

## **Press release: Queen appoints Suffragan Bishop of Ramsbury**

The Queen has approved the nomination of the Reverend Andrew Paul Rumsey, MA, DThMin, Team Rector of Oxted in the Diocese of Southwark, to the Suffragan See of Ramsbury, in the Diocese of Salisbury, in succession to the Right Reverend Edward Francis Condry, MA, BLitt, DPhil, MBA, who resigned on the 12 May 2018.

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## **Press release: New plans to stamp out rogue mobile home site owners**

- Action to tackle unscrupulous site owners – ending unfair charges which could save some residents thousands of pounds
- Councils will be granted powers to act against owners who make residents' lives a misery – including bans for those who refuse to clean up their act
- Working group to look at a range of issues including the sale of mobile homes to ensure residents are not left out of pocket

Mobile home residents are to receive greater protection from dishonest site owners seeking to make a profit at their expense, thanks to plans announced today (22 October 2018).

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP confirmed new steps to give local authorities tougher powers to tackle rogue operators in their areas, ranging from fines to outright bans for the worst offenders.

Over 85,000 families live on 2,000 park home sites across the country, including many older people, but a small minority of dishonest site owners abuse their position – intimidating residents and neglecting their duty of care.

The changes that will be made will prevent site operators from burdening residents with unfair and unnecessary charges, providing greater transparency and clarity for those who live on the site and putting cash back into resident's pockets.

There will also be better guidance available on what to do if residents feel they are being harassed by their site owner.

Housing Minister Heather Wheeler MP said:

Everyone has a right to feel safe and secure in their own home.

We know some people in mobile homes have been ripped off by rogue site owners who charge excessive fees and harass residents.

To stop this, councils will be given powers to ban site owners who do not meet the standards expected of them. We will make sure they have the tools needed to protect the vulnerable, while allowing honest operators to flourish.

Some mobile home owners have reported management charges increasing by as much as 50% year on year, and some residents paying additional fees of up to £300 a month.

Often these site owners make it difficult for residents to raise their concerns, given their complex management structures. There have been reports of site owners trading under a number of different names.

In one case a site owner was involved with around 13 companies under one holding company. This caused complications and extra expense for residents during court or tribunal cases and for local authorities when issuing enforcement notices.

Ministers will be making regulatory changes and legislation will be introduced in due course when Parliamentary time allows.

These will be the biggest changes to the sector since the Mobile Homes Act 2013 was introduced and will have an impact of those living in park homes, most of whom are elderly and vulnerable.

The government will set up a new working group to develop and share best practice on how to improve the process for selling homes, reviewing pitch fees and streamlining site rules further to make the process clearer and easier to navigate.

These measures will build upon comprehensive action by the government to make the housing market fairer for everyone.

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# Press release: CMA sends tough message to business cheats with cartel campaign

It comes as new research shows many firms don't know enough about how to comply with competition law.

The Competition and Markets Authority's (CMA) latest cartel awareness campaign aims to educate businesses about which practices are illegal and urges people to come forward if they suspect a business has taken part in cartel behaviour, such as fixing prices or rigging contracts.

ICM research released by the CMA today to coincide with the campaign shows that out of amongst 1,000 companies surveyed:

- only 57% knew it was illegal to fix prices
- nearly half either didn't know or thought it was legal to discuss prices with competing bidders when quoting for new work (23% said 'don't know', and 25% actually thought it was legal)
- significantly more than half (59%) didn't know or thought that dividing up and sharing customers with rivals was legal (24% said 'don't know' and 35% actually thought it was legal)

Howard Cartlidge, Senior Director of Cartels at the CMA, said:

Businesses that fix prices or rig contracts are breaking the law and ripping people off.

The victims are customers and other businesses, who are getting cheated out of a fair deal.

We know that the vast majority of businesses want to do the right thing, but pleading ignorance simply isn't good enough. Today's campaign makes it easy to find out the facts.

If you know of something illegal – do the right thing and tell us about it.

The campaign is targeting industries including construction, manufacturing, recruitment, estate agents and property management and maintenance. These are sectors identified as particularly susceptible to cartels. Previous campaigns have driven a 30% rise in the number of tip-offs to the CMA's cartels hotline.

The campaign uses simple imagery on social media sites and a [dedicated website](#) and comes as the CMA continues to step up its enforcement action. Since April 2015 it has issued over £155 million in fines following investigations into anti-competitive practices and it is currently investigating 15 cases including in construction services, roofing materials and estate agency.

Examples of CMA action include:

- Two of the biggest suppliers of charcoal and coal for households in the UK were fined £3.4 million for taking part in a market sharing cartel.
- Water tank firms were fined over £2.6 million, after they formed a cartel to divide up customers, fix minimum prices and share commercially sensitive information for tanks used in large construction projects (such as schools and hospitals).
- Somerset estate agents were fined over £370,000 for fixing minimum commission rates, such that local home owners had been denied a fair deal when selling their property. The CMA also secured the disqualification of 2 company directors in this case.
- An Amazon Marketplace seller was fined over £160,000 and its director disqualified from running a company after agreeing to fix the prices of popular posters and frames with a competitor.

## Notes to editors

1. Businesses found to have been involved in illegal cartels can be fined up to 10% of their annual turnover. Individuals can face up to 5 years in prison and directors can be disqualified from holding director positions for up to 15 years. These can be reduced or eliminated altogether where a business or individual report their involvement in a cartel and co-operates fully with the CMA's investigation. Witnesses who blow the whistle can receive a reward of up to £100,000.
2. The CMA has [published results from an ICM survey of 1,201 businesses](#),

which includes breakdowns by region and sector.

3. The campaign encourages people to visit the CMA's designated '[Stop Cartels' page](#) which features videos, short guides and case studies to explain what cartels are and how people can report them.
4. If you have witnessed a cartel or have been involved in a cartel and wish to apply for leniency, call: 0203 738 6888 (witnessed); 0203 738 6833 (leniency). For more information on cartels and the CMA's campaign, visit the Stop Cartels webpage.
5. Enquiries should be directed to the CMA press team at [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk) or 020 3738 6460

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## **Press release: Outstanding tax lands engineering boss with 7-year ban**

Victor Craig Morrell (49) was the sole director of Specmar Ltd, a company that provided engineering support services to the oil and gas industry.

However, Specmar entered into Creditors Voluntary Liquidation in January 2017 due to difficult trading conditions and after it failed to pay thousands of pounds of unpaid tax.

After the company was wound up, investigators from the Insolvency Service looked into the conduct of Victor Morrell and his role into the failure of the company.

Investigators confirmed that over a four-year period between August 2012 and February 2016, Victor Morrell filed inaccurate tax returns on behalf of the Specmar, where he inappropriately claimed input tax on items that were out of scope.

After personal expenses were disallowed, it was calculated that due to the incorrect filing of tax returns, Victor Morrell changed from being a creditor of Specmar in August 2014 to owing the company's Director's Loan Account more than £350,000 at liquidation in January 2017.

On 22 August 2018, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Victor Morrell after the company director did not dispute the fact that he submitted inaccurate tax returns.

Effective from 14 September 2018, Victor Morrell is now banned for 7 years

from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Robert Clarke, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Directors have a firm duty to ensure they deal properly with tax matters and pay what is due. Taxation revenue provides for the benefit of all and cannot simply be ignored.

Victor Morrell has paid the price for failing to do that as he cannot now carry on in business other than at his own risk.

Mr Victor Morrell, of Peterhead and whose date of birth is July 1969.

Specmar Limited (Company Reg no. SC384447)

Mr Morrell signed a seven year undertaking on 22 August 2018 which was agreed on 24 August 2018. The disqualification commenced 14 September 2017.

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](#).

The Insolvency Service administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, assesses and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice.

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

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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