

Computer traders banned for selling counterfeit goods

Alan Gould (53) and Kelley Stewart (48) are each banned for 12 years from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

The pair, both from Manchester, were directors of GEN-X IT LTD, a company incorporated in 2002 and sold computer hardware from premises in Dark Lane, Ardwick, Manchester.

Following complaints of trademark infringements, however, in 2007 the directors signed undertakings on behalf of all parties connected to GEN-X IT that they wouldn't deal with counterfeit products that hadn't been manufactured by Cisco or a licensed manufacturer.

By January 2016, GEN-X IT had entered into insolvency proceedings when it was uncovered that the computer trader had for three years bought and sold an estimated 55,000 counterfeit computer products that infringed on the intellectual property rights of Cisco. This was in breach of the undertakings they had previously signed.

Further investigations confirmed that Cisco had established that between January 2013 and January 2016 GEN-X IT bought the Cisco-branded products from a third party, who in-turn had purchased the counterfeit products from China. But these products were not authorised to be sold in the European Economic Area.

And in 2018 Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart accepted that they had infringed Cisco's trade marks and agreed to pay the vendor a seven-figure settlement penalty.

On 19 May 2020, the Secretary of State accepted disqualification undertakings from Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart after they did not dispute that they had caused or allowed GEN-X IT to trade with a lack of commercial probity. Their bans came into effect on 8 June 2020,

Neil Sheridan, Head of Global Investigations for Cisco's Brand Protection team, said:

We are grateful to the Insolvency Service for their perseverance in this case, the outcome of which should be a warning to anyone trading in counterfeit products of any sort.

We are committed to tackling both individuals and organisations that recklessly trade in counterfeit Cisco products and create significant risk to critical network infrastructure.

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

Both Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart were fully aware GEN-X IT was importing and selling computer products that infringed on Cisco's intellectual property rights, which was a flagrant breach of an undertaking promising they would stop.

Their conduct fell well short of what is expected of company directors. Alan Gould and Kelley Stewart's substantial disqualifications should serve as a stark warning to those who seek to gain a corporate advantage illegitimately that they could face a lengthy ban from limited liability trading.

Alan Gould is from Manchester and his date of birth is August 1967.

Kelley Stewart is from Manchester and her date of birth is May 1972.

GEN-X IT LTD (Company number: 04480097).

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.](#)

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

Special session on Ukraine at the Annual Security Review Conference: UK statement

Thank you Mr Secretary General. I would like to thank the Albanian Chairmanship for organising this special session on the security situation in Ukraine. I would also like to thank the panel for their valuable insights. I share many of the concerns expressed by our partners, including the EU, that have been highlighted today.

The UK is an ally and friend of Ukraine and we fully support their sovereignty, territorial integrity and independence within their internationally recognised borders and their waters. Since 2014, in violation of OSCE principles and commitments, the Russian Federation has sent troops to Crimea, attempted to illegally annex sovereign Ukrainian territory and sought to destabilise Ukraine by instigating and fuelling conflict in Donbas. Sadly, in the six years since the conflict in Donbas began, approximately 13,000 people have lost their lives, including nearly 3,500 civilians. The

humanitarian situation affects 3.5 million people who are mostly vulnerable, including elderly civilians and children.

I would like to pay tribute to Ms Lubrani and all the UN staff working to support Ukraine in mitigating the humanitarian effects of the conflict. I commend the excellent work of the ICRC in Ukraine, under the able leadership of Ms Gillette, in trying to alleviate the situation of some of those who are most vulnerable in this conflict. I would also like to pay tribute to the many other humanitarian organisations that have faced unnecessary access restrictions this year due to the Russia-backed armed formations. Russia bears a heavy responsibility for the ongoing loss of life and devastation to civilian lives. They must use their influence, with the armed formations they back, to respect the ceasefire, protect critical infrastructure and to make progress on humanitarian demining.

I wish to thank Ambassador Cevik and his dedicated team of SMM monitors for their factual, impartial reporting of the situation in eastern Ukraine. The SMM operates in challenging circumstances and the UK is deeply concerned by continued restrictions on the Mission's freedom of movement, in areas held by Russia-backed armed formations, as well as incidents that threaten the safety of monitors.

The situation has been made worse by the Russia-backed armed formations' use of COVID-19 as a pretext to restrict the Mission's ability to cross the Line of Contact and between non-government controlled Donetsk and Luhansk regions. This has effectively divided the Mission into three parts, in violation of its mandate to operate as a single, cohesive Mission throughout Ukraine. These restrictions on the SMM are unacceptable and we call on Russia to play its crucial role in ensuring that the SMM has full, safe and unhindered access in accordance with their mandate.

We also thank Ambassador Grau and her team for their important work in the Trilateral Contact Group; you continue to have our full support. The UK is a firm supporter of the Minsk agreements and the Normandy Format. We urge all sides to fully implement their obligations under the agreements and work urgently to achieve a full and sustainable ceasefire. This is fundamental to any further progress towards peace in eastern Ukraine.

Unfortunately, Russia has repeatedly failed to meet their obligations that are essential in bringing peace to eastern Ukraine. Since the last Normandy Summit, ceasefire violations have continued along the Line of Contact, including the use of heavy artillery, resulting in further casualties. We consistently see SMM reporting of sophisticated Russian equipment, such as the Zhitel jamming device. SMM Long Range UAVs continue to observe military-type trucks travelling on dirt track roads between the border and the Manych holding site in non-government controlled areas on no fewer than seven occasions. These are just a few examples. Russia could use its considerable influence on the Russia-backed armed formations to ensure they comply with the Minsk agreement commitments. Instead it fuels the conflict by supplying them with weapons and personnel.

The situation in Crimea remains of grave concern. Since its illegal

annexation in 2014, which the UK does not and will not accept, Russia has focused on militarising the peninsula, undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine and threatening the security of the wider region. Russia has increased its military personnel on the ground, including through the illegal conscription of at least 21,000 Crimean people. It has deployed a multi-layered air, naval and ballistic missile defence system in the peninsula. The Black Sea Fleet has strengthened its coastal missile brigades with BAL and BASTION systems, capable of destroying targets at sea and on land. The worrying reports of closure of parts of the Black Sea near the Crimea Peninsula, for the purpose of combat training and military exercises, impede navigation and undermine regional security.

Finally, I'd like to thank Ambassador Herasymenko for sharing his insights on the challenges faced not just by his own country, but also by the entire OSCE community, stemming from Russia's ongoing violation of OSCE principles and commitments in Ukraine. We stand united with Ukraine in calling out unacceptable Russian aggression against sovereign Ukrainian territory and its people. We call on Russia to cease its financial and military support to armed formations in eastern Ukraine, implement the Minsk agreements and end its illegal annexation of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol. The international community will not be silenced on these issues. The Ukrainian people deserve peace. Thank you Mr Secretary General.

[New teacher training inspections to focus on the ITE curriculum](#)

Ofsted is publishing its new initial teacher education (ITE) framework so that future inspections will focus more on the substance of the ITE curriculum and how well trainees are prepared to teach, and less on outcomes data.

The new inspections will help to make sure that ITE partnerships are focusing on the things that have the most impact on a trainee's education and, ultimately, the children and young people they teach.

The changes bring ITE inspection in line with Ofsted's education inspection framework's (EIF) focus on the quality of the curriculum. The [new framework](#) is tailored to the different phases of trainee education, including early years, primary, secondary and further education.

The public consultation, Ofsted's research fieldwork and feedback from more than 30 pilot inspections undertaken this academic year have informed amendments to the final framework and handbook.

Ofsted received more than 300 responses to its [public consultation](#) from a wide range of respondents, including trainees and newly qualified teachers,

ITE partnerships, headteachers and other employers. The vast majority supported the five key proposals, and many shared their thoughts on the proposed [new handbook](#).

Two new key judgements for 'quality of education and training' and 'leadership and management' will focus on the ITE curriculum and help inspectors get to the heart of the quality of trainee teachers' education. These replace the previous judgements of 'outcomes for trainees' and 'quality of training across the partnership'.

Other changes include:

- applying a new methodology for gathering inspection evidence
- a single visit, four-day inspection, announced three days in advance, rather than the previous two stage process
- an educationally focused telephone conversation with partnership leaders prior to the inspection
- spring and summer term inspections only

The new framework will take effect from September 2020, but the handbook document has been published early so that ITE partnerships have time to familiarise themselves with it. The intention is to begin the new cycle of inspections from January 2021 but given the impact of COVID-19 (coronavirus) on the education sector, this will be kept under regular review.

Amanda Spielman, Ofsted's Chief Inspector said:

I'm pleased with the overwhelmingly positive response to our consultation. All trainee teachers should have access to high-quality education and training and our new inspections will help to do just that.

This new framework will make sure we're looking at the things that matter most to trainee teachers, so that they can start their career on solid foundations. Putting the curriculum front and centre of teacher training is the right thing for new teachers but above all, for children – so they get a broad, rich education that will set them up for life.

Circular 001/2020: Epidyolex scheduling, (SI) 2020 No. 559

The amendment places a cannabis-based medicine 'Epidyolex' under Schedule 5 of the Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001.

Broad subject: drugs misuse

Sub category: The Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001

Date for implementation: 24 June 2020

From: Home Office

Unit: Drugs Misuse and Firearms Unit

Apprenticeships and social mobility

Workers from disadvantaged backgrounds are being left behind by the apprenticeship system, with numbers slumping by more than a third since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy, says the Social Mobility Commission in its report 'Apprenticeships and social mobility: Fulfilling potential' published today (Wednesday 24 June).

The report also reveals that most of the benefits of apprenticeships are going to more privileged learners. It finds that apprenticeships are one of the most effective means of boosting social mobility for workers from poorer backgrounds – if they can get into and through the system.

Key findings

- a 36% decline in apprenticeship starts by people from disadvantaged backgrounds, compared with 23% for others
- just 13% of degree-level apprenticeships, the fastest growing and most expensive apprenticeship option, goes to apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds
- most disadvantaged apprenticeship starters came from three regions: north-west England (25%); the west midlands (15%); and London (15%)
- more than 80% of apprenticeships undertaken by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds are in enterprises in the services, health, education or public administration sectors
- only 63% of apprenticeships are successfully completed by men from disadvantaged background, compared with 67% of men from more privileged backgrounds
- on average, apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds earn less than

apprentices from more privileged backgrounds

- there is a 16% boost to wages for learners from disadvantaged backgrounds who complete their training, compared with 10% for others

Collapsing numbers

Analysis by the report authors, London Economics, shows that the 2017 Apprenticeship Levy reform was followed by a collapse in overall apprenticeship starts which hit disadvantaged learners hardest. In addition, the analysis shows that disadvantage gaps opened up at every stage, from employer candidate selection to training quality and pay rates after completion.

Consultant and lead author Alice Battiston said:

There is a severe disadvantage gap throughout the entire apprenticeship training journey, and this has worsened over time. Not only has the proportion of new starters from disadvantaged backgrounds declined over time, but they have also benefited less than their better-off peers from the shift towards higher-level programmes.

Between 2015/16 and 2017/18, there was a 36% decline in disadvantaged apprentice starts in England, compared with a 23% decline for more privileged apprentices. The impact was even greater for older (aged 25+) and female apprentices.

Steven Cooper, interim co-chair of the Social Mobility Commission, commented:

The apprenticeship levy, introduced in 2017, has disproportionately funded higher-level apprenticeships for learners from more advantaged communities, rather than those from disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds who would benefit more.

Barriers to success

Disadvantaged apprentices are less likely than their more privileged peers to complete their course. The main reason for dropping out included low levels of pay with small and medium size employers (SMEs) more likely to pay apprentices the minimum wage.

Alice Battiston said:

The relatively low completion rate achieved by disadvantaged apprentices, particularly at intermediate level, is another alarming point emerging from our analysis. Specific interventions are needed to reduce drop-outs.

Apprenticeships boost social mobility

Despite the many barriers faced by disadvantaged learners, the report confirms how effective apprenticeships can be in promoting social mobility.

People from less privileged backgrounds who complete an apprenticeship get a bigger boost in their earnings than other learners. This is particularly true at intermediate level – the first step on the apprenticeship journey. Furthermore, apprentices from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to complete their course on time.

Following the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, however, there are concerns disadvantaged apprentices are at greater risk from an economic decline, with many employed in hard-hit sectors such as hospitality and retail.

Alice Battiston said:

The pandemic is likely to have made the disadvantaged gap worse. There needs to be urgent consideration of the impact of the apprenticeship levy on social mobility outcomes.

Steven Cooper said:

It is no longer credible for the government to assume that apprenticeships automatically improve social mobility and leave the system to its own devices.

Strategic action and direction are needed to target the system better on disadvantaged communities and improve the system's value for money.

This is an easy win for the government in its attempts at levelling up – if it can get this right. The government must look at the structural barriers in place and take action to channel resources where they will have the greatest effect.

Notes to editors

The Social Mobility Commission is an independent advisory non-departmental public body established under the Life Chances Act 2010 as modified by the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016. It has a duty to assess progress in improving social mobility in the UK and to promote social mobility in England.

On 20 May 2020, the Sutton Trust published 2 research studies on apprenticeships: 'COVID-19 impacts: apprenticeships' examines the pandemic's impact on the apprenticeship system, and in particular on learners from disadvantaged backgrounds. 'Degree apprenticeships: levelling up?' focuses on

the highest level 6 and 7 apprenticeships – equivalent to a bachelors or postgraduate degree – and asks whether they are delivering social mobility for disadvantaged learners.

The commission board comprises:

- Sandra Wallace, Joint Managing Director UK & Europe at DLA Piper – joint deputy chair
- Steven Cooper, Chief Executive Officer, C. Hoare & Co – joint deputy chair
- Alastair da Costa, Chair of Capital City College Group
- Farrah Storr, Editor-in-chief, Elle
- Harvey Matthewson, Aviation Activity Officer at Aerobility
- Jessica Oghenegweke, Presenter, BBC Earth Kids
- Jody Walker, Senior Vice President at TJX Europe (TK Maxx and Home Sense in the UK)
- Liz Williams, CEO @FutureDotNow.UK
- Pippa Dunn, Founder of Broody, helping entrepreneurs and start ups
- Saeed Atcha, Chief Executive Officer of Youth Leads UK
- Sam Friedman, Associate Professor in Sociology at London School of Economics
- Sammy Wright, Vice Principal of Southmoor Academy, Sunderland