

Home Office

16 April 2026

**Application from Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates, CB, CBE, former Director General, Illegal Migration Operations Command and Senior Responsible Officer for the UK/Albania Migration Agreement, Migration and Borders Group at the Home Office, for a paid commission with M&C Saatchi World Services as a client of his independent consultancy, Barchester Skeates Associates Limited.**

Thank you for submitting an application for advice under the Business Appointment Rules (the Rules) to the Civil Service Commission (the Commission) on behalf of **Lieutenant General Stuart Skeates, CB, CBE (Lt Gen Skeates)**, formerly Director General, Illegal Migration Operations Command and Senior Responsible Officer for the UK/Albania Migration Agreement, Migration and Borders Group at the Home Office. The application is for a commission with **M&C Saatchi World Services** to be a client of his independent consultancy, Barchester Skeates Associates Limited. Further detail on the content of the application is in the Annex. The Commission's advice is required as Lt Gen Skeates was a civil servant at SCS Pay Band 3. His last day of service was 12 August 2024.

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<sup>1</sup> is that this commission with M&C Saatchi World Services should be subject to the following conditions:

1. Privileged information – Lt Gen Skeates should not draw on (disclose or use for the benefit of himself or the persons or organisations to which this advice refers) any privileged information available to him from his time in the civil service.
2. Lobbying – For two years from his last day in the civil service, until 12 August 2026, Lt Gen Skeates should not become personally involved in lobbying the

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<sup>1</sup> See [Advice under the Business Appointment Rules](#) for details applying to all advice issued by the Civil Service Commission.

UK government or its arm's length bodies on behalf of M&C Saatchi World Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients). He should also not use, directly or indirectly, his contacts in the government and/or civil service to influence policy, secure business/funding or otherwise unfairly advantage M&C Saatchi World Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients).

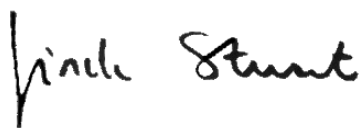
3. Bids and contracts – For two years from his last day in the civil service, until 12 August 2026, Lt Gen Skeates should not provide advice to M&C Saatchi World Services (including parent companies, subsidiaries, partners and clients) on a bid or contract relating to the UK government or its arm's length bodies.

As a reminder, for two years from his last day in civil service, until 12 August 2026, Lt Gen Skeates should continue to seek advice before accepting new work for his consultancy, in line with the conditions outlined in the initial approval for Barchester Skeates Associates Limited issued by the Advisory Committee on Business Appointments<sup>2</sup>.

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

Lt Gen Skeates must seek advice if he proposes to extend or otherwise change his role with the organisation. Once this appointment has been taken up, the letter will be published on the Civil Service Commission's website.

Yours sincerely,



**Gisela Stuart**

First Civil Service Commissioner

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<sup>2</sup> 'Stuart Skeates - Director General, Illegal Migration Operations Command, Home Office - ACOBA advice', Advisory Committee on Business Appointments, [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/681e28f8d9c9bb76078f7ebf/Advice\\_Letter\\_-\\_Stuart\\_Skeates\\_Independent\\_Consultancy\\_Barchester\\_Skeates\\_Associates\\_Limited.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/681e28f8d9c9bb76078f7ebf/Advice_Letter_-_Stuart_Skeates_Independent_Consultancy_Barchester_Skeates_Associates_Limited.pdf)

## Annex A: The application

### Applicant assessment

1. The Advisory Committee on Business Appointments (ACOBA) previously considered Lt Gen Skeates' application to form his independent consultancy, Barchester Skeates Associates Limited. Barchester Skeates Associates Limited provides generalist advisory work in the defence and security sector including strategy and organisational change, public speaking and leadership. It also involves board advisory work and NED roles.
2. According to its website, M&C Saatchi Group is a global creative solutions company and independent advertising network with five core specialisms: Advertising, Consulting, Issues & Advocacy, Passions & PR, and Media. M&C Saatchi World Services is a specialist strategic consultancy within the Group. It focuses on international, governmental, and public interest work, especially in complex or high-risk environments. The organisation describes itself as an issues-focused communications agency, providing a range of services, including strategy, insights, content, media, data, and behavioural communications, with an emphasis on diplomatic, development, defence, and security-adjacent sectors.
3. Lt Gen Skeates said that he will provide advice to the CEO and the strategy team on strategic communication regarding NATO allies in European countries, and his work will not involve the UK military.
4. Lt Gen Skeates said his work with M&C Saatchi World Services will not involve lobbying of the UK Government, nor involvement in UK Government bids and contracts on behalf of the company.
5. Lt Gen Skeates' recent role in the civil service was Director General, Illegal Migration Operations Command at the Home Office. He was responsible for delivering a new migration system under the Illegal Migration Act 2023 and the Safety of Rwanda Act 2024. Alongside his Director General position, he was also Senior Responsible Officer for the Sovereign Borders Programme, Senior Responsible Officer for the New Detained Accommodation Programme and Senior Responsible Officer for the UK/Albania Migration Agreement.
6. Lt Gen Skeates' recent roles at the Home Office focussed on UK border security, national security and relevant international cooperation on this matter – not defence or technology. Lt Gen Skeates stated he did not have dealings with M&C Saatchi World Services, nor was he involved in decisions specific to the company during his time in post.

### Department assessment

7. The Home Office stated that Lt Gen Skeates did not meet with M&C Saatchi World Services, nor was he involved in decisions specific to the organisation, commercial or otherwise, during his time in post. The Home Office considers the risk of this commission being seen as a reward for decisions made in post to be limited.
8. The Home Office stated that it does not hold any contractual or commercial relationship with M&C Saatchi World Services and that Lt Gen Skeates did not have access to information that would provide an unfair advantage to the company.
9. The Home Office outlined no concerns with this commission with M&C Saatchi World Services. It recommended the standard conditions.

### The Commission's analysis

10. *Risk of reward.* The Commission agreed with the department's assessment and considered the risk of this commission with M&C Saatchi World Services as a reward for decisions in post to be limited.
11. *Access to information.* There is no known overlap with Lt Gen Skeates' recent role in the civil service and the work of M&C Saatchi World Services, and it has been over 19 months since he left government. The Home Office was also unaware of any sensitive information he may possess that could present a risk. The Commission considered the risks relating to his access to information and degree of overlap with his time in post to be limited. The standard privileged information ban sufficiently mitigates any remaining risk, with a further limitation not proportionate to the risks presented.
12. *Improper influence.* As a senior official, there is a risk that Lt Gen Skeates' government contacts may present an unfair advantage to M&C Saatchi World Services. It is significant to note that Lt Gen Skeates stated he would not have contact with government as part of his consulting work. The standard lobbying condition mitigates any risk.
13. *Return to Commission.* Lt Gen Skeates has submitted a request to the Commission for approval of his work with M&C Saatchi World Services. This is in accordance with the relevant condition included in the original advice issued by ACOBA.