

[Press release: Government consults on proposals to toughen rules on building safety](#)

Tough new rules designed to strengthen fire testing for cladding systems on residential buildings were published for consultation today (11 April 2018) by Housing Secretary Sajid Javid.

The consultation, which aim to improve building safety, will look at restricting or banning the use of 'desktop studies' as a way of assessing the fire performance of external cladding systems.

The revisions come directly as a result of the recommendations made by Dame Judith Hackitt in her interim report from the review into building regulations and fire safety published last year. Government is also going further by asking whether 'desktop studies' should be used at all.

The consultation is seeking views on whether 'desktop studies' are appropriate for all construction products, wall systems (cladding) or for any other purpose.

If 'desktop studies' are deemed appropriate, the proposed changes include improving the transparency of assessments, enabling proper scrutiny of results and ensuring that the studies can only be carried out by properly accredited bodies that have the relevant expertise.

These proposals are subject to a full consultation that will end on 25 May 2018.

Housing Secretary, Sajid Javid said:

We have listened carefully to Dame Judith Hackitt and we are taking action to strengthen building regulations guidance, which could mean that the use of 'desktop studies' are either significantly restricted or banned altogether.

This demonstrates the tough measures we are prepared to take to make sure that cladding tests are as robust as possible and people are safe in their homes.

Desktop studies

Assessment in lieu of tests, also known as 'desktop studies' are an established part of the system for classifying the fire performance of construction products and systems set out in [paragraph 1b of Annex A of Approved Document B](#).

Their use is being considered as part of Dame Judith Hackitt's [independent review into Building Regulations and Fire Safety](#) established by government following the Grenfell Tower fire tragedy. Her final report will be published in the spring.

See further details of the [consultation](#).

The deadline for consultation responses is 25 May. Once closed the department will consider all the comments received and provide a response as soon as possible.

New British Standard

Government has commissioned the British Standards Institution (BSI) to draft a standard for the extended application of BS8414 results. This will provide detailed rules for assessments relating to cladding systems, in support of the new proposed requirements. Once the new British Standard is introduced for cladding systems, following it would be the expectation.

[Press release: Directors banned for pocketing millions of Brazilian teak investments](#)

On 12 January 2018, Junie Conrad Omari Bowers and Andrew Nathaniel Skeene gave undertakings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of 10 years each.

This means Junie Bowers and Andrew Skeene are prevented from controlling or managing a limited company without leave of the court.

Junie Bowers and Andrew Skeene were directors of GFI, which traded as Global Forestry Investments, and their business promoted two teak investment schemes in Brazil.

The Insolvency Service investigation found Junie Bowers and Andrew Skeene caused or allowed the company to operate with a lack of commercial probity from 24 September 2010 until the company ceased trading in March 2014, following a compulsory liquidation.

Investigators found that GFI received £20,146,631 from the sale of plots in the Belem Sky Project and £3,863,185 from plots sold in the Para Sky Project.

But there was no evidence in GFI's records or information provided by third parties that the majority of investors in the Belem Sky project received any returns after the first year, with investors receiving only £709,884.69 in

total.

And there was no evidence in the company records or information provided by third parties of any returns being made to investors in the Para Sky project.

However, investigators discovered that investors' funds for the purchase of plots was paid to trust companies and over £13 million arising from the sale of the plots was paid to the bank accounts of Junie Bowers and Andrew Skeene.

The two directors explained that they had paid themselves the money as it helped ensure that running and operational costs of GFI could be paid whilst the company had no bank account. But investigators found that £8,820,311 of those monies were used to pay creditors of a Dubai based company controlled by Bowers and Skeene, which was wound up by the High Court in October 2014.

Anthony Hannon, Official Receiver for the Insolvency Service, commented:

Directors who receive investment monies and misapply them for purposes not to the benefit of the company can expect to face the consequences of a lengthy period of disqualification.

Mr Junie Conrad Omari Bowers, date of birth December 1976, resides in South East London.

Mr Andrew Nathaniel Skeene, date of birth November 1977, resides in Croydon.

GFI Consultants Ltd (Company Reg No 7222180) traded from St Clement's House, 27-28 Clements Lane, EC4N 7AE.

The company entered into compulsory liquidation on 3 March 2014 with a deficit to creditors of at least £2,136,888.

On 13 March 2014 Stephen R Penn of Absolute Recovery Limited of First Floor, Block A, Lovell Court, Clayfields, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, DN4 8QG was appointed liquidator of the company.

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, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency

regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies. The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, 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 7596 6187 or 020 7637 6498

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

Press release: Exporting is GREAT 'Hero' campaign unveiled at London City Airport

- Minister for Export and Trade Promotion Baroness Fairhead visited London City Airport to meet airport executives and SMEs as new Exporting is GREAT campaign is unveiled
- London City Airport announces partnership with Department for International Trade (DIT) to promote British exports and support the Exporting is GREAT campaign
- Baroness Fairhead consults airport on emerging Export Strategy shortly after making final call for business to help shape the UK's trading future

Baroness Fairhead, Minister for Export and Trade Promotion, visited London City Airport yesterday and unveiled new Exporting is GREAT branding featuring 5 export 'heroes'.

Celebrating their partnership with the Department for International Trade (DIT), the airport is hosting the creative campaign to inspire and support more UK companies to take their first steps towards selling overseas.

The artwork is being displayed in the airport's departure lounge and on their main 'City Icon' digital screen outside the terminal over the coming weeks.

Five businesses featured in the creative campaign met with the minister and CEO of London City Airport, Robert Sinclair, to discuss their export journeys. They are:

- Chemian Technologies (North East)
- Stitch and Story (South East)
- Norton Motorcycles (Midlands)
- Sensoteq (Northern Ireland)
- Joe and Seph's Popcorn (London)

The visit came shortly after Baroness Fairhead made a final call for businesses to input into the government's new [Export Strategy](#) which will report in the coming months.

Speaking at London City Airport, Baroness Fairhead said:

I am determined to help British businesses seize global export opportunities across the world.

The Department for International Trade is helping thousands of new companies to export every year through our online export support tools at great.gov.uk

This campaign provides a fantastic opportunity to showcase our export heroes and inspire many more businesses to sell their products overseas.

Robert Sinclair, CEO of London City Airport, said:

As a vital gateway for business travellers, and with its proximity to growing clusters of SMEs in East London, London City Airport is uniquely placed to strengthen DIT's new campaign, and reach a truly captive audience.

Already the airport is associated with trade exports totalling over £11 billion per year, and once our 4 year £480 million development programme is complete, even more routes to new destinations and markets will help connect businesses with opportunities overseas – helping an outward-looking Britain to prosper.

Ian Dell, Managing Director of Chemian Technology, one of the companies profiled in the campaign said:

Exporting has always been of fundamental importance to Chemian Technology since I founded the business in 1996. Most of our turnover currently comes from overseas sales and we now sell to more than 30 countries worldwide.

Exporting is certainly not an easy process but I'd encourage every company with an innovative product to do what we've done and look overseas for growth.

DIT's Exporting is GREAT campaign is currently showcasing 30+ UK businesses – from a range of sectors and regions – to inspire and support firms up and down the country to export.

Background

1. The Export Strategy is expected to report in the coming months. Evidence will be taken [until 18 April 2018](#).

2. The Department for International Trade (DIT) secures UK and global prosperity by promoting and financing international trade and investment, and championing free trade. We are an international economic department, responsible for:

- bringing together policy, promotion and financial expertise to break down barriers to trade and investment, and help businesses succeed
- delivering a new trade policy framework for the UK as we leave the EU
- promoting British trade and investment across the world
- building the global appetite for British goods and services

3. Exporting is GREAT is the government campaign to inspire and support more UK companies to take their first steps towards selling overseas and help existing exporters grow further. At great.gov.uk UK businesses can apply for real-time global export opportunities, access expert advice, trade services, training and events.

4. Featured companies:

Chemian Technologies

Darlington-based Chemian Technology develops and manufactures ingredients for the pharmaceutical, chemical and cosmetic industries. The company began exporting after a request from an overseas customer and has received market support from DIT. Overseas sales make up 70% of its revenue and they export to over 20 countries.

Norton Motorcycles

Founded in 1898 and selling its first motorcycle sold in 1902, Norton Motorcycle has been an iconic British brand for nearly 120 years. Its current owner, Stuart Garner re-established the company's UK manufacturing base and delivered the company's first motorcycle of the new millennium in 2010.

It now sells around 1,000 motorcycles each year all over the world and employs 120 staff in the UK. Government support has allowed Norton to grow its business in key markets like Australia, Japan and the USA.

Stitch and Story

Stitch & Story, a knitting kit manufacturer, has seen sales increase by 200% in the last year as a direct result of exporting to the US, following support from DIT.

Based in Dartford, Kent, the business distributes to US marketplace Uncommon Goods, as well as independent gift stores and retailers. The exporting opportunity was secured after Stitch & Story exhibited its products at consumer trade show, NY Now, with support from DIT.

The success of Stitch & Story's international expansion is being celebrated in DIT's Exporting is GREAT campaign.

Sensoteq

Northern Ireland based company Sensoteq, design and manufacture bespoke low power wireless sensors for remote machine health monitoring. The company have been exporting for over a year after government support connected them with customers overseas.

Joe and Seph's

Joe & Seph's are a family owned and run business on a mission to produce the best-tasting popcorn in the world.

The company started exporting after a French department store saw the popcorn in Selfridges in London.

Working with DIT the company started to understand the size of the export opportunity and over the last few years have focused much more proactively on exporting.

Their products are now stocked in over 25 countries with the main focus on Scandinavia and the Middle East.

Further information

[Press release: Freight transport boss banned after using red diesel in his](#)

fleet

Scott McClung (47) was the sole director of SDS Logistics (Bonnybridge) Limited, a company registered as freight transport by road and based in Leslie Park, Denny, Stirlingshire.

After six years, however, the company ceased trading on 15 August 2016 when it was placed into liquidation, with an eventual deficiency to creditors of £1,860,934.

An investigation by the Insolvency Service following the liquidation found that between May 2014 and April 2017, SDS Logistics misused close to 1.7 million litres (approximately 1,688,648 litres) of rebated Gasoil, otherwise known as red diesel, in their road vehicles.

Gasoil is a rebated fuel, dyed red, for identification purposes. It can be used in registered agricultural or construction vehicles, such as tractors, excavators, cranes and some other non-road applications such as boats, and carries a significantly reduced tax levy compared to Derv, the white diesel fuel used in ordinary road vehicles.

But it is illegal to use red diesel in vehicles registered for and used on public roads.

SDS Logistics' misuse of the fuel was first detected when HMRC officials visited SDS Logistics' premises in April 2016 and found four vehicles had been misusing red diesel.

HM Revenue & Customs levied an excise duty of £790,456 and a penalty of £553,210 but SDS Logistics failed to pay, leading to its liquidation.

On 13 February 2018, Mr McClung gave a disqualification undertaking to the Insolvency Service, which was accepted by the Secretary of State, on 21 February 2018. The disqualification is from 14 March 2018 and is effective until 14 March 2027.

Robert Clarke, Investigations Group Leader at the Insolvency Service, said:

The substantial period of this disqualification reflects the fact this director put his financial interests above all else in taking advantage of this subsidised fuel. The majority of similar businesses pay the proper duty on the fuel they use, and carry that legitimate cost within their trading strategy.

This was a blatant disregard by a director to obtain an unfair competitive advantage.

Scott Andrew Walker McClung's date of birth is March 1970 and he resides in, Denny, Stirlingshire.

Scott Andrew Walker McClung was appointed as a director of SDS Logistics (Bonnybridge) Limited (Company Registration No. SC380133) from 8 November 2011 to 28 February 2014 and again from 31 March 2014 to the date of liquidation on 15 August 2016.

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Red Diesel

Diesel used only in vehicles that are operated solely off-road or in machinery and attracts a lower rate of excise duty than diesel used on the road. Vehicles and machinery that are permitted to use rebated fuel include:

- Agricultural tractors, plant and machinery
- Mobile cranes
- Digging machines
- Snow ploughs
- Gritters
- Road rollers and surfacing vehicles

HMRC has compiled a full list of the [vehicles that can use red diesel](#).

HMRC officers have the power to:

- Examine any vehicle and its fuel
- Require the vehicle's owner or driver to open the fuel tank for inspection
- Require the vehicle's owner to produce documentation relating to the vehicle
- Enter and inspect any premises, apart from private houses, to inspect, test and sample fuel
- Ask anybody concerned with the sale, purchase or disposal of rebated fuel for their documentation

Vehicles found to be using rebated fuel illegally may be seized by the authorities. The vehicle's owner will then have to pay a fee for the vehicle's release, which would include a penalty for the offences, up to a £250 fine for each offence, along with an amount to cover the duty owed.

Serious offences may result in the issue of an unlimited fine to the operator and a prison sentence of up to two years.

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You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: Near miss with track workers at Primrose Hill](#)

Image from forward facing CCTV showing the incident. Note: the bright spots are light reflections (image courtesy of West Midland Trains)

Around 00:40 hrs on 11 March 2018, a group of track workers narrowly avoided being struck by the 22:14 hrs Birmingham New Street to London Euston passenger service. The incident took place between South Hampstead station and Primrose Hill tunnels on one of the lines into London Euston station.

The train was approaching along the up fast line at around 49 mph (79 km/h) when the driver saw a group of track workers, sounded the train's warning

horn and applied the train's brakes. The track workers, who believed that they were working on the up slow line, heard shouted warnings from other workers, heard the sound of the train's warning horn and saw the headlights of the approaching train. They immediately began to get out of the way and removed two trolleys that they had placed on the track. The track workers and trolleys were clear of the approaching train around two seconds before it passed.

One person injured their knee as they moved out of the way of the approaching train. Several of the people involved in the near miss, and several people who saw it, were very distressed.

Our investigation will determine the sequence of events. It will also include consideration of:

- how the intended work was planned and authorised, including the adequacy of the geographic information provided for those on site
- how the work was implemented on site and the way safe work procedures were applied
- the competence management of those involved in the planning, authorisation and implementation of the system of work
- any relevant underlying cultural or 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.