



Dear Sir Jeremy,

We write to you as public health professionals to express our deep concerns about the alcohol industry interests held by the newly appointed Chief Executive of the UK civil service, John Manzoni. We find it inexplicable and troubling that Mr Manzoni retains a paid position as Executive Director of one of the world's largest brewers, SAB Miller, while stepping down from two other paid positions in the energy sector. This appears to be only partial fulfilment of the Nolan Principles, which require holders of public office to 'take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.'¹ We believe this situation threatens to undermine the impartiality of the civil service and presents a direct conflict of interest with UK public health policy goals.

We urgently request assurances that the advice given by the Cabinet Office appointments panel in relation to Mr Manzoni took full account of the potential conflicts of interest presented by his continued employment by SAB Miller. The specific risks that are of clear public interest are as follows:

- Mr Manzoni's remuneration for his post with SAB Miller - taken in the form of company shares - means he has a pecuniary interest in growth of the company's sales and profits and therefore an interest in government policies that may affect this. SAB Miller has conducted a well-resourced and wide reaching lobbying campaign against UK Government policies aimed at tackling alcohol harm that potentially threaten profitability of the drinks industry, such as minimum unit pricing. The company also funds industry-friendly think tanks and research reports that actively seek to influence public policy and cast doubt upon the scientific evidence to support effective alcohol interventions that save lives². Given that alcohol policy is such a high profile and contested issue within government, it is problematic that the leader of the UK civil service has such clear links to an organization with strong vested interests on one side of such debates.
- SAB Miller has strong commercial ties to the tobacco company Philip Morris. The Altria Group (formerly known as Philip Morris Companies Inc) is the parent company of Philip Morris International and also has a 28.7% economic and voting interest in SAB Miller plc. Presently the two companies have high levels of cross representation on their respective boards. We seek clarification on whether Mr Manzoni's commercial links to the tobacco industry are considered to be compatible with the UK Government's obligations under article 5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control and its implementation guidelines, requiring that public health policies should be protected from commercial and other vested interests of the tobacco industry³.

¹ UK Government Guidance for civil servants:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/85772/Guidance-for-civil-servants.pdf

² Hawkins B, McCambridge, J, Industry Actors, Think Tanks and Alcohol Policy in the United Kingdom, American Journal of Public Health, June 2014

³ WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control http://www.who.int/fctc/guidelines/article_5_3.pdf



We believe Mr Manzoni's continued interest in SAB Miller poses a serious threat to the perceived neutrality and integrity in the role of the UK civil service in policy-making. The UK Civil Service CEO must be independent, and seen to be independent, to make decisions that are based on the public good and not influenced by vested interests.

We and our many colleagues who strive to improve the health of our population, deserve a full disclosure of the details surrounding Mr Manzoni's appointment with a view to an early review of the Cabinet Office appointments committee advice.

Yours faithfully,