

[International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families](#)

News story

AAIB marks the inaugural ICAO International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families



Crispin Orr, Chief Inspector of Air Accidents said: “The International Civil Aviation Organization has recently designated 20 February as the International Day for Commemorating Air Crash Victims and their Families. We join colleagues around the world in remembering all those who have lost their lives in aircraft accidents over the years and their families. We acknowledge the gravity of their loss and will continue to do all we can to ensure that the causes of each tragedy are identified and action taken to prevent recurrence. But on this day of commemoration, more so than ever, our thoughts are with all those who have been affected.”

[Click for more information about this new international day](#)

Published 18 February 2022

[Midlands construction firm boss disqualified for 7 years](#)

Mitchell James Smith, 40, from Dudley, has been disqualified as a director for 7 years.

He was director of MJS Business Ltd, a home renovation and refurbishment business which was started in late 2017 and traded as MJS Interiors, based in

the West Midlands.

However, the company struggled and by late 2020 had ceased trading before liquidators were appointed to close the company.

The Liquidators reported to the Insolvency Service that the director failed to co-operate with them and failed to deliver up the company's accounting records, meaning it was not possible to determine if assets could be realised for the benefit of creditors, or how much any creditors were owed.

This triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service, which uncovered money paid to the company totalling £2,189,405, for which there was no explanation. In addition, outgoing payments of £2,205,375 were not explained.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted a disqualification undertaking from Mitchell Smith after he admitted failing to maintain and/or preserve adequate accounting records or, in the alternative, failing to deliver up to the joint liquidators such records as were maintained. His ban commences on 8 March 2022 and runs for 7 years.

The disqualification undertakings prevent both from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

Dave Elliott, Chief Investigator at The Insolvency Service said:

It is important for all directors to be aware of their responsibilities to the company and its creditors. Failure to maintain accounting records is a failing for which the Insolvency Service will seek serious and significant sanction.

Notes to editors

Mitchell James Smith is of Dudley, West Midlands and his date of birth is October 1981.

MJS Business Ltd (Company Reg no. 11125409).

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](#).

[Information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct](#).

Contact Press Office

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Trade Secretary secures major trade bloc milestone ahead of Asia visit](#)

- Announcement by Japan as Chair of the UK's Accession Working Group on behalf of the CPTPP members this morning confirms UK's move into second and final phase of accession to join £8.4 trillion CPTPP free trade area
- International Trade Secretary travels to Asia to visit Indonesia, Japan & Singapore to strengthen Indo-Pacific trade ties and oversee launch of final phase of negotiations
- Trans-Pacific Partnership trade bloc contains some of the world's most dynamic economies and demonstrates the value of UK's future-facing trade strategy

The UK has today [18 February 2022] reached a major milestone to join what the International Trade Secretary has hailed 'one of the largest and most exciting free-trading clubs in the world'.

Confirmation from the Japanese government, as Chair of the UK's Accession Working Group on behalf of the CPTPP members, in the early hours of this morning means the UK has moved into the second 'market access' phase of negotiations with the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a free trade area worth £8.4 trillion in GDP.

The announcement comes ahead of Anne-Marie Trevelyan's visit to Indonesia, Japan and Singapore next week to oversee the launch of the final accession stage and deepen trade ties throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

Moving to the final stage of the accession process is a key milestone towards acceding to CPTPP and means the UK has demonstrated to members of the partnership that we are a high-standards, fair trading economy.

Secretary of State for International Trade Anne-Marie Trevelyan said:

CPTPP is one of the largest and most exciting free-trading clubs in the world. Today's announcement is a major milestone for us joining this dynamic group of economies and means the finish line is in sight.

I look forward to visiting Asia next week and flying the flag for Global Britain by holding valuable trade talks with key partners across the Indo-Pacific region and pushing to secure CPTPP accession by the end of the year. This is just one aspect of our Indo-Pacific strategy, which will benefit businesses and consumers across every part of the UK and help us to level up at home.

Following today's announcement, market access negotiations will now begin in which the UK will agree new trading relationships with CPTPP countries, which could lead to 99.9% of UK exports to CPTPP being eligible for tariff-free trade.

We will ensure that the terms are in line with the UK's broader policies and will negotiate in the national interest.

Benefits of UK accession could include:

- New guarantees of access to services markets, providing valuable opportunities for the UK's world-class services industry to increase exports to CPTPP countries.
- Ensuring UK businesses are in an even better position to expand their digital reach in the global marketplace thanks to CPTPP's modern rules for digital trade across all sectors of the economy.
- Making it easier for some UK exports to qualify for preferential tariff treatment than under bilateral free trade agreements alone and increasing demand amongst CPTPP members for imports of UK goods such as British engines. CPTPP's rules of origin means traders can more easily import goods from other members.

CPTPP membership is expected to support levelling up by benefitting every nation and region of the UK, with the greatest relative gains predicted to be in the West Midlands, Scotland and Northern Ireland. There is expected to be a £53 million boost to the Gross Value Added of Wales, £45 million for Northern Ireland and £163 million for Scotland following UK accession to CPTPP.

As made clear in our Integrated Review published last year, the Indo Pacific

region is vital for the future of Britain as it is critical to Global Britain's strategic, economic and security interests. The centre of economic gravity is moving East.

Joining CPTPP puts the UK at the heart of a dynamic group of countries as the world economy increasingly centres on the Pacific region. As these economies grow, so does the benefit to the UK of being able to trade freely with them.

Accession to CPTPP will also give the UK a role in setting the standards for a liberal international trading order which is a key part of securing shared prosperity and regional stability.

CBI President Lord Karan Bilimoria said:

This marks a significant step towards the UK's ambition to join one of the largest free trade agreements in the world. Global trade is pivotal for levelling up our regions, and this deal could unlock opportunities with countries contributing more than £100 billion to our economy. It will also give the UK a chance to play a leading role in shaping standards.

Nicola Watkinson, Managing Director, International Trade and Investment, TheCityUK, said:

This announcement is a significant milestone in the UK's journey towards joining this strategically important trade bloc and demonstrates the real momentum behind the UK's application. CPTPP member countries include some critical growth markets for the UK-based financial and related professional services industry. Membership will give UK firms greater access to business opportunities in one of the fastest growing regions in the world, benefiting the UK's overall export performance.

CPTPP membership will allow the UK to work more closely with other Pacific Rim economies as the Partnership develops, to set in train innovative approaches to regulating digital trade, fostering regulatory co-operation, and liberalising services trade.

[CVS takeover of The Vet raises competition concerns](#)

The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) opened its investigation into CVS

Group's purchase of Quality Pet Care, which trades as The Vet, in December last year. Both firms are providers of veterinary services, with CVS Group owning 467 practices in the UK, while The Vet operates 8 practices across England.

Recent reports indicate that there are 17 million pet-owning homes across the UK, with consumer expenditure on vets and other services for pets in the UK estimated to be around £4 billion between July 2020 and June 2021. In recent years, the ownership of vets' practices across the UK has changed, with many practices being acquired by a small number of corporate groups, such as CVS. While independent veterinary practices accounted for 89% of the UK industry in 2013, this share had fallen to less than half (45%) by 2021, primarily as a result of independent practices being bought by corporate groups.

Following its Phase 1 investigation into CVS's acquisition of The Vet, the CMA has found that the merger raises competition concerns in 5 local areas – Bristol, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Southampton and Warrington.

The CMA's investigation found that the combined businesses would account for a significant proportion of veterinary services in each of these areas. While veterinary practices owned by CVS and The Vet currently compete for customers at each of these locations, the CMA is concerned that the combined businesses would not face sufficient competition after the merger. This could lead to pet owners facing a worse quality of service, including more limited treatment options, or having to pay higher prices.

Colin Raftery, Senior Director of Mergers, at the CMA, said:

Pets are much-loved members of millions of households across the UK and, when veterinary care is needed, it's important that pet owners have access to a good service at the right price.

The CMA has received a number of complaints in recent years about higher prices or lower quality services as a result of too many vets' practices in the same area being under the control of a single company.

This deal could lead to customers facing more limited treatment choices for their pets or paying over the odds for services in these areas. Should CVS fail to address our concerns we will refer the deal for an in-depth investigation.

CVS has 5 working days to offer legally-binding proposals to the CMA to address the competition concerns identified. The CMA would then have a further 5 working days to consider whether to accept these instead of referring the case to a Phase 2 investigation.

For more information, visit the [CVS / Quality Pet Care merger inquiry page](#).

1. CVS refers to CVS Group plc, including its subsidiary CVS (UK) Limited, and The Vet refers to Quality Pet Care Ltd (Quality Pet Care), trading

as The Vet.

2. Following a Phase 1 review, the CMA has found that CVS's acquisition of The Vet gives rise to a realistic prospect of substantial lessening of competition (SLC) in the local areas around 5 of the 8 practices acquired by CVS, in Bristol, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Southampton and Warrington.
3. The information available to the CMA indicates that the combined businesses of the CVS and The Vet would provide more than 30% of all veterinary services in each of these five local areas.
4. The CMA served an initial enforcement order in September 2021 requiring the companies to operate independently, as they did before the purchase. The order remains in force. Details of the order can be found on the [CVS / Quality Pet Care merger inquiry page](#).
5. The CMA's investigation focused on the provision of commercial veterinary services to small animals (including cats, dogs and other pets), and excluded services for equine and farm animals (horses and livestock); the CMA's investigation also excluded out of hours services and referral services, as well as non-commercial practices in the market, such as charities.
6. The Pet Food Manufacturer's Association found in its [2021 Pet Population report](#) that 17 million UK households had pets.
7. [ONS data](#) suggests that in the year leading up to July 2021 consumer spending on vets and other services for pets was over £4 billion.
8. All media enquiries should be directed to the CMA press office by email on press@cma.gov.uk, or by phone on 020 3738 6460.

[Thousands of new prison places to rehabilitate offenders and cut crime](#)

- massive construction project to create thousands of jobs for local communities
- latest step in government's ambitious plans to create 20,000 places by mid-2020s, helping to cut crime and protect the public.

An unprecedented expansion and refurbishment programme will create more than 4,000 new prison places across the country, the Deputy Prime Minister Dominic Raab announced today (18 February 2022).

These new places are part of the government's £4 billion investment to create 20,000 modern and innovative prison places, ensuring the right conditions are in place to truly rehabilitate prisoners. This will give prisoners the education, skills and addiction support they need to live crime-free lives on release, helping to cut crime and protect the public.

The 4,000 places announced today will be created across 16 prisons through

the building of new wings and refurbishing jails. They will create thousands of jobs for local communities, boosting economies.

Subject to planning permission, 8 prisons will receive new houseblocks while HMP High Down in Surrey will get a brand-new workshop. The innovative designs will mean easier access to supporting facilities such as healthcare, kitchens and staff offices which will help to protect frontline staff and clamp down on crime behind bars.

New workshops and classrooms will also see offenders getting vital work and training so they are able to find employment on release.

Seven other prisons will also receive comprehensive refurbishments part of a wider £150 million investment in the estate to help bring all jails into the 21st century.

Deputy Prime Minister and Justice Secretary Dominic Raab, said:

Our unprecedented prison-building programme is the largest in more than a century and will deliver an additional 20,000 prison places by the mid-2020s.

We are improving our existing prison estate, putting more offenders behind bars, training them for release and protecting the public.

Today's news is the latest step in the government's commitment to create 20,000 modern and innovative prison places by the mid-2020s.

Construction at 2 new prisons, which are part of the Deputy Prime Minister's commitment to [build 6 modern jails](#), has already created more than 500 jobs and over 70 apprenticeships. When the two prisons open, they are expected to offer over a thousand permanent jobs – providing a significant boost to the local economy. Thousands of jobs will also be created at the 16 sites planned for expansion through the building process and the additional prison officer roles required.

Notes to editors

- The prison population is expected to increase by 19,000 by the mid-2020s as the government cracks down on crime and recruits 20,000 new police officers.
- At the same time in its recent [Prisons White Paper](#), the Ministry of Justice pledged to commence a large-scale recruitment campaign for up to 5,000 additional prison officers in public and private prisons by the mid-2020s.
- All plans to refurbish and expand existing jails will be subject to planning permissions but the department already has planning for 5 of the prisons, HMPs Stocken, Guys Marsh, High Down, Birmingham and Liverpool.
- The Ministry of Justice has previously announced that [4 prisons](#) would be expanded to increase prison capacity. Today's announcement builds on

this, with a total of 16 sites being expanded and refurbished as part of the drive to create 20,000 new prison places by mid-2020s.

- The 7 refurbishment sites are HMPs Norwich, Feltham, Aylesbury, Haverigg and Swinfen Hall, Liverpool and Birmingham. Four have already been completed.
- Sites due to receive additional houseblocks are HMPs Bullingdon, Channings Wood, Elmley, Highpoint, Hindley, Wayland, Guys Marsh, High Down (in the form of a workshop) and Stocken.