

Press release: Companies involved in fraudulent art investment scheme wound-up

Two companies involved in what appears to be a fraudulent art investment scheme have been shut down after abusing close to £1.4 million of investors' money.

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Halifax Mannin Ltd, based in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales, and Birmingham's Hey Design Services Ltd were wound-up in the public interest on 1 March 2019 at the High Court in Manchester before District Judge Bever. The Official Receiver has been appointed liquidator of the companies.

The two companies came to the attention of the Insolvency Service after complaints were received but following confidential enquiries, investigators were unable to determine the exact nature of the trading activities of either Halifax Mannin or Hey Design Services or where their business activities were being conducted from.

However, investigators established that Halifax Mannin and Hey Design Services both received payments from people persuaded to make investments in works of art by renowned painters.

In little more than a year between October 2017 and October 2018, Halifax Mannin received close to £250,000, while Hey Design Services secured just over £1.1 million in funds.

The vast majority of the £1.4 million received by the two companies was paid out of the companies' bank accounts but investigators could not determine how the funds have been spent as the directors have failed to co-operate with enquiries.

Investigators were also able to establish that the art investment scheme that the companies were involved with appears to have been operated by a separate business in Spain, Asset Consulting Services, which had been subject to a previous [public warning from the Financial Conduct Authority](#).

The courts wound-up the two companies on the grounds they traded with a lack of commercial probity, having been incorporated or used as vehicles for fraud, with their sole purpose being to receive monies from investors who were misled or bullied into making an investment.

Furthermore, the companies and their directors failed to cooperate with the investigation and the companies operated with a lack of transparency.

David Hope, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Despite accepting more than a million pounds from members of the public, including elderly and vulnerable people, there is no evidence to indicate that the investment had any value or was likely to generate any return for the investors.

Thankfully the courts have put a stop to these companies, preventing anyone else from coming to harm, and I would encourage anyone approached by, or thinking about making, an investment with, Asset Consulting Services to read the warning issued by the FCA and to take independent financial advice before making any investment decision.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to: The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit, 2 Floor, 3 Piccadilly Place, London Road, Manchester, M1 3BN. Email: piu.north@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk.

Halifax Mannin Ltd – company registration number 10894972 – was incorporated on 2 August 2017. The company's registered office is at The Old Police House, Trawsfynydd, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales LL41 4RW.

Hey Design Services Ltd – company registration number 09851082 – was incorporated on 2 November 2015. The company's registered office is at 22 Ellerton Road, Birmingham B44 0QD.

The petitions were presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 12 December 2018.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Further information about live company investigations is available [here](#).

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

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: Homes England trials co-location in the Midlands

Homes England is trialling shared office space with Coventry City Council to see if the centre of the country location could work as a new national centre for the agency.

Press release: Homes England trials co-location in the Midlands

- The government's housing agency is trialling shared office space with Coventry City Council
- The move is part of Homes England's aim to work collaboratively with regional partners
- If successful Coventry could become the agency's new national centre

The news follows the announcement that Homes England is trialling space with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and supports its commitment to collaborate with regional partners, ensuring its experts can work hand-in-hand with local specialists.

Sir Edward Lister, Chairman of Homes England, said:

"Homes England is committed to a place based approach, working with local experts to accelerate the delivery of homes across England. The co-location that we are now trialling in Coventry is a way of cementing that collaborative approach as teams work side by side."

Councillor Jim O'Boyle, cabinet member for jobs and regeneration at Coventry City Council, said:

"The announcement that Homes England is establishing a presence in Coventry, at Friargate which is located right next to the fastest growing railway station outside London, offers a strong statement of confidence in the city's ongoing regeneration and transformation. We have already welcomed the Financial Ombudsman Service who are based at Friargate and now we are working closely with Homes England, sharing our local knowledge with its team."

Andy Street, Mayor of the West Midlands, commented:

“We’re delighted to welcome Homes England to Coventry and we hope this will be the first step towards a new headquarters, with new jobs for people in Coventry and the wider West Midlands.”

ENDS.

For more information contact Kate Hall, Communications Officer at Homes England 0115 852 6900 or 07967 782252 kate.hall@homesengland.gov.uk

Press release: A new and robust inspection regime for secure training centres

As the lead inspectorate, Ofsted works alongside the Care Quality Commission and HM Inspectorate of Prisons to inspect England’s 3 STCs.

Following [consultation](#), the following changes to the way STCs are inspected will take effect from 1 April 2019:

- When an STC is judged to be inadequate, Ofsted and its partner inspectorates will respond more robustly. An urgent review meeting will be held with the Ministry of Justice to determine the most appropriate action, and inspectors will routinely return to check on the centre’s progress within 8 weeks of the initial inspection.
- The notice period that STCs are given before inspection will be reduced to 4 days. This is 1 day fewer than proposed in the consultation, and effectively 2 days fewer than under the existing arrangements.
- A ‘point-in-time’ survey of the views of children at an STC will be used to inform the timing of an inspection and key lines of inquiry. It is hoped the survey will empower children to speak more openly and honestly.
- A revised and simplified judgement structure will help tell a clearer story about what life is like for the children living at the STC.

Yvette Stanley, Ofsted’s National Director for Social Care said:

Children living in secure training centres need to feel safe and well looked after. Although there have been some improvements in conditions at STCs, overall, our findings in recent years have reflected the serious concerns held nationally about the experiences of those living at the centres. These changes will see inspectors focus more on the difference that the centres make to children’s lives, and less on processes and procedures.

Peter Clarke, HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, said:

This is a robust multi inspectorate framework that include a strengthened response to inadequate judgements. The new framework has the experience of children at the centre of all judgements and provides the foundation for developing a comprehensive inspection regime as children's custody is reformed and new models of detention developed.

Ursula Gallagher, Deputy Chief Inspector of General Practice and lead for care in secure settings said:

Secure training centres are home to vulnerable children and young people who often have a very complicated set of needs.

Knowing that the healthcare services available to them, which CQC inspects, will be looked at in the wider context of their experience and better represented in the overall judgement will give a clearer view of what does and does not work well in these settings. Knowing this, we as regulators can help drive improvements in the system and better outcomes for patients.

Read the new [joint inspection framework: secure training centres](#) for guidance about how secure training centres are inspected.

We have also published a [report on the responses to the consultation on the new joint inspection framework for secure training centres](#).

There are 3 secure training centres in England: Medway, Rainsbrook and Oakhill.

No STC has been rated 'good' or 'outstanding' since 2015. The new framework is anticipated to result in a more consistent approach to inspection of secure settings for children and bring it more in line with how Ofsted inspects secure children's homes. There are 14 secure children's homes in England, and 10 (71.4%) have been rated 'good' or 'outstanding'.