

Our Ref: FOI2016-164

Date: December 2016

**Subject: Acceptance of outside appointments**

This request asked for information about the SFO's policy on employees taking up employment in sectors regulated by the SFO or with employers investigated by the SFO, and the safeguards that are put in place once the employment commences.

SFO employees, like all civil servants and crown servants, are subject to rules on accepting outside appointments after leaving Crown service which are included in the Civil Service Management Code. Depending on an individual's seniority, these rules apply to individuals for either one or two years after leaving Crown service. More information on the business appointment rules can be found in the Civil Service Management Code which can be found at the link: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/crown-servants-new-jobs-and-business-appointments>

SFO employees as civil servants must familiarise themselves with and as appropriate abide by *Business Appointment Rules for Civil Servants* which can be found at 4.3 in Annex A of the Code.

The rules apply to civil servants who intend to take up an outside appointment or employment after leaving the Civil Service.

The approval process for applications under the rules differs depending on the applicant's seniority. For members of the Senior Civil Service and equivalents, including special advisers of equivalent standing, the rules continue to apply for two years after the last day of paid Civil Service employment. The aim of the rules is to avoid any reasonable concerns that:

- a. a civil servant might be influenced in carrying out his or her official duties by the hope or expectation of future employment with a particular firm or organisation, or in a specific sector; or
  - b. on leaving the Civil Service, a former civil servant might improperly exploit privileged access to contacts in Government or sensitive information; or
  - c. a particular firm or organisation might gain an improper advantage by employing someone who, in the course of their official duties, has had access to:
    - i. information relating to unannounced or proposed developments in Government policy, knowledge of which may affect the prospective employer or any competitors; or
    - ii. commercially valuable or sensitive information about any competitors.
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The SFO also sets out a Code of Conduct Policy that applies to anyone working for the organisation. All employees are expected to familiarise themselves with the contents of the Code of Conduct policy and are required to abide by the Official Secrets Act. They must ensure that any information they acquire in the course of their work is not misused or disclosed outside the SFO without authorisation from the Head of HR during or after their employment. All employees are expected to sign a declaration to confirm they understand and will abide by the restrictions set out in the Official Secrets Act.

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