

# Directors banned in care home investment scheme

Christopher Bateman (49) and his business partner, Nicola Fairweather (48) are banned for 25 years from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

The Insolvency Service's investigations were triggered when two connected companies, GCC Management Ltd and Amek Solutions Ltd, entered into insolvency procedures. Bateman, from Knutsford, and Fairweather, from Macclesfield, were directors of both companies.

GCC Management was an unregulated company that offered people the opportunity to invest in the purchase of care homes, with the promise of fixed rate returns of 10% to 30%. Amek Solutions advised on and/or arranged investments in GCC Management.

Investigators found Bateman caused Amek Solutions to breach the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000. Misconduct included: advising people – many being unsophisticated investors – to transfer funds from their pensions; failing to advise investors to seek independent financial advice; and Amek did not have authority to encourage investments.

Amek Solutions promoted GCC Management's scheme to at least 133 people, who invested close to £6.3 million from their pensions despite not being protected under the Financial Services Compensation Scheme. Amek Solutions was rewarded by receiving more than £5.4 million in commission from GCC Management.

Investigators also looked into the affairs of GCC Management and found that when the company entered into liquidation, investors were owed £13.2 million.

GCC Management produced misleading and unrealistic marketing materials based on a business plan which lacked commercial viability, there were no mitigation plans to help investors if returns couldn't be made, and the company sent false information to investors about when their returns would be repaid.

By September 2012, GCC Management only had one operating care home that had generated income, which was much lower than expected. However, the company continued to push their investment opportunities to dupe more investors.

Investigators calculated that at least 243 people invested more than £11.6 million with GCC Management. 166 of these investors transferred more than £7.8 million from their existing pensions.

From the funds they received through deception, GCC Management made unaccounted payments worth millions that did not benefit the company or its investors. This included £1.4 million paid to connected companies Bateman and

Fairweather were directors of and another £1.4 million to foreign exchange companies.

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

Our thorough investigations uncovered extensive abuse of investors who have lost millions of pounds through Bateman and Fairweather's deceitful activities. Many investors were regular people who were not familiar with investments and were duped to transfer money from their hard-earned pensions.

The judge commented in court that this was an appalling exploitation of relatively unsophisticated investors. Thankfully Bateman and Fairweather have been removed from the corporate arena for a significant amount of time and this should send a clear message to other company directors that there are serious consequences if you dupe those seeking to invest pension funds to best effect.

### **About the directors**

Christopher Bateman is from Knutsford, Cheshire, and his date of birth is August 1973. On 1 August 2022, in the Manchester High Court of Justice, HHJ Cawson KC made a disqualification order for 14 years against Christopher Bateman in relation to his misconduct in Amek Solutions and GCC Management. Richard Tetlow appeared for the Insolvency Service. The defendant did not appear nor did anyone appear on his behalf.

Nicola Fairweather is from Macclesfield, Cheshire, and her date of birth is November 1973. On 5 February 2020, the Secretary of State accepted an 11-year disqualification undertaking from Nicola Fairweather, after she did not dispute causing or allowing GCC Management to operate with a lack of commercial probity to the detriment of its investors.

### **About the companies**

GCC Management Ltd (Company number 07460611) entered creditors voluntary liquidation on 09 November 2017.

Amek Solutions Ltd (Company number 07054820) entered compulsory liquidation on 31 October 2018.

### **About disqualifications**

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 restrictions](#).

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