

Press release: Intimidation in Public Life: Lord Evans welcomes government response

Lord Evans said: 'The Committee welcomes the [government response](#) and we are pleased that the Government has accepted the recommendation we made in our [2017 report](#) to make intimidation of electoral candidates and party campaigners a criminal offence.

'This is an important step and carries a powerful message about the unacceptable abuse and intimidation of people who stand for public office. If we want a vibrant and diverse democracy, more representative of the public it serves, we must be prepared to stand up to intimidation'.

Press release: Luton coach boss banned for hiding fleet

Luton director banned for nine years after intentionally hiding company assets, including three coaches worth almost £40,000, from the liquidator.

Press release: Luton coach boss banned for hiding fleet

Craig Andrew Hughes (27) of Luton was the registered director of HL Tours Limited from July 2013. Based in Bedford, the company provided private hire coach services catering to schools and private clients.

However, the company could not pay its debts and entered into a Creditors Voluntary Liquidation (CVL) in October 2017, owing its creditors £38,000. An Insolvency Practitioner was appointed but faced obstacles throughout.

Two months before the company entered into liquidation, Craig Hughes removed the three coaches without the permission of the liquidator and tried to hide them.

Despite letters from the liquidator threatening legal action, Craig Hughes

refused to reveal their location. The coaches were eventually found almost a year later but their condition had deteriorated and they had lost value by the time they were sold in the liquidation, to the detriment of the company's creditors.

Craig Hughes also failed to ensure the company maintained or preserved adequate accounting records or failed to deliver them to the liquidator, which would have explained the position regarding the company's assets and several financial transactions.

For example, there were no explanations behind almost £133,000 of bank transfers, including £127,000 to an account held by Craig Hughes himself.

On 28 March 2019 the Secretary of State accepted a nine-year disqualification undertaking from Craig Andrew Hughes.

Effective from 18 April 2019, he is banned for nine years from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Lawrence Zussman, Deputy Head of Investigations for the Insolvency Service, said:

Craig Hughes thought he could hide assets from the liquidator, three coaches no less, to avoid paying his creditors even in the face of legal action. Thankfully, the coaches were recovered and sold on.

Directors have responsibilities to their creditors and a nine-year disqualification demonstrates the consequences of those who put their interests above anyone else.

Craig Andrew Hughes is from Luton and his date of birth is July 1991.

HL Tours Limited (Company number 08272907).

A disqualification order has the effect that without specific permission of a court, a person with a disqualification cannot:

- act as a director of a company
- take part, directly or indirectly, in the promotion, formation or management of a company or limited liability partnership
- be a receiver of a company's property

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings. Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other restrictions](#).

Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: Nuclear businesses recognised in Queen's Awards](#)

Cockermouth-based [Createc](#) and [Oxford Technologies](#) were among more than 200 UK businesses receiving the UK's top business honour – awarded annually to mark The Queen's birthday.

Both businesses, which have previously won funding from NDA's research portfolio and the government's Innovate UK, have also picked up several accolades at the NDA's Supply Chain Awards.

Business Secretary Greg Clark said:

These prestigious awards help shine a light on all that is great about UK business today. I am extremely impressed to see such a wealth of talent and innovation from across the UK being recognised today by Her Majesty The Queen.

These awards recognise the innovative products and services being provided by British businesses that are in demand across the world, as well as the sheer determination and hard work that comes with starting and running a business.

Many of these winners are small businesses – the backbone of our economy – and we are backing them to grow, increase their productivity and create more jobs and opportunity across the UK through our modern Industrial Strategy.

Their remotely operated technologies have been exported overseas as part of the work to clean up Japan's damaged Fukushima power station, as well as being used closer to home at the NDA's nuclear sites and in other industrial sectors across the UK

NDA Head of Technology Prof Melanie Brownridge said:

We are absolutely delighted that two of our innovative suppliers have excelled in these prestigious awards.

Suppliers like Createc and Oxford Technologies play a vital role in solving some of the unique challenges we face – particularly in developing remote technologies and techniques for use in the most radioactive areas of our sites, helping us carry out decommissioning and hazard reduction work safer, faster and in a way that's more cost effective for the UK taxpayer.

Createc, a business which sprung up around the nuclear industry in Cumbria, employs around 30 scientists and specialises in innovative applications of imaging technology. Its 'N-Visage' radiation-mapping and characterisation software provides vital 3D images of radiation hotspots in places too hazardous to be accessed by people

Oxford Technologies was founded by engineers working in nuclear fusion and now specialises in remote handling technology for hazardous environments. The firm first collected a Queen's Award in 2014.

Oxford Technologies' remotely operated system is being developed for Fukushima Daiichi

Image credit: Oxford Technologies

Part of the Veolia Group, Oxford Technologies has also worked on various aspects of the remote handling systems used to decommission and clean up the NDA's Dounreay site in the north of Scotland.

Createc Managing Director Dr Matt Mellor said:

We are delighted that Createc has been recognised with a Queen's award for innovation. This shows what is possible for smaller UK nuclear businesses willing to pursue a growth strategy based on innovation driven diversification.

Veolia Nuclear Solutions UK Sales Director Mark Sharpe added:

This award for International Trade recognises the hard work, skill and dedication of every single person in our team.

Thanks to the tremendous support given to us from the UK Department for International Trade, the Embassy in Tokyo, NDA subsidiary International Nuclear Services (Japan), our supply chain partners and suppliers – our overseas sales have grown by over 400% in the last 3 years.

News story: Operational irregularity at Balham

An operational irregularity occurred just after 19:00 hrs on Saturday 20 April 2019 near Balham station, in south London. A passenger train, running from London Victoria to East Grinstead, passed across a junction less than two minutes before an engineering train that was travelling in the opposite direction. The engineering train, formed of an on track machine known as a tamper, was making an un-signalled move that had not been correctly authorised when it left a possession (in which a section of line had been closed to railway traffic to allow engineering work to take place). There were no injuries or other adverse consequence although, if the circumstances had been slightly different, there was the potential for the two trains to have collided.

Our investigation will seek to identify the sequence of events which led to the irregularity, and will consider:

- the communications that occurred between those involved in planning, setting up and managing the movement of the tamper within, and when leaving, the possession
- the actions of staff involved in managing the movement of the tamper, both locally and remotely, taking appropriate account of human factors
- the information that was available to those who made decisions leading to the departure of the tamper from the possession
- the adequacy of relevant rules and procedures, as well as the training, instruction, and competence management of the staff involved
- any underlying management factors

Our investigation is independent of any investigation by the railway industry or by the industry's regulator, the [Office of Rail and Road](#).

We will publish our findings, including any recommendations to improve safety, at the conclusion of our investigation. This report will be available on our website.

You can [subscribe](#) to automated emails notifying you when we publish our reports.