

# News story: Bogus Croydon immigration advisers convicted of fraud

On Tuesday 26 June 2018 Commonwealth Evaluators Ltd., and the leading members of the company were convicted at Croydon Crown Court on 12 counts comprising offences of fraud and the unlawful provision of immigration advice and services following a nine week trial brought by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

Swaye Binns, 39, of Croxted Road, Dulwich was the founder and CEO of the company which offered immigration advice and services. His twin brother Sheldon Binns, 39, of Cannon Street Road, Bow was a director in the company for a period when the company was incorporated in July 2014. Swaye Binns' partner, Tara Robinson, 33, also of Croxted Road, Dulwich was employed as a manager responsible for the day to day running of the business. Donald Hill, 37, of Uckfield Road, Mitcham, a long time friend of Swaye Binns, was brought into the company as director responsible for managing company finance.

The company was based in Croydon and advertised legal services, according to its Companies House profile. In fact this company was providing unregulated immigration advice and services to unsuspecting clients who were seeking to obtain Leave to remain in the UK. The services offered were tailored to appeal to citizens of Commonwealth countries, promoting a niche area of immigration law relating to the Right of Abode. In particular, this service was directed at the Caribbean community. The company promoted their services on television and radio, in community newspapers and at public events in London and Birmingham. Clients nationwide who were experiencing difficulties with their immigration status responded seeking help.

Each client was charged £2000 for immigration advice and Home Office applications were submitted on their behalf claiming a Right of Abode. In meetings held at their Croydon office clients were falsely told that their unique position as Commonwealth citizens provided an automatic Right of Abode in the UK based on their heritage. However, unknown to these clients, Swaye Binns himself was an illegal overstayer and the subject of a deportation order resulting from a conviction in 2003 which resulted in a term of imprisonment.

Complaints started coming in to the OISC in August 2014 when disgruntled clients had their applications refused by the Home Office, later discovering that the company was unauthorised to provide these services as they were not regulated. Commonwealth Evaluators initially claimed to be authorised by the OISC, the statutory regulatory body for immigration advisers in the UK. This was not true. The company later declared that it was operating under the supervision of the Solicitors Regulation Authority, but this was also found to be fraudulent.

In a desperate attempt to continue trading, Tara Robinson made an application for registration as an approved immigration adviser with the OISC in early

2015. However the application was found to contain false information, claiming that the company was not advising clients at that time. The application was refused.

Working in collaboration with the Home Office, the OISC traced in excess of 260 clients who had been duped and gathered evidence from them to prosecute the company. Many of these clients attended court and gave evidence as to how they had been deceived into parting with their life savings only to find that their immigration problems were made far worse. Many have lost vital documents which has caused further issues as Commonwealth Evaluators refused to return them until their fees were settled in full.

Commonwealth Evaluators Ltd. were sentenced yesterday (19 July 2018) at Croydon Crown Court. Swaye Binns, the company CEO, was sentenced to imprisonment totalling 4 years. Sheldon Binns was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 14 months and 150 hours of unpaid work. Tara Robinson was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years and 280 hours of unpaid work. Donald Hill was sentenced to a Community Service Order of 100 hours.

Swaye Binns was disqualified from holding any directorship for 5 years and a Criminal Behaviour Order banning him from working in the field of immigration indefinitely. Donald Hill was also disqualified from holding any directorship for 1 year. In addition, Donald Hill was ordered to pay compensation in the sum of £1000. Sheldon Binns and Tara Robinson were each ordered to pay compensation in the sum of £700. There was no order for costs.

Commonwealth Evaluators Ltd. was fined a notional £100 and will be struck off from the Companies Register on 19 August 2018. At the conclusion of his prison sentence the current deportation order against Swaye Binns will be activated.

Sentencing, Her Honour Judge Smaller said:

“You have been convicted on the clearest evidence of fraud. Commonwealth Evaluators was a professional looking company with an impressive looking website. That is not a compliment. It outlines the sophisticated nature of the fraud. I have no doubt that clients of the company were under the impression that they were receiving the services of lawyers. Your company was not qualified from the outset and you knew that. It is clear that you portrayed yourselves as dedicated to serving your Jamaican community. In fact you caused a great disservice to those in your community and others besides. Immigration firms have to be regulated because they deal with the most vulnerable in society.”

About Swaye Binns, the Judge said “ You styled yourself as a successful businessman with an income to match, helping yourself to money from the company bank accounts. You talked of aiming to be head of an international organisation and specialists in the field. You have nothing more than an aspirational understanding of running a company and a complete disregard for keeping within the law. Your dishonesty is a self-aggrandising fantasy. You are arrogant, grandiose, self-interested, blinkered and greedy. When

challenged about your behaviour you have reacted with further dishonesty. Whether you thought you were helping anyone I am unsure but you were really interested in the money. I am satisfied that you are dishonest through and through. This is serious offending over a sustained period of time with a high impact on vulnerable victims."

Speaking about the case, the OISC Deputy Commissioner, Dr Ian Leigh, said:

"The OISC is here to ensure that people seeking immigration advice are treated fairly by qualified people they can trust. In the largest case ever prosecuted by the OISC, Commonwealth Evaluators were exposed operating outside the law, preying upon vulnerable clients within their own community without regard for their protection or the consequences. I am delighted with the outcome of this case, and I hope it sends a clear message to anyone considering providing unregulated immigration advice and services."

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## [Mrs Boulton and the woodland warbler](#)

Have you ever noticed how some animals are named after people? Hume's Partridge. Lady Amherst's Pheasant. Waller's Starling. I come across this quite a lot when cataloguing new collections and have often wondered who these people were. You'd be forgiven for thinking that these species were named after the naturalists...

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## [News story: Defence Secretary meets civil society groups to discuss human rights in conflict-affected areas](#)

Staff from organisations representing the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia, South Sudan and Ukraine, as well as several international action groups, were welcomed to London to discuss the issues faced in their countries, particularly by women.

Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said:

Conflict can have devastating effects for anyone caught in its path, but life can be particularly traumatic for women. They are subject to violence, sexual exploitation and abuse, and their calls for justice are often falling on deaf ears.

I am determined we do more to listen to those who are often not given a voice. It is only by understanding the situation faced by women and girls that we will be able to protect them.

The event allowed the Defence Secretary to gain a greater understanding of the security situation faced by women, men, girls and boys in conflict-affected areas. In turn this will allow the military to develop better plans for protection of civilians.

The meeting was the first time a UK Defence minister has sat with civil societies groups specifically representing women's human rights from areas affected by conflict. The groups represented included Gender Action for Peace and Security, Action Aid, International Alert, the International Rescue Committee, Plan, Saferworld, Women's League for Peace and Freedom, Women for Women International, Security Women, Nigeria INGO Forum and Legal Action Worldwide.

The UK National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security has currently nine focus countries, five of which were discussed yesterday: DRC, Iraq, Nigeria, Somalia and South Sudan. These nations either have UK military directly deployed there, or are nations where UK-trained peacekeepers are deployed.

The UK has already increased peacekeeping in Sudan and Somalia, has deployed four Military Gender and Protection Advisers to DRC and has established a UK centre of excellence to integrate guidelines on women, peace and security into its work. It is also among the first countries to publish a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security.

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## **Press release: £1.5 billion space export campaign to fuel British industry growth**

The 'Space Exports' campaign will see 2 of the world's fastest growing markets targeted with trade missions, led by newly appointed Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner [Antony Philipson](#). In India the Department for International Trade (DIT) will also increase its operation by recruiting British space sector experts to work in market.

The campaign comes as 40% of the entire globe's small satellites are built in the UK, highlighting the huge capability in country. The International Trade Secretary will use the opportunity of leaving the European Union to make the most of global engagement with a sector that is growing 15 times faster than the rest of the UK economy.

The UK space industry's growth has been quick, doubling in size since 2010, with exports growing to £5 billion in 2014/15, or 36.4% of total income. The campaign will seek to increase the number of nations that are using the specialist products British businesses produce ahead of the UK's departure from the EU.

International Trade Secretary, Dr Liam Fox MP, said:

Our space industry is thriving as years of strong growth has seen the UK secure its reputation as a leading space nation.

To sustain this, we need to be reaching new markets with huge potential like India and the USA. As an international economic department, we'll achieve this through our new space exports programme, which will help meet the ambition of both government and industry to see space exports reach £40 billion by 2030.

With over a third of its business coming through overseas sales, the space sector is a great example of the benefits of seizing global opportunities which in turn create jobs back home.

Her Majesty's Trade Commissioner to North America, Antony Phillipson, said:

The space sector in the US presents tremendous opportunities for high-quality British goods and services. We are both nations with a rich heritage in space technology.

Through the UK government's extensive and expert trade and investment network, British business will be well-placed to make a major contributions to jobs, just as US firms will be in the UK. Together we can boost jobs and economic growth in both countries.

Graham Peters, Chair of UK Space said:

The UK has a proud history of leveraging its space expertise to become a leader in commercial aspects of space. We are delighted to be working with government to promote UK capabilities overseas to underpin the continued growth of the sector.

Dr Jaime Reed Industry Co-Chair of the Space Growth Partnership's Space Exports Group said:

Industry and DIT have been working closely to build a solid evidence base demonstrating the potential for significant new UK business in major global markets. It's fantastic to see the government committing to growth through these new announcements.

The government is engaging with the sector to determine how best to create a sector deal with them that drives forward the modern Industrial Strategy. Low cost access to space is an important part of this, and there have been significant steps taken this week to enable small satellite launch from UK soil for the first time.

## Case study

The space sector is not the only one that can benefit from expansion into the US and India. The UK's aerospace companies carry a strong reputation around the globe and this has been exemplified by Derby-based Pattonair, who last week announced that they would expand their manufacturing operation to Bangalore.

By opening their factory in Bangalore, Pattonair are aiming to tailor their supply chain services to customers in the region. When the new facility opens it will be the latest in a succession of British based companies in the city, with Airbus and Rolls-Royce also operating there.

## Further information

The government working with industry has a shared ambition to grow the sector to £40 billion by 2030 (10% of the forecast global market).

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## [News story: Emergency response prevents huge fish deaths at the River Mole](#)

Since the weekend, fish have been in distress in the River Mole due to environmental impacts caused by the current hot and dry weather conditions. The Environment Agency has been at the watercourse throughout to take all necessary actions to prevent widespread fish deaths and to use re-oxygenating equipment to boost levels in the river.

Sadly, a significant number of fish, including perch, pike and roach have already died as a result of the naturally occurring incident. Due to the Environment Agency's emergency response it is hoped that now oxygen levels are stable, thousands more fish have now been saved.

Anna Burns, Environment Manager at the Environment Agency, said:

Our officers have worked around the clock to prevent widescale fish deaths at this much-loved river. It is distressing that a large number of fish had perished ahead of our efforts, but our swift emergency response has ensured that many more will now be saved.

We have worked in partnership with Gatwick Airport and Thames Water and we thank them for their valuable assistance regarding this incident. We will all continue to work to prevent further fish deaths and reduce potential harm to local wildlife.

During summer the Environment Agency regularly respond to reports of fish in distress due to natural processes reducing oxygen levels in the water. Hot, sunny weather can lead to low flows in rivers and still water fisheries (ponds and lakes) start to warm up.

Small still waters are particularly susceptible. Rescuing fish is part of the Environment Agency's fisheries management role. Fisheries teams are trained to use aeration equipment or hydrogen peroxide to restore dissolved oxygen levels. When necessary, fish will be rescued and transferred to safety.

Members of the public are encouraged to report any sightings of fish in distress to us via the Environment Agency's 24-hour emergency hotline: 0800 807060.