

## Solihull brothers ordered to pay nearly £400,000 in Environment Agency's proceeds of crime case

- Company made claims of recycling 10,600 tonnes of electrical waste
- Forged paperwork discovered in Environment Agency investigation

The Environment Agency has successfully gained a proceeds of crime confiscation order on two brothers from Solihull who had previously received custodial sentences following a fraud investigation into a company called Electronic Waste Specialists Ltd (EWS).

Hearings at Birmingham Crown Court on 31 January and 2 February 2022, ordered Jamil Rehman, 58, of Appleby Grove, to pay £295,965.97 and Saleem Rehman, 57, of Buckbury Croft, £100,000.

The orders follow an investigation which detailed how Jamil, who was the sole director at Electronic Waste Specialists Ltd (EWS), had submitted fictitious claims for the recycling of approximately 10,600 tonnes of electronic waste with his company receiving payment to the value of £1.48 million from a producer compliance scheme, Weelight Ltd.

Jamil Rehman admitted one charge of trading fraudulently between October 2011 and January 2012. His brother, Saleem Rehman, admitted one charge of theft from the company.

On 6 January 2020, Jamil Rehman received a custodial sentence of 5 years 4 months while Saleem was given a 16-month prison sentence, suspended for 2 years.

Following these sentences, the Environment Agency carried out a confiscation investigation under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA).

At a hearing on 1 February, Jamil Rehman was ordered to pay £295,965.97 within 3 months with a default sentence of 4 years imprisonment for not paying within that period. The court determined that he had benefitted in the sum of £1,481,908.85. With the £295,965.97 being his available amount.

At a hearing on 31 January, Saleem Rehman was ordered to pay £100,000 within 3 months with a default sentence of 2 years imprisonment for not paying within that period. The court determined that he had benefitted in the sum of £100,000 and that this was also his available amount.

Neil Campbell, from the Environment Agency's national enforcement team, said:

The case shows that the Environment Agency is not just content to prosecute for illegal waste operations but will also come after those who profit illegally to recoup taxpayers' money spent on

pursuing them.

Waste crime can have a serious environmental impact and puts communities at risk. It undermines legitimate business and the investment and economic growth that go with it.

We support legitimate businesses and are proactively supporting them by disrupting and stopping the criminal element backed up by the threat of tough enforcement as in this case.

If anyone suspects that a company is doing something wrong, please contact the Environment Agency on 0800 80 70 60 or report it anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

See: [Brothers sentenced for £1.48 million electronic waste fraud – GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) for background on this case.

EWS's services were contracted by Weelight Ltd as an approved authorised treatment facility.

The company created forged paperwork which detailed fictitious recycling.

The fraud came to light when the Environment Agency's National Investigations Team became suspicious of the paperwork EWS, which operated out of a warehouse in Devon Street, Nechells, Birmingham, had submitted.

EWS Ltd went into voluntary liquidation in 2014 with debts of over £116,000.

Serious and organised waste crime is estimated to cost the UK economy at least £600 million a year. Rogue operators illegally dumping or exporting waste, or deliberate mis-description of wastes undermines legitimate businesses by disposing of waste cheaply and recklessly. This harms the environment and local communities, and deprives the government of tax income.

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## **Inspirational Afghan women invited to Parliament for International Women's Day**

A group of inspiring Afghan women have visited the Houses of Parliament to mark International Women's Day and tell their own unique stories of success and integration.

At a reception hosted by Minister for Afghan Resettlement Victoria Atkins, a group of 12 Afghan women shared their incredible stories of living in the UK after leaving Afghanistan.

Among the women invited to parliament were:

- **Benafsha Yaqoobi:** An Afghan disability rights activist, she was made one of the BBC 100 women in 2021. Yaqoobi who is visually impaired, founded the Rahyab Organisation in 2008 with her husband, to provide education and rehabilitation to visually impaired people in Afghanistan. Following the Taliban invasion, she was forced to leave the country but remains a vocal advocate for the rights of disabled people, who she fears will face discrimination from the Taliban.
- **Arefa Shafaei:** A Chevening scholar, (an international scholarship, funded by the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office) she feared for her life and didn't believe that she would make it to the UK following the takeover of Afghanistan by the Taliban. However, after securing a place to study at the University of York she made it to the UK with the help of the British embassy.
- **Zahra Joya:** Along with her sisters Sabria Joya, Sharifa Joya and Fakhria Joya, she is the founder of a media company called Rukhshana Media that shared women's voices across Afghanistan, a child in Afghanistan, she pretended to be a boy in order to get an education.

The visit to Parliament comes as the government continues its unprecedented operation to resettle thousands of Afghans forced to flee, with over 19,000 Afghan evacuees already arrived in the country.

The UK is also preparing to welcome thousands of Ukrainian families as part of a huge humanitarian effort.

Minister for Afghan Resettlement Victoria Atkins said:

It's so important that we mark International Women's Day by recognising just some of the extraordinary Afghan women who have made the UK their home.

I have met Afghan disability rights activists, Chevening scholars, judges and journalists – all with their unique stories to tell.

I hope their uplifting tales of bravery, determination and success can shed some light on the journeys and struggles so many women and girls have had to undertake since the Taliban took control of their country.

Since August 2021, the government has been working at pace to find permanent homes for Afghan families who were brought to the UK under Operation Pitting, so they can settle and rebuild their lives in the UK. Measures to support Afghans as they start their new lives in the UK include:

- A series of cultural orientation 'Welcome Resources', for councils to share with Afghan families. They include advice and support on a range of topics including education, employment support, gender equality and the law, to help give people the best start in life. Bespoke resources were also created for women and girls on issues such as health and personal safety
- Continued support to help move people into accommodation and so far councils have pledged more than 7,000 places for families, supported by £5 million funding to help the national effort.
- Speeding up the process of matching families to property. DLUHC last month launched a housing portal which allows private landlords to put forward offers of accommodation so councils can match them to families.

As part of the UK's proud tradition for helping people in need, the UK government is now working at pace to welcome thousands of Ukrainians. These measures include:

- The expansion of the family route to enable more Ukrainian family members of people settled in the UK to come and join them here.
- Working at pace to establish a new humanitarian sponsorship scheme for Ukrainians forced to flee their homes to be matched with organisations and communities in the UK as their sponsors.
- A further £220 million committed to emergency and humanitarian support for Ukraine, alongside the 1,000 troops who are on standby in neighbouring countries to help those forced to flee.

Afghan women and girls can experience marginalisation, barriers to education, gender inequality, language skills. Once in the UK our integration Welcome Resources package gives councils, alongside the voluntary community sector, resources to tackle some of these barriers.

We are working at pace to find permanent homes for Afghan families who were brought to the UK under Operation Pitting, so they can settle and rebuild their lives in the UK. There are over 12,000 Afghan evacuees in bridging accommodation.

Finding suitable settled homes for this number of people all at once is a significant challenge, particularly given the larger average size of many Afghan families.

People are encouraged to submit housing offers via the [DLUHC housing portal](#) where offers can be signposted to the appropriate council to consider if they could support a family under the scheme using that property.

In addition to the work we are doing with councils, the government has extended the Community Sponsorship Scheme so that local community groups will be able to directly support an Afghan family resettled through the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme which will commence soon.

The government has set aside £5 million funding for councils in England, Wales and Scotland to support Afghans coming to the UK and provide top-up to help meet the costs of renting properties.

All those brought to the UK under the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Policy (ARAP) and the Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme (ACRS) will have the right to work, access to education and healthcare and be able to apply for public funds.

The government has also announced plans for a new sponsorship scheme for Ukrainians without any family ties to the UK. The scheme will allow sponsors, such as communities, private sponsors or local authorities, to bring those forced to flee Ukraine to the UK.

There will be no limit on this scheme and we will welcome as many Ukrainians as wish to come and have matched sponsors.

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## **Joint Statement on Russian invasion of Ukraine: UK – Canada – Netherlands**

We, the leaders of the United Kingdom, Canada and the Netherlands are appalled by Putin's unprovoked and brutal invasion of Ukraine. This is a horrific attack on a democratic, sovereign European nation, as well as a clear violation of Russia's obligations under international law, including the United Nations Charter.

We call on Russia to uphold its obligation to fully respect international humanitarian law and human rights law, and to implement an immediate ceasefire that allows civilians safe passage, food and medical supplies.

We have seen extensive and indiscriminate use of force against civilians. This is prohibited by international humanitarian law. We will not spare any effort to ensure that violations of international law in Ukraine are investigated, that evidence is gathered and that the perpetrators are held accountable.

That is why the UK, Canada and the Netherlands joined the largest referral to the International Criminal Court in history to expedite an investigation. That is also why we welcome the urgent establishment by the UN Human Rights Council of a Commission of Inquiry with a strong investigative mandate. We stand ready to provide the necessary cooperation and assistance to support the ICC Prosecutor in its work.

We also condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's use of force in the direct vicinity of Ukraine's nuclear power plants and other nuclear facilities and call on Russia to immediately cease these hostilities.

We will continue to stand strong in supporting Ukraine and applaud the heroism and strength of Ukraine's resistance led by President Zelenskyy. Together we have committed significant economic and humanitarian assistance.

The UK, Canada and the Netherlands are close defence partners, both bilaterally and within NATO. In past weeks, our three countries have played a crucial role in strengthening the global response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and have each committed to deploy additional forces to bolster NATO's deterrence and defence posture in Eastern Europe in response to Russian aggression.

We have consistently underlined Ukraine's right to defend itself against this unlawful aggression and have responded to requests by Ukraine for the provision of defensive military equipment. We call on the international community to stand by Ukraine's right to self-defence and to respond to calls by Ukraine to strengthen its capabilities to defend itself. We will continue to do so and are bringing in further packages of defence support to Ukraine.

We have also worked with partners to bring in an unprecedented package of purposeful and punitive sanctions to isolate Russia's economy and will continue to impose severe costs on Russia given this unconscionable attack. While the humanitarian situation in Ukraine continues to deteriorate, we reiterate the call for Russia urgently to de-escalate and to prioritise the protection of civilians. Ukrainian, UN and other humanitarian agencies, medical personnel, and non-governmental assistance providers must be given safe, rapid and unimpeded access. We have already committed substantially to the common humanitarian efforts of the UN, Red Cross and coordinating humanitarian aid organisations. The breakdown in the Mariupol ceasefire is a major concern. The lesson from history is that for such ceasefires to work they need to be as concrete, actionable and specific as possible.

In particular, we wish to highlight the plight of women, children, the elderly and other vulnerable groups fleeing the violence in Ukraine. We underscore the importance of addressing their specific protection needs, from family separation to psychosocial stress and trauma, to exploitation and all forms of violence. Our collective efforts to address the crisis in Ukraine must continue to address the needs of the most vulnerable.

The breadth of support across the international community for defending the principles of democracy and freedom has been unprecedented. This was demonstrated by the UN General Assembly when the international community unequivocally condemned Russian aggression, and committed to upholding the rules based international order with 141 member states voting in favour of the resolution entitled 'Aggression against Ukraine'.

Today we invite Ukraine's friends to unite in support of a shared commitment to sustain and coordinate the political, humanitarian, economic and defence support that is so vital for a free and independent Ukraine, and to continue to hold Russia to account for its invasion.

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# British Embassy Prague: Ambassador for a Day essay competition 2022

The “Ambassador for a Day Competition 2022: Freedom and Democracy” is a joint initiative by the Embassies of Canada, United Kingdom and United States to the Czech Republic.

## **Objectives**

The theme of this year’s competition is freedom and democracy. Currently, the importance of our shared values of freedom and democracy are top of the international news agenda. Two years of restrictions in response to COVID have also impacted some people’s attitudes to what freedom and democracy mean. In international relations and conflict resolution, women’s voices are often absent or sidelined, yet research shows they can make a difference to how issues are approached and managed, and the resilience of responses.

## **How to participate**

Submit an essay of 500-700 words in English that responds to the following questions:

Why more women’s voices need to be heard in international affairs, conflict resolution, and policymaking more generally;

Why women’s engagement and participation in decision-making processes is important;

What difference women’s voices can make in this field;

What freedom and democracy mean to you in the Czech Republic in 2022.

- Your essay should be submitted [via this form](#) or via [ukinczechrepublic@fco.gov.uk](mailto:ukinczechrepublic@fco.gov.uk). Applicants are required to submit: surname, name, email, nationality, age, present occupation, where they learnt about this contest, and indicate their presence on social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn).
- The Contest is open to females, aged 16-25, who are resident in the Czech Republic and are able to communicate in both English and Czech.
- The essay must be submitted by midnight, 31st March 2022 via the above-mentioned form or email.
- Once submitted, the essay cannot be edited, updated, or resubmitted. Only one entry per person.
- Participation in the Contest is understood as acceptance of all the

rules of the Contest.

## **Platforms**

The information about the essay Contest, including the selection process, announcement of the winner, as well as activities engaging the winners will be communicated on social media platforms of all the sponsors, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

Communication between the sponsors and participants will take place via email or phone. Announcement of the competition winners will be communicated on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube, however, none of these platforms are partners or sponsors of the Contest.

## **Submissions of essays – format**

Please, submit your essays in doc, docx, or pdf format. Each submission should include the name of the contestant.

## **Content**

Submissions must be original pieces, must not include text protected by intellectual property rights or third party's ownership rights.

## **Eligibility**

The Contest is open to females aged 16 to 25 who are residents of the Czech Republic and are able to communicate in both English and Czech.

Only the person who submits the essay will be considered as the Contest participant. To participate in the Contest, the participant must submit all the requested information, which will be strictly used only for the purpose of the Contest and will not be shared with third parties.

The Contest is not open to employees and interns of any of the sponsors, nor it is open to family members of such employees and interns.

After submission of the essay, the Contest participants may be publicly identified.

## **Selection of winners**

The sponsors reserve the right to discount all entries to the Contest that do not fulfill the requirements of the competition.

The winners will be selected by representatives of all three Embassies. Each Embassy will choose one winner (three in total).

## **Winners**

Each participating embassy will choose a winning essay whose author will win the opportunity to work shadow the American, British or Canadian Ambassador (or Chargé) for the day to experience first hand a "day at the office" of a

senior diplomat. Winners will be announced on 25th April 2022. Our aim is to inspire young women to think about what freedom and democracy means to them, and how women can contribute to international affairs. The winners will gain insight into the work of our Embassies on the issues, and perhaps inspire young women to consider a career in diplomacy.

Although the competition will launch on International Women's Day (8 March), the actual work shadowing day will take place later in the summer months, when the COVID-19 situation allows and through mutual agreement with the winners. It will cover a day's worth of meetings and activities on the subject of freedom, democracy and foreign affairs.

The winners will also have the opportunity to work on our respective Embassies' social media feeds for a day to share their experiences.

## **Awards**

Each of the three winners may expect:

- \* To spend a day at the Embassy with Embassy staff, shadowing the Ambassador and/or other Embassy representatives.
- \* Program of meetings with stakeholders, selected and planned by the Embassy
- \* Social media take-over for a day
- \* Small gifts from the Sponsors

The sponsors reserve the right to make the winning essay available online on either Embassy website and/or on social media.

The winners must respond to Embassy's email within a week. If the winner does not accept the selection, the sponsors reserve the right to reach out to the runner-up.

The fulfilment of the awards cannot be passed on a third person, cannot be exchanged for a different activity, and cannot be reimbursed in monetary value.

## **Rights and responsibilities**

1. The sponsors' selection does not automatically mean endorsement of the ideas in the essays.
2. The Contest and the sponsors will not support any activity violating intellectual property rights and therefore reserve the right to disqualify any submission in the Contest that would be in violation with these rules.
3. Contest participants will retain all the rights to their work. At the same time, participants explicitly agree to sponsors' use of any material related to the Contest (essay, photos etc. ).
3. Sponsors reserve the right to check the authenticity of the submissions and remove anyone who violates the above-mentioned rules from the Contest.
4. The sponsors reserve the right to disqualify any contestant who violates the rules of the Contest
5. The sponsors reserve the right to change the awarded prize in case of outside circumstances prohibiting the execution of the afore-mentioned program at each of the Embassies.
6. The sponsors reserve the right to disqualify a person from the Contest

if they deem the person violated the rules of the Contest, violated rules of an online platform involved in the promotion of the Contest, or otherwise acted in bad faith.

7. The sponsors reserve the right to change the process of the Contest or cancel the Contest. Participants agree to protect the good name of the sponsors, their parent, subsidiary and affiliates, officials, directors, employees, trainees and agents. In case of damaging their interests, the participants in the Contest will be responsible for all claims, damages, obligations, losses, liabilities, costs or debts; and expenses (including but not limited to legal fees) arising from (i) breaches of these official Contest rules; (ii) infringement of a third party's right, including but not limited to copyright, trademark, intellectual property, right to privacy, right of publication or other proprietary right in connection with the Contest; or (iii) any claim that the Contest entry has caused any harm to a third party, including financial loss. These compensation and protection obligations remain in force permanently even after the end of the Contest.
8. Sponsors will take all precautions to protect PII of the participants in the Contest.
9. The Sponsors of the Contest do not accept any liability or liability for any damage or injury resulting from the participation of any user in the Contest or the attempt to participate in the Contest or the ability or inability to upload, download or otherwise obtain information related to the Contest.
10. The sponsors of the Contest do not accept any responsibility or liability for technical problems or technical failures arising in connection with the operation of the Contest, including: hardware or software errors; defective computer, telephone, cable, satellite, network, electronic, wireless or internet connection or other problems with online communication; errors or limitations of any ISPs, servers, hosting providers or providers; distorted, disordered or erroneous data transmission; failure to send or receive e-mail transmissions; lost, delayed, delayed or withheld electronic mail transmissions; complete or partial inaccessibility of the Contest site for any reason; congestion of the internet network or Contest site; unauthorized human intervention or other interference with the course of the Contest, including but not limited to tampering, unauthorized access, theft, virus, software bugs and worms; or the destruction of any aspect of the Contest or the loss, miscalculation, misdirection, inaccessibility or unavailability of the e-mail account used in connection with the Contest.
11. Use of the Contest website is at the user's own risk. The sponsors of the Contest are not liable for personal injury, property damage or loss of any kind possibly suffered on the computer equipment because of participating in the Contest, using the Contest website or downloading information from the Contest website. By participating in the Contest, the competitor relieves the sponsors of the Contest of all claims arising directly or indirectly as a result of or in connection with the participation of the competitor in the Contest.
12. Sponsors are not held liable for any delay in the Contest proceedings caused by external factors, such as weather, fire, strike, public health or other unforeseen circumstances.

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# Charity Commission takes regulatory action against trustees who mismanaged Newark charity

Press release

The Charity Commission has secured voluntary undertakings from three trustees of Hope House School.



The Charity Commission has secured voluntary undertakings from 3 trustees of Hope House School, ensuring that they will not act as charity trustees for a period of at least 8 years. The regulator's action follows investigations into the trustees' misconduct and/or mismanagement of the Newark-based charity.

Hope House School is a charity-run independent school, catering for approximately 25 pupils with special educational needs. The charity aims to advance the education of children between the ages of 5 and 19 years old who suffer from neurological and psychological conditions such as, but not limited to, Opltz syndrome, Autistic Spectrum Disorders and Dyspraxia.

The Commission opened a statutory inquiry into Hope House School in October 2017. This inquiry followed a compliance case opened in 2016 to assess anonymous complaints that a trustee (trustee A), was receiving personal benefit from the charity. This benefit included designer handbags and holidays to New York and Belgium. Trustee A was also the school's founder and Principal.

In an assessment of the charity's banking information, the Commission also identified suspicious payments made to trustee A's husband, as well as wider concerns about how spending was in line with the charity's purposes. This prompted a statutory inquiry, which was concluded today.

[The inquiry](#) found multiple instances of misconduct and/or mismanagement,

including that:

- trustee A was able to breach internal financial controls and make payments to her husband
- the payment of the rent and utility bills of a flat for a former beneficiary were not in furtherance of the charity's objects, and constituted a misapplication of charity funds
- trips to New York and Belgium, made by trustee A's family members to accompany pupils, and the purchase of personal luxury items, constituted personal benefit
- the current trustees did not act to adequately address concerns identified by Ofsted, and did not take all of the appropriate steps to improve the school's safeguarding practices and training, risk assessments, or health and safety

**Amy Spiller, Head of Investigations at the Charity Commission, said:**

Cases like this demonstrate the importance of good governance, robust internal financial controls and responsible trustee oversight. Trustee A abused their position and other trustees' neglect of their duties allowed this misconduct to continue unchecked, to the detriment of the charity and its beneficiaries.

The public expects trustees to deliver the charity's objects and ensure it makes a tangible and positive impact in the community. It is disappointing that these trustees did not take that duty and their responsibilities seriously.

As part of the inquiry, the regulator appointed an interim manager who improved the charity's financial position and helped ensure it could continue in its work to provide an education for children with special needs.

The Commission worked with Ofsted and the Department for Education to ensure trustees were taking seriously their responsibilities to rectify concerns raised by Ofsted on the safeguarding of beneficiaries and the effective ongoing operation of the charity.

### **Notes to Editors**

1. The Charity Commission is the independent, non-ministerial government department that registers and regulates charities in England and Wales. Its purpose is to ensure charity can thrive and inspire trust so that people can improve lives and strengthen society.
2. The voluntary undertaking made by the former trustees commenced in 2019.
3. The full report can be viewed [here](#).

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