

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.

Speech: UK is committed to ensure everyone is equal, safe and empowered: **Speech by Enyonam Azumah**

It's an honour to be here today to speak on behalf of DFID – at this important dissemination event of the What Works research and COMBAT intervention.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) occurs in all parts of the world and in all societies and remains one of the most systematic widespread human rights violations worldwide. 1 in 3 women has suffered violence in her lifetime with abusers generally being members of the family. Women are predominantly victims of Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) at a rate of around 5 times more than males. For children exposed to IPV, the long-term health and social consequences are similar to those of child abuse and neglect.

DFID is proud to be a global leader in efforts to eradicate violence against women and girls in all its forms. Eradicating VAWG is a key pillar in our new Strategic Vision on Gender Equality and the FCO's Special Envoy for Gender Equality has made a commitment to ensure a foreign policy that focuses on 3 themes to achieve gender equality – Equal, Safe and Empowered. Our work typically provides support to women's rights organisations; tackles the attitudes that normalise violent behaviour; gets comprehensive services to survivors; ensures that national legislation and policies are in place and implemented and ensures that we conduct rigorous research to produce evidence on What Works to prevent VAWG.

DFID's new Strategy on Disability Inclusion Development places a greater focus on mental health and psychosocial support. We recognise that exposure to all forms of conflict, violence and insecurity more broadly can have a major impact on the mental health and psychosocial well-being of all people with high rates of depression among victims being linked with observing IPV and or experiencing violence in childhood.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The objective of this forum is to share DFID-funded research, evidence and best practices on preventing domestic violence. The 'What Works to Prevent Violence Against Women and Girls' programme is a flagship programme from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), which is investing an unprecedented £25 million over five years to the prevention of violence against women and girls supporting primary prevention efforts across Africa and Asia.

Component Three of the Economic and Social Costs of Violence against Women and Girls is a 3-year multi-country project that estimates the costs of VAWG, both social and economic, to individuals and households, businesses and communities in Ghana. Today, ISSER will present findings from a survey conducted among businesses in Kumasi and Accra revealing how domestic violence impacts businesses in Ghana. The findings show that domestic violence has ripple effects throughout the community and is not contained within the four walls of the home. No such analysis has previously been carried out in Ghana, or indeed elsewhere in West Africa.

The impact of the Ghana study may be significant in breaking new ground in understanding the impact of VAWG eg. on the physical and mental health of individuals, community cohesion, economic stability and development in order to provide further evidence for Government to accelerate efforts to address VAWG.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our commitment to ensure everyone is Equal, Safe and Empowered aligns with His Excellency the President's vision to create a Ghana where all citizens are able to actively participate and contribute towards the socio-economic development of the country to create a self-reliant and prosperous Ghana Beyond Aid. It is crucial that we act together to stop IPV: women, men, youth, teachers, political leaders, government ministries (health, education, gender and finance), traditional and religious leaders, civil society organisations, international, multilateral organisations, academia, grassroots organisations and the media – in a coordinated, multi-actor and multi-sectoral approach if we are to meet the Goal 5 of the SDGs by 2030.

In conclusion, failure to eliminate Violence Against Women and Girls constitutes a drag on the national economy and on inclusive human development. There is thus strong incentive for investment by the government and other stakeholders to address VAWG as the cost of inaction may be significant. Finally, I'd like to applaud ISSER for their hard work and expertise in developing the research and intervention. I'd like to thank the Minister of Gender and the Government of Ghana for their leadership and look forward to working together, in partnership, to build a safer, healthier and more prosperous Ghana for all ensuring, above all, that we reduce gender inequality and eliminate violence against women and girls in Ghana.

Thank you.

Speech: Effective solutions to gender issues should be sustained: speech by Philip Smith

Honourable Minister of Education, madam moderator, Executive Secretary of the National council on Tertiary Education (NCTE), President of PRINCOFF, Vice-Chancellors and Heads of colleges of education, representatives of civil society and the media, development partners, all invited guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here today to speak on behalf of the UK's Department for International Development at this important summit on Gender Equality and Social Inclusion in Teacher Education.

Who teachers are, and how teachers are educated, has a direct impact on how children access education, and what they learn in school.

To ensure inclusive learning and to address social inequalities, teachers need to be able to treat all children equitably and effectively, regardless of gender, age, socio-economic background and disability.

For the education sector, this means addressing teachers' ideas of gender and social inclusion, so that teachers view all young people as capable, and do not perpetuate restrictive gender and social stereotype norms or violence.

As the government of Ghana improves standards of teaching and schools through education reforms, the teaching profession also needs to become ever more diverse and inclusive to meet all children's needs. There are gender and social disparities in teacher education in Ghana, which both reflect and impact on wider inequalities in society.

Women and people with disabilities are significantly underrepresented as teachers, tutors, lecturers and senior education managers.

In the 46 public colleges of education, only 38% of student teachers, 25% of tutors and 12 Principals are female. We don't have the data on disability prevalence yet, but NCTE's inclusive education study will provide valuable insights into this.

Many women and people from poorer families do not have funds to study to become a teacher in the first place. And many women and people with disabilities within teacher education also experience harassment, lack of safety, and discrimination within colleges of education and face challenges of getting the support they need to complete their course and progress in their career.

Teaching in basic schools is also gendered and male-dominated – while 83% of kindergarten teachers are female, only 42% of primary teachers are women, and this drops to only a quarter of teachers at JHS and a fifth of teachers at SHS. Female teachers are also underrepresented in higher-status subjects like Science, Maths and English. There are few female head teachers. And we need more demographic data on people with disabilities or from less advantaged backgrounds within teaching.

These disparities have an impact on school access and progression for children who are female, have disabilities, are in deprived districts and rural areas, and from the poorest families. While gender parity in access to basic education has been achieved nationally, gender and social inequalities persist in the northern regions, and in children's learning outcomes.

Girls perform worse than boys across all regions and at all levels for Maths, Science, and Social Studies, and in English in the northern regions. Children in rural deprived districts perform the lowest on national primary-level assessments.

Only 1 in 5 girls qualifies for tertiary compared to 1 in 4 boys.

However, evidence shows that having more teachers who are female, and are from similar backgrounds to their pupils, can have a significant positive impact on the enrollment, retention, safety and performance of girls and more less privileged children in schools.

DFID is proud to support the important work of the National College for Tertiary Education (NCTE) to reform – and transform – teacher education in Ghana, with support from T-TEL. It is vital that teachers are selected, educated and assessed differently, to address persistent gender and social inequalities, and promote learning for all children in the basic education system.

Over the past few years, we have seen solid improvements in the gender-responsiveness of colleges of education in terms of facilities, policies, safety and teaching approaches, which have been driven through gender-responsive improvement plans and gender champions. This should be celebrated.

We now need to ensure that this progress continues, and that we understand the impact of changes in colleges of education on the attitudes and teaching practices of student teachers and newly-qualified teachers in the classroom.

It is important that this progress is sustained, built on, and made even more strategic so it can improve gender and social equality throughout the education system. This is vital if we are to enable more girls, children with disabilities, and people in rural and deprived areas to complete secondary education and move into tertiary education, teaching and education leadership.

The government of Ghana's ambitious education reform agenda provides a real opportunity to drive progress on gender equality, diversity, social inclusion and better safeguarding across all aspects of education.

The UK works around the world to uphold the rights of women and people with disabilities and help to improve their lives.

Here in Ghana, DFID prioritises gender equality and inclusion throughout our programmes. The UK is pleased to have also supported Ghana to improve gender equality in education through the Girls-PASS programme, Girls' Education Challenge (GEC), and Complementary Basic Education.

We encourage lessons from these programmes to be shared widely, so effective solutions to gender issues can be sustained.

For example, at this year's Education World Forum in London in January, DFID's Secretary of State highlighted how the Varkey Foundation GEC project in Ghana has used technology to run distance interactive lessons to tackle challenges of poor teacher quality and learning outcomes, and lack of safe spaces and role models for girls. This has shown positive changes in literacy and numeracy, as well as engagement of girls who had dropped out of school.

We encourage the Ministry of Education to support policies and budget allocations which will enable real improvements in gender equality and social inclusion in education.

Under the leadership of the Ghana Education Service's Girls Education Unit, the Girls' Education Network have already been doing excellent work to maintain focus on gender issues within the education sector, such as developing guidance on how to support girls who become pregnant to continue in and re-enter school.

We are also proud that Ghana's Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs is a member of the global Girls' Education Platform, co-chaired by the UK Foreign Secretary (who was in Ghana last week). We also thank the Hon. Deputy Minister of Education Gifty Twum for her participation in the platform. We are keen for Ghana to use the platform to showcase its progress on gender equality in education.

At the last Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in 2018, the government of Ghana made important commitments around gender equality in education. We encourage the government of Ghana to demonstrate strong progress and action on these in advance of the next CHOGM 2020.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As development partners we welcome the government's focus on achieving the SDGs, and applaud His Excellency the President's vision for a self-reliant Ghana.

Today we are at a point of decision and opportunity, where in the 11 remaining years of the Sustainable Development Goals, we still have time to realise their full ambition to address the root causes of poverty and inequality, and achieve development that works for all people.

Gender equality and social inclusion is key to that ambition. Ghana Beyond Aid will not be realised without it. When over half the population is unable

to achieve their potential, when they are prevented from being productive, or when their voices are simply not heard, there can be no sustainable path to development.

I wish you fruitful discussions today as you consider how to bring about ever greater gender and social equality within – and through – the education system.

As we continue the strong Ghana-UK partnership in education beyond aid, DFID is with you every step of the way.

Thank you.