

# Lincs man guilty of exposing public to asbestos gets prison term

A court heard that between 2017 and 2019, Lee Charles of Caldicot Gardens acted as a de facto director of Lincs Demolition Ltd in securing lucrative jobs. He was able to do so by marketing himself as a registered asbestos-removal specialist.

Charles operated his deception in 43 towns and cities across England. A full list can be found under additional information below.

When disturbed, asbestos is a hazardous substance and carcinogenic, something Charles knew, but he also claimed to be registered with the Environment Agency. He was neither a specialist or registered.

The use of asbestos in the UK was subject to an outright ban in 1999, after certain types became outlawed in the 1980s.

Lincoln crown court was told Charles pleaded guilty to lying to customers and giving false paperwork to disguise his deception.

Having duped his customers, waste asbestos was stashed in hired storage containers in Welbourn, Lincolnshire, just 200 metres from a school and close to a Girl Guide centre.

Charles told the owners of the storage space that he wanted to keep tools there. When he failed to pay the rent on the containers, the owners forced the locks and were confronted with the dangerous contents.

Once exposed, Charles, 40, abandoned the storage containers at Welbourn, moving his activities to an unpermitted waste site in Little Hale, near Sleaford. He continued to store asbestos unsafely, posing a risk to public health.

Imposing a 12-month prison sentence, recorder Paul Mann told Charles, who has a string of previous convictions that he “knew the regulatory regime well enough to know what he was doing was seriously wrong.”

However, he said that he was “just” able to suspend the sentence for a period of 2 years so that Charles could pay the Environment Agency’s costs. Charles will also be required to pay compensation to the owners of the Welbourn containers for the not insignificant costs they had incurred in cleaning up the site.

Charles was told that he must return to Lincoln crown court in June for consideration of financial orders, including the potential confiscation of his proceeds of crime.

Paul Salter, waste crime officer for the Environment Agency in Lincolnshire, said:

Lee Charles' crimes were not just illegal, but dangerous.

In spite of repeated warnings and advice from the Environment Agency, Lincs Demolition, under Charles' direction, put both the environment and public health at risk.

Asbestos when inhaled causes serious health problems, the careless storage of which presents a significant hazard, with a risk to the life.

Taking Charles' avoidance of costs into consideration, from appropriate staff training to safe storage, Lincs Demolition avoided business costs of at least £50,000.

It is imperative that all waste businesses have the correct permits in place to protect themselves, the environment and the public. We support businesses trying to do the right thing, only issuing enforcement notices, and penalising businesses as a last resort.

In 2015, illegal waste activity was estimated to cost over £600 million in England alone, with the figure for the UK likely to be much higher.

The Environment Agency's permitting and licensing system enables businesses to carry out their operations, while robust regulation provides the level playing field legitimate businesses need to prevent being undercut by irresponsible or illegal operators.

Charles pleaded guilty to 2 counts of operating a waste operation without a permit, contrary to Regulations 12, 38(1)(a) and 41(1)(a) of the Environmental Permitting (England and Wales) Regulations 2016.

He also pleaded guilty to 2 counts of keeping or disposing of controlled waste in a manner likely to cause pollution or harm, contrary to Sections 33(1)(c), 33(6) and 157(1) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

A date in June will be fixed for the court to decide costs against Charles in favour of the Environment Agency and the proceeds of crime order.

## **Additional information**

- Abingdon
- Barton-upon-Humber
- Boston
- Burntwood
- Cambridge
- Caterham
- Doncaster
- Dorking
- Erdington
- Birmingham
- Grantham \*Gravesend
- Great Yarmouth

- Huntingdon
- Ipswich
- Kettering
- Kings Lynn
- Leicester
- Lincoln
- Loughborough
- Luton
- Mansfield
- Market Rasen
- Melton Mowbray
- Newar
- Norwich
- Nottingham
- Oakham
- Peterborough
- Scunthorpe
- Sidcup
- London
- Sleaford
- Spalding
- St Ives, Cambridgeshire
- Stockport
- Wythenshawe
- Greater Manchester
- Stourbridge
- Walsall
- Warsop
- Wellingborough
- Worksop.

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## **Health and social care leaders unite to improve public involvement in research**

Funders, regulators and research organisations who play an important role in the UK health and social care research have come together, working with members of the public, to sign up to a bold new shared commitment to improve public involvement in research.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the Health Research Authority, the National Institute for Health Research and a host of organisations across the UK to bring about changes which will drive up standards in health and social care research.

They include: the Academy of Medical Sciences, the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry, the Association of Medical Research Charities, Chief Scientist Office, Health and Care Research Wales, Health and Social Care Northern Ireland, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, the Medical Research Council, the National Coordinating Centre for Public Engagement, NHS Research Scotland, Universities UK and UK Research and Innovation.

The statement, signed by leaders at each organisation, reads:

‘Public involvement is important, expected and possible in all types of health and social care research. Together our organisations and members fund, support and regulate health and social care research. This statement is our joint commitment to improve the extent and quality of public involvement across the sector so that it is consistently excellent.

People have the right to be involved in all health and social care research. Excellent public involvement is an essential part of health and social care research and [has been shown to improve](#) its quality and impact. People’s lived experiences should be a key driver for health and social care research.

When we talk about public involvement, we mean all the ways in which the research community works together with people including patients, carers, advocates, service users, and members of the community. Excellent public involvement is inclusive, values all contributions, ensures people have a meaningful say in what happens and influences outcomes, as set out in the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#).

Working together we will support the research community to carry out excellent public involvement. We will provide or share guidance, policies, systems, and incentives. We will:

- listen to and learn from the people and communities we involve and apply and share that learning
- build and share the evidence of how to involve the public and the impact this has
- support improvements in equality, diversity, and inclusion in public involvement
- promote the [UK Standards for Public Involvement](#).

We will embed this commitment into the decision-making processes of our organisations.’

You can find more from each of the signatories – and what they will do – by clicking on the links below:

The MHRA are additionally working with partners on the [Recovery, Resilience and Growth \(RRG\) of UK clinical research](#) programme. This includes work to make research more diverse and more relevant to the whole of the UK, and to strengthen public, patient and service user involvement in research.

**Dr Marc Bailey, Chief Science and Innovation Officer, Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency, said:**

We welcome the joint commitment to improve the extent and quality of public involvement in health and social care research. This aligns with our Patient Involvement Strategy and our objective to engage and involve the public and patients at every step of the regulatory journey.

**Lord Kamall, Minister for Technology, Innovation and Life Sciences, said:**

Today's sector-wide public commitment makes a strong statement that the organisations signing up, led by the Health Research Authority (HRA) and National Institute for Health Research (NIHR), recognise and welcome the importance of involving the general public in health and social care research.

We want the UK to be one of the best places in the world to invest in a life-science business and to deliver research that benefits everyone. The key to this is to develop stronger partnerships between research and patients and the wider public. Involving the public in research will help researchers conduct better studies that are open to everyone. Such inclusive research will enable the UK to deliver more world-leading, life-changing breakthroughs in science and improvements, which in turn will improve the health of our nation.

**Dr Matt Westmore, HRA Chief Executive, said:**

Excellent public involvement is an essential part of excellent health and social care research. It improves research and people have a right to be involved.

This shared statement, developed with patients, research participants and leaders in health and social care research, will ensure public involvement is embedded across the health and social care research system. For the first time the entire research system is sending the same strong message. That public involvement is always important, always expected and always possible. The evidence is that better research results from involvement, and better research delivers benefits for patients.

It also says that together we are stronger – the 14 influential leaders in health and social care research are stronger together – the public and the research community are stronger together. And together we will bring about real change.

**Roger Wilson, HRA public contributor, said:**

This has been an outstanding piece of work and it has been a real joy to be involved with it. I'd like to thank the HRA and NIHR for their leadership of the project and for the consideration and care shown to 'public contributors'. The co-creation of this shared commitment to public involvement has been a real partnership. Now we need to ensure that others across the health and social care research system can recognise and adopt this commitment to public involvement.

**Professor Lucy Chappell, Chief Executive, NIHR, said:**

Partnering with patients, service users, carers and communities is absolutely fundamental to improving research.

We're proud to have worked with health and social care leaders and public contributors to develop this strong statement of our ongoing commitment to public involvement. We already have a track record in this area but we are committed to supporting researchers to become more skilled and confident in partnership working and to making it more straightforward for patient and public members to work with us.

The benefits are clear – by involving patients and the public in our research from the outset, we plan and deliver studies that are relevant and important. This approach ensures that people's perspectives and lived experiences of health and care are heard and acted upon.

**Ifeanyi Sargeant, NIHR public contributor, said:**

Ultimately, research aims to ask the right questions to get answers for problems and challenges we face. But how to know which questions to ask and what is most important or meaningful to address for people with health or social care needs? The only way is to ask the people affected what they struggle with and what they need. That's why public involvement in research – right from the initial ideas through to practical implementation – is vitally important. If we don't ask the right questions, then we can never hope to deliver the right answers and solutions that can improve lives.

**Richard Torbett, Chief Executive of the Association of the**

## **British Pharmaceutical Industry, said:**

The UK faces an immense challenge in rebuilding a sustainable NHS post-pandemic that is able to deliver world class patient care and attract global research investment.

That cannot happen without collaboration between the life sciences industry, patients and the public, which is why we are committed to embedding patient and public involvement at the heart of research.

The shared commitment builds on earlier work, led by the HRA. In January last year the HRA produced a report, on their [public involvement matching service](#) which was set up in response to the drastic reduction in public involvement seen in studies submitted for approval at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. The team wrote a report entitled [Public Involvement in a Pandemic](#), which highlighted four gaps that had led to public involvement being left out of health and social care research applications.

The shared commitment aims to address the gaps identified in leadership and communication by bringing patients and public contributors and leaders in health and social care together to actively set out the importance of public involvement in all health and social care research with the ambition of delivering better health and social care.

Other organisations are invited to sign up to the statement. For more information, please email [publicinvolvement@hra.nhs.uk](mailto:publicinvolvement@hra.nhs.uk).

For further information, please contact Alison Barbuti, Senior Communications Manager at the Health Research Authority [alison.barbuti@hra.nhs.uk](mailto:alison.barbuti@hra.nhs.uk).

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## **[National Clinical Excellence Awards: 2021 appeals process delayed](#)**

News story

Information about delays in processing appeal requests for the 2021 awards round.



The Advisory Committee on Clinical Excellence Awards (ACCEA) is unfortunately experiencing delays in processing appeal requests due to a high volume of appeals resulting from the size of the 2021 awards round, staff illness and implementing reform.

We apologise for any inconvenience these delays may have caused and would like to reassure all appellants that their requests are being considered carefully. All those who submitted an appeal request will hear from the ACCEA secretariat in due course.

We thank all those affected for their patience and understanding.

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## **One million tutoring courses delivered to help children catch up**

One million courses have been started by children across the country through the National Tutoring Programme, the Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, announced today (Friday 11 March).

Speaking at the Association of School and College Leaders conference in Birmingham, the Education Secretary announced the milestone alongside measures to further boost the number of children who can benefit from tutoring this year.

Of the estimated 1 million courses started since the beginning of the programme, around 532,000 were provided through the School-Led Tutoring route, which provides funding directly to schools giving them greater flexibility to source their own tutors, whether external or staff already working in the school.

As a result, up to £65m will be transferred into this route from the Academic Mentor and Tuition Partner pillars of the programme, giving more schools the

autonomy and support to deliver high quality tutoring to as many children and young people as possible, and reflecting the department's continued focus on following the evidence of what works.

The programme remains on track to deliver the ambitious target of two million courses overall this academic year.

To further support schools and meet increasing demand, the eligibility for recruiting Academic Mentors and schools has been updated, with minimum A level requirements replacing the requirement for a degree, along with increasing the rate of pay for all graduate mentors looking to enrol and support the programme.

Separately, while the Government expects group sizes of 1:3 to remain standard, schools working with tuition partners can now use their discretion when determining group sizes, with a cap of up to 1:6 to allow greater flexibility where needed (such as for phonics, where pair work is required).

Speaking at ASCL, Nadhim Zahawi, Education Secretary, said:

It's important to step back and look at what we've achieved with the National Tutoring Programme.

Tutoring used to be something that was the preserve of only a fortunate few.

Thanks to this Government, today it's benefitting all children who want it and need it, from Bristol to Blackpool and Newquay to Newcastle, helping them realise their potential.

I am proud to announce that more than one million tutoring courses have been delivered since we rolled out this programme last year.

I hope you will agree with me that what we are doing together on tutoring is an invaluable addition to our education system, and I am continuing to look at how we can make sure it is having as big an impact as possible.

In addition to the estimated 532,000 courses that have started through the school led route this year, 114,000 starts have been made on courses through Tuition Partners and an estimated 74,000 pupils have started packages through the Academic Mentor pillar of the programme.

The government is working closely with Randstad and the sector to make sure these numbers continue to rise, and tutoring continues to reach the students who need it most.

311,000 courses were delivered in the 2020/2021 academic year.

The Government intends to continue building on the success of the National Tutoring Programme this year, in particular the School-Led route.

Schools, tutors and other stakeholders have continued to provide feedback to the department over the course of the year – in particular regarding the need for a programme that is as simple as possible – and the department is exploring all options to make sure that feedback is reflected in the programme next year.

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## Reynolds' Portrait of Omai at risk of leaving UK

- Export bar is to allow time for a UK gallery or institution to acquire the painting
- Painting depicts Pacific Islander Omai who travelled with Captain Cook on HMS Adventure to London in 1774

A painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds depicting a Pacific Islander who travelled with Captain Cook on HMS Adventure to London in 1774 is at risk of leaving the country unless a UK buyer can be found. Worth £50 million, Portrait of Omai is a full-length, life-size painting from the 18th century. It depicts one of the earliest and most celebrated Polynesian visitors to England in flowing white Tahitian dress.

The painting is inextricably linked to the great voyages of discovery and exploration during this period. It offers an important insight into the British reception, understanding, and representation of people from beyond Europe at that time in history.

The artist, Sir Joshua Reynolds, was one of the foremost British painters of his day. He became the first President of the Royal Academy and his work and beliefs had a profound impact on subsequent generations of British artists. Portrait of Omai technically exemplifies Reynolds at his best and is a masterpiece of 18th-century British painting.

Arts Minister Lord Parkinson of Whitley Bay said:

The outstanding 18th-century Portrait of Omai by Sir Joshua Reynolds exemplifies the importance of the export bar process. This stunning painting is impressive for its scale, its attention to detail, and the valuable insights it provides into the society in which Reynolds painted it.

I sincerely hope that a UK buyer comes forward to save this iconic painting for the nation.

The minister's decision follows the advice of the [Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest](#). The committee agreed

the painting is one of the great iconic works of the 18th century and is arguably the greatest portrait by one of the greatest British portraitists.

Committee Member Christopher Baker said:

This magnificent British portrait has a global resonance. It illustrates the connectivity of the world in the late eighteenth century through exploration and the spread of colonial ambitions, as well as the fascination that high profile cultural encounters inspired. Mai (c.1753-1779) (or 'Omai' as he was called in Britain) arrived in London from his home in Polynesia in July 1774, aboard HMS Adventure, which formed part of Captain James Cook's second voyage. He was regarded as a celebrity and became the focus of written accounts and images, among which this sensational painting is undoubtedly the most potent.

Reynolds' picture was exhibited at the Royal Academy in 1776, just after its subject returned to the Pacific. It is a highly romanticised image, illustrating European perceptions, and has a special status in the evolution of grand portraiture of the period. Securing it for a public collection would have profound benefits and allow the numerous and riveting historical and artistic narratives it embodies to be fully developed and shared.

The committee made its recommendation on the grounds that the painting met all three of the Waverley Criteria: being closely connected with our history and national life; of outstanding aesthetic importance; and of outstanding significance for the study of British history and 18th century art and, in particular, for the work of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

The decision on the export licence application for the painting will be deferred for a period ending on 10 July 2022 inclusive. This period may be extended until 10 March 2023 inclusive if a serious intention to raise funds with a view to making an offer to purchase the painting at the recommended price of £50 million is expressed.

ENDS

Notes to editors

1. Organisations or individuals interested in purchasing the painting should contact the RCEWA on 0845 300 6200.
2. Details of the painting are as follows: Portrait of Omai oil on canvas 236 by 145.5 cm. (93 by 57 in.) Sir Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) painted c. 1776
3. Provenance: The artist's studio sale; Greenwood's, London, 16 April 1796 (= 3rd day), lot 51,100 gns. to the following, Michael Bryan, from whom acquired by 13 August 1796 by the following, Frederick Howard, 5th Earl of Carlisle (1748-1825), Castle Howard, and by descent to the following, George Howard, 13th Earl of Carlisle (b. 1949), Castle Howard; Sotheby's, London, 29 November 2001, lot 12 (£10,343,500), where

acquired by the present owner. The painting has appeared before the Committee before on two occasions, in December 2002 for a permanent licence that was refused (reported at Case 17 of its 2002/03 annual report) and in April 2012 for a temporary export that was also refused (reported at page 21 of its 2011/12 annual report).

4. The Reviewing Committee on the Export of Works of Art and Objects of Cultural Interest is an independent body, serviced by Arts Council England (ACE), which advises the Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport on whether a cultural object, intended for export, is of national importance under specified criteria.
5. [Arts Council England](#) is the national development agency for creativity and culture. Its strategic vision in [Let's Create](#) is that, by 2030, England should be a country in which the creativity of everyone is valued and given the chance to flourish and where everyone has access to a remarkable range of high-quality cultural experiences. ACE invests public money from the government and the National Lottery to support the sector and deliver the vision. Following the [Covid-19 crisis](#), ACE developed a £160 million Emergency Response Package, with nearly 90 per cent coming from the National Lottery, for organisations and individuals needing support. It is also one of the bodies administering the government's unprecedented £1.96 billion Culture Recovery Fund.