Baroness Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner
Civil Service Commission

1 Horse Guards Road, London, SW1A 2HQ
E-Mail first.commissioner@csc.gov.uk

All Heads of Department
Via email

2 October 2025

Dear Heads of Department,

- **Queries on, and applications under, the Business Appointment Rules for senior civil servants and special advisers should now be sent to bars@csc.gov.uk.**
- **Further information on departmental BARs audits will follow.**

The government has announced that the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) will close, and that as of 13 October 2025 the Civil Service Commission (the Commission) will take on a new role providing independent advice on, and scrutiny of, the application of the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) for senior civil servants and special advisers.

As of 13 September, applications under the Rules for current and former senior civil servants at Director General level and above (SCS Pay Band 3 / equivalent and above) and senior special advisers (Pay Band 4 and equivalent) should therefore be submitted via the department to the Commission via **bars@csc.gov.uk**.[1] All queries on the application of the Rules to these cohorts should also be sent to this address.

Advice cannot be issued until the Commission assumes its new role on 13 October.

ACOBA will be in contact with applicants directly if their application was submitted prior to 13 September. Advice considered and provided by ACOBA before it closes on 12 October, but taken up or announced by the applicant on or after 13 October, will be published on the Commission's website. The Commission will not have considered these applications.

For further information on this change, please see this blog on the Commission's website. The Commission will publish further updates on how cases within its remit will be considered in due course.

The Commission has also been asked to:

- Commence regular audits of departmental performance considering BARs cases. Next steps on this process will be communicated later in the autumn.

[1] Former ministers should submit applications to: the office of the Independent Adviser on Ministerial Standards at **ind.adviser.BARS@cabinetoffice.gov.uk**, and those with enquiries regarding applications from other senior Crown servants, for example members of the military, should consult the HR function in their department or contact **acoba@acoba.gov.uk** for further information.

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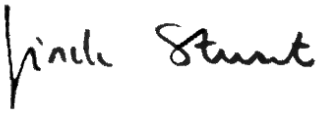
- Report to Cabinet Office ministers, having taken on these functions, on how the BARs can be strengthened. For clarity, the Rules as set out by the Cabinet Office remain in place.

To support the implementation of these changes, please respond to this correspondence with contact details for individuals or teams managing BARs applications within your department.

The Commission can continue to be reached via **info@csc.gov.uk** for queries and casework regarding the Recruitment Principles.

We look forward to engaging further with your department as a result of this change.



Rt Hon Baroness Gisela Stuart of Edgbaston
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