

**Baroness Stuart of Edgbaston
First Civil Service Commissioner
Civil Service Commission**

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Cabinet Office

25 November 2025

Application to establish an independent consultancy under the Business Appointment Rules from Ms Fiona Ryland, former Government Chief People Officer.

Thank you for submitting an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules¹ (the Rules) to the Civil Service Commission (the Commission) on behalf of **Ms Fiona Ryland**, formerly Government Chief People Officer at the Cabinet Office. The application is to establish an independent consultancy. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Ms Ryland is a civil servant at SCS Pay Band 3. Her last day of service is 30 November 2025.

The purpose of the Rules is to protect the integrity of the government. They aim to avoid any reasonable concerns that: a civil servant may be influenced in their official duties by the risk of reward; a civil servant may improperly exploit access to information; and an organisation may gain an improper influence through the employment of a civil servant.

The Commission's advice is that this application should be subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Ms Ryland should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of herself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information² available to her from her time in the civil service.
2. Lobbying – For two years from her last day in office, until 30 November 2027, Ms Ryland should not become personally involved in lobbying³ the UK Government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of her independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). She should also not use, directly or indirectly, her contacts in the government

¹ See the [Business appointment rules for Crown servants](#).

² Meaning official information to which a Crown servant has had access as a consequence of his or her office or employment and which has not been made publicly available.

³ As defined in the rules.

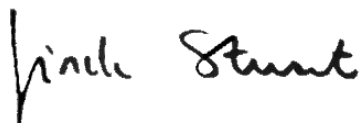
and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage her independent consultancy (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

3. Bids and contracts – For two years from her last day in the civil service, until 30 November 2027, Ms Ryland should not provide advice to any company or organisation on behalf of her independent consultancy on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.
4. Independent consultancy – Given the likely scope of the consultancy work set out by Ms Ryland in her application, she does not need to return to the Commission for future client work unless the proposed work, or a change to existing work, would alter this scope. If Ms Ryland is uncertain, she should return to the Commission to seek advice. In particular, Ms Ryland would need to seek further advice related to:
 - Any client or work where Ms Ryland had direct involvement in related contractual, funding, or policy decisions while at the Cabinet Office.
 - Any client or work relating to matters she held specific responsibility for.
 - Any client or work requiring contact with the Cabinet Office or UK government for influencing purposes.

The Rules set out that civil servants must abide by the Commission's advice. It is Ms Ryland's personal responsibility to manage the propriety of any appointment and to understand any other rules and regulations they may be subject to in parallel with the Commission's advice.

Ms Ryland must seek advice if she proposes to extend or otherwise change her role with the organisation. Once this appointment has been publicly announced or taken up, the letter will be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gisela Stuart', with a stylized, cursive script.

Gisela Stuart

First Civil Service Commissioner

Annex A: The application

Applicant assessment

1. Ms Ryland stated that she will be setting up her own consulting service. She outlined that her work will likely be HR focused and involve coaching assignments, leadership development, strategy development and ad-hoc project work.
2. As Government Chief People Officer (GCPO), Ms Ryland is the head of the Government People Function and Director General of the Government People Group. Her responsibilities include overseeing the delivery of cross-government HR strategy and workforce planning; leading the Government People Function and HR Profession in government; ensuring the right policies and structures are in place to create an efficient and effective Civil Service; and improving the way government attracts and develops talented civil servants.
3. Ms Ryland said her consulting work will not involve contact with, or lobbying of, the government.
4. Prior to entering the civil service, Ms Ryland had over 25 years experience in strategy and HR roles across both the public and private sectors.
5. Ms Ryland has also informed the Commission that there is a possibility that her initial work may be through Tap'd Solutions, an HR consultancy company. The company's work focuses on coaching, leadership development and training. Ms Ryland stated her husband, the co-founder and Managing Director of the company, has a current conflict of interest plan which means that the company does not currently bid for work with the Civil Service, though the company does do work broadly with the public sector.

Departmental assessment

6. The Cabinet Office provided advice on Ms Ryland's stated intention to work with Tap'd Solutions. The department confirmed that Ms Ryland did not meet with Tap'd Solutions in an official capacity during her time in post, and she was not involved in decisions specific to the company.
7. The Cabinet Office stated that as Government Chief People Officer, Ms Ryland will have had access to a wide range of information, in particular relating to government HR policy, which could provide an unfair advantage to Tap'd Solutions, though because the company does not currently bid for work

with the Civil Service, the value and relevance of any privileged information held by Ms Ryland is reduced.

8. The Cabinet Office recommended the standard conditions.

CSC analysis

9. *Risk of reward.* Ms Ryland is establishing a new consulting business. In relation to her initial potential work contracted or subcontracted through Tap'd Solutions, Ms Ryland did not meet with Tap'd Solutions in an official capacity and was not involved in decisions specific to the company. The risk of reward for decisions or actions taken in office is likely to be low.
10. *Access to information.* It is likely that as Government Chief People Officer, Ms Ryland had access to a wide range of information that may benefit many companies, though the Cabinet Office did not note any specific information that presents a risk. The risks under the Rules will be most significant where Ms Ryland seeks to provide advice on matters where she had a relationship with her clients, or had access to relevant sensitive information, while in government service. Given her description of the work, this risk is limited.
11. *Improper influence.* As a senior official, there is a risk that Ms Ryland's government contacts may present an unfair advantage to potential clients of her consulting work. Given the lobbying ban that applies to all former senior civil servants, Ms Ryland cannot have contact with ministers or officials that could reasonably be seen as seeking to influence government. It is significant to note that Ms Ryland stated she would not have contact with government as part of her consulting work. The risks relating to lobbying and/or involvement in government bids and contracts are mitigated by the standard conditions. In relation to her initial potential work contracted or subcontracted through Tap'd Solutions, a conflict of interest plan currently prevents Tap'd Solutions from bidding for work with the Civil Service.
12. *Independent consultancy.* This advice grants her consent to accept consultancy client work, as well as to undertake initial potential work contracted or subcontracted through Tap'd Solutions, without returning to the Commission, unless the work extends or alters the scope described in her original application. In such cases, she must seek advice so the proposal can be assessed against the Rules.