

Directors banned for abusing dissolution process

The four directors were disqualified after they all secured bounce back loans before dissolving their companies to avoid paying their liabilities back.

In the most recent case, Sirfraz Ahmad, from Leeds, was disqualified for 10 years after he exaggerated his turnover to secure a higher value bounce back loan he wasn't entitled to.

Instead of using the government-backed loan to support the business, Food Box Leeds Limited, Sirfraz Ahmad squandered £25,000 to repay family members.

Sirfraz Ahmad joins Max Hadley, Lewis Wright and Jake Joynt, on the disqualification register after the Insolvency Service used new powers to tackle unscrupulous directors who dissolve companies to avoid paying their liabilities.

The Insolvency Service has powers to investigate directors of companies that enter a form of insolvency, including administration and liquidation. The Insolvency Service may also be instructed to investigate live companies where there is evidence of wrongdoing.

[The Rating \(Coronavirus\) and Directors Disqualification \(Dissolved Companies\) Act](#), which became law in December 2021, extends the Insolvency Service's investigatory powers, on behalf of the Business Secretary, to directors of dissolved companies.

If misconduct is found, directors can face sanctions including being disqualified as a company director for up to 15 years or, in the most serious of cases, prosecution.

Business Minister Lord Callanan said:

The government provided unprecedented support to businesses to help them through the pandemic, but unfortunately a minority of people abused this support for personal gain.

We have been clear that we will not tolerate those who seek to defraud the taxpayer, which is why we introduced tough new powers which have allowed the Insolvency Service to disqualify directors for dissolving their companies, to avoid repaying their bounce back loans.

Consultant Lewis Wright received a £50,000 loan in June 2020 despite his company having stopped trading the previous year. Lewis Wright received the maximum loan amount after he inflated turnover before paying himself just over £47,000. He is disqualified for 12 years.

Max Hadley, director of Prestige Building Works and railway engineer, received a 10-year ban after he secured a £20,000 bounce back loan before spending £18,000 on payments not connected to the building firm.

And Jake Joynt received a 7-year disqualification after he received a £15,000 bounce back loan before spending £13,000 of it for personal use.

All four directors are banned from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

The Insolvency Service is considering recovery of the bounce back loan funds by using legal powers to seek Compensation Orders against the directors where appropriate.

Leonardo AW189, G-MCGT, 30 July 2021: Anniversary Statement

News story

Unexpected pitch oscillations following selection of Transition Down AFCS SAR mode, near Heads of Ayr, South Ayrshire, on 30 July 2021.



This statement provides an update on the AAIB investigation into a serious incident involving a Leonardo AW189 helicopter, G-MCGT, near Heads of Ayr, South Ayrshire, on 30 July 2021.

During an offshore training sortie, the flight crew encountered pitch instability and an erroneous status indication when switching between particular Search and Rescue (SAR) modes of the Automatic Flight Control System (AFCS).

The AAIB investigation has focused on the operation of the AFCS SAR modes and the indications it provides to flight crews. The helicopter manufacturer has

published a Technical Information Letter to alert flight crews to this issue. The report is nearing completion at which time it will be published.

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10p bag charge turns the tide on plastic waste

Billions of harmful plastic bags have been stopped from blighting our towns and countryside thanks to the single-use carrier bag charge, [new figures reveal today](#) (29 July).

The 5p charge was introduced in supermarkets in 2015 and since then usage at the main retailers has dropped by a staggering 97%. Meanwhile, over £200 million has been voluntarily donated by retailers to good causes in that time.

As a result of the charge, the average person in England now buys around three single-use carrier bags a year from the main supermarkets, compared with around 140 in 2014.

The charge was last year [increased to 10p and extended to all businesses](#). This has helped further bring the number of bags used down by over 20% from 627 million in 2019/20 to 496 million in 2021/22.

Environment Minister Steve Double said:

Our plastic bag charge has ended the sale of billions of single-use bags, protecting our landscapes and ensuring millions of pounds is redistributed to worthy causes.

There is much more to do to tackle the problem of plastic waste. That is why we are building on our single-use plastic bans and introducing the deposit return scheme for bottles to fight back against littering and drive up recycling rates.

The number of single-use carrier bags reported by the main retailers was 197 million in 2021/22, down from 271 million in 2019/2020, the previous comparable year* – a reduction of 27%. This is a huge drop from the 7.6 billion used in 2014 before the charge was introduced.

In 2021/22, retailers donated £10 million to good causes in education, arts, heritage, sports, environment, health, charity or volunteering sectors, or

causes chosen by customers and staff.

Adam Herriot, Sector Specialist, Resource Management, WRAP said:

Flexibles remain one of the most common plastics in our bins, but just like pots tubs and trays we're now at a point where the tide is turning on flexible plastics. Today, nearly 5,000 stores nationwide have front of store collections where people can drop off their unusable bags once they reach their end of life.

So not only do we have less single-use shopping bags to worry about, we have somewhere convenient to put them when we go shopping to make sure they are recycled.

This builds on the government's action to turn the tide on plastic waste.

This year we introduced a world-leading plastic packaging tax, while our deposit return scheme will ensure billions more drinks bottles and cans are returned to shops and recycled.

We have already banned microbeads in rinse-off personal care products and restricted the sale of plastic straws, stirrers and cotton buds.

We have [consulted on banning single use plastic cutlery, plates and certain types of polystyrene cups](#), and are also looking at evidence on other problematic single use plastics – including wet wipes.

*It is important to note that the data for 2020/21 cannot be directly compared with other years, due to unique circumstances relating to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Kathryn Cearns (OBE) joins NDA Board as a Non-Executive Board Member

News story

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) has today announced the appointment of Kathryn Cearns to its Board as a non-executive board member for a 3-year term from 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2025.



This appointment has been made by Kwasi Kwarteng, the Secretary of State for the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, in consultation with Scottish Ministers.

Dr Ros Rivaz, the Chair of the NDA, said:

I am delighted that Kathryn is joining us to support the important and complex work we do to decommission the UK's 17 earliest nuclear sites. Kathryn has extensive experience in financial reporting and corporate governance, including the reporting and auditing aspects of company law and risk management. She will bring a valuable perspective not just to ensure the effectiveness of the risk assurance control framework established by the Board, but also to help us shape our strategy and deliver transformational change.

Kathryn Cearns said:

This is a hugely exciting, challenging and rewarding opportunity. The work the NDA does is world-leading and its mission is of vital importance to the UK. I feel privileged to be able to contribute to decisions over the coming years which will carry weight for the next generation and beyond.

Kathryn is a chartered accountant with extensive senior level experience in both the public and private sectors. She was Chair of the Financial Reporting Advisory Board to HM Treasury from 2010 to 2016 and Chair of the ICAEW Financial Reporting Committee for 10 years. Her past roles include project director at the UK Accounting Standards Board (now the Financial Reporting Council) and consultant accountant for an international law firm. Kathryn has held a number of non-executive, trustee and advisory appointments, including at the Office of Tax Simplification, the Property Ombudsman, Crossrail, and National Highways.

At the NDA, her role on the NDA Board will see her chair the important Audit, Risk and Assurance Board Committee which oversees effective risk management, control and governance of the NDA's annual budget of over £3 billion.

First marine geophysical surveys set to start this summer

News story

Investigations off the coast to provide data about potential of deep rocks to host a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).



The survey vessel will be carrying specialist acoustic equipment

The marine geophysical surveys off the coast of Copeland, Cumbria, which are set to begin in the summer of 2022, are non-intrusive and will provide a better understanding of the rock structure to help inform the search for a suitable site for a Geological Disposal Facility (GDF).

The data-gathering programme will use a vessel carrying specialist acoustic equipment deployed between 5 and 20km from the coastline. The work will take place over a period of three to four weeks and will be undertaken by specialists Shearwater GeoServices, who were awarded a £6 million contract by Nuclear Waste Services (NWS) following a procurement process.

The survey is an important early step in beginning to understand the deep geology beyond the coast. This first survey is focused off the coast of South and Mid Copeland.

The technology deployed from the 92-metre vessel is based on sound waves – similar to ultrasound scans used for medical purposes – which are reflected as an echo from different geological layers. This enables a 3D picture of the underlying rocks to be gradually built up. The seabed itself remains undisturbed. Surveys of this type are commonplace in the offshore wind, oil and gas sectors.

The GDF team will work with marine representative bodies and other stakeholders to keep marine users and local communities informed of developments.

Chris Eldred, Head of GDF Geosphere Characterisation, said:

We are looking forward to the commencement of the first surveys this summer off the south west coast of Copeland, working with the specialists at Shearwater GeoServices.

The information we gather will help us to further consider the suitability of areas to host a GDF and support informed dialogue with the communities that are at the heart of the siting process.

Data from the surveys will need to be processed and analysed in detail which will take about nine months during which time we will consider how or if further survey work is needed. The information will give our geologists and engineers some of the tools they need to begin designing and planning the next steps in the search for a suitable site for a GDF.

[Learn more about geological disposal.](#)

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