

Press release: Directors of £1m carbon credit scam banned

An Insolvency Service investigation found that the voluntary emission reduction carbon credits (VERs) were sold by Cleartrade at highly inflated prices and had no investment potential. Members of the public have lost almost £1m as a result of dealing with Cleartrade.

Mr Hawrysh, 40, gave an undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to be disqualified as a director for a period of 13 years. Mr McKeigue, 39, and Mr Thornton, 36, did not defend proceedings brought by the Official Receiver and on 8 February 2017 were disqualified for 15 years each – the maximum period – by the High Court after the Registrar found that members of the public had been deceived and that Cleartrade's business was a scam.

Mr Hawrysh's disqualification commenced on 13 July 2016, those of McKeigue and Thornton will start on 1 March 2017 and mean that they cannot promote, manage, or be a director of a limited company until 2031.

This disqualification follows investigation by the Official Receiver at the Public Interest Unit, a specialist team of the Insolvency Service, whose involvement commenced with the winding up of the company in the public interest following an investigation by Company Investigations into the affairs of the company. The disqualification regime exists to protect the public.

The Official Receiver's investigation uncovered that between November 2011 and October 2012 the company sold VERs to members of the public as an investment, netting almost £1m. The VERs they were selling had no potential to show a return and McKeigue, Thornton and Hawrysh knew, or should have known that this was the case.

Commenting on this case Anthony Hannon, Official Receiver in the Public Interest Unit, said:

This company's claims about the profits to be made by buying its carbon credits were quite simply untrue and only the company and those working for it made money.

The lengthy periods of disqualification handed down in this case show that this kind of behaviour will not be tolerated by the Insolvency Service nor by the Court.

Notes to Editors

Cleartrade Ltd (CRN: 07816587) was incorporated on 19 October 2011. Its trading address and registered office was at One Cornhill, London EC3V 3ND.

The petition to wind up the company was presented by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (formerly Business, Innovation and Skills) in the public interest following an investigation conducted by Company Investigations (Live), another specialist unit within the Insolvency Service which uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 (as amended) to conduct confidential enquiries into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State. The winding up order against Cleartrade Limited was made on 1 May 2014.

On 22 June 2016, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification under taking from Graham Stephen Philip Hawrysh for a period of 13 years. The period of disqualification commenced on 13 July 2016.

On 20 April 2016 the Official Receiver issued disqualification proceedings against Marcel McKeigue and Carl Stuart Thornton in the High Court and on 8 February 2017 Mr Registrar Jones disqualified each for a period of 15 years. These disqualifications will commence on 1 March 2017.

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](#).

The Insolvency Service, an executive agency sponsored by the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS), administers the insolvency regime, and aims to deliver and promote a range of investigation and enforcement activities both civil and criminal in nature, to support fair and open markets. We do this by effectively enforcing the statutory company and insolvency regimes, maintaining public confidence in those regimes and reducing the harm caused to victims of fraudulent activity and to the business community, including dealing with the disqualification of directors in corporate failures.

BEIS' mission is to build a dynamic and competitive UK economy that works for all, in particular by creating the conditions for business success and promoting an open global economy. The Criminal Investigations and Prosecutions team contributes to this aim by taking action to deter fraud and to regulate the market. They investigate and prosecute a range of offences, primarily relating to personal or company insolvencies.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, assesses

and pays statutory entitlement to redundancy payments when an employer cannot or will not pay employees, provides banking and investment services for bankruptcy and liquidation estate funds and advises ministers and other government departments on insolvency law and practice. Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to: The Official Receiver, Public Interest Unit (South), The Insolvency Service, 2nd Floor, 4 Abbey Orchard Street, London SW1P 2HT. Tel: 020 7637 6578 Email: piu.or@insolvency.gsi.gov.uk.

Contact Press Office

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7596 6187.

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: UK House Price Index \(HPI\) annual review 2016](#)

2016 was an interesting year, with changes to stamp duty on second homes introduced in April 2016 and an EU referendum in June, but how did this impact the UK HPI?

If we look at 2016 as a whole, the UK annual growth rate for the year was 7.5%, 1.6 percentage points above that of 2015, as seen in the following table.

Annual rate of change UK HPI, all dwellings from 2006 to 2016

Year	% United Kingdom	% Great Britain	% England	% Scotland	% Wales	% Northern Ireland
2006	7.8	7.3	6.6	14.0	7.5	28.1
2007	9.9	9.1	9.0	14.8	6.7	40.3
2008	-4.3	-4.0	-3.9	0.0	-5.1	-17.0
2009	-8.6	-8.3	-8.3	-4.8	-7.7	-19.1
2010	5.8	6.0	6.6	1.6	2.6	-6.8
2011	-1.4	-1.2	-1.3	-1.8	-1.9	-12.1
2012	0.4	0.8	1.3	-3.3	-0.4	-11.2
2013	2.6	2.7	2.9	0.4	0.4	-2.8
2014	8.0	8.1	8.3	4.7	5.0	7.7

Year	% United Kingdom	% Great Britain	% England	% Scotland	% Wales	% Northern Ireland
2015	5.9	6.4	6.8	4.0	2.8	7.3
2016	7.5	7.6	8.2	2.0	4.3	6.6

In a historic context, this annual growth remains strong particularly when compared to growth in [general inflation](#). This strong UK house price growth was supported by falling new sales listings through the year, as reported by [RICS \(Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors\) PDF, 532KB](#) coupled with modest increases in new buyer activity since the referendum.

UK HPI annual rate of change

All dwellings against [CPI \(Consumer price inflation\)](#) from Quarter 1 2006 to Quarter 4 2016.

However, during the second half of the year, we did observe a slowdown in the annual growth rate. The annual growth rate of the UK for Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2016 was 7.9% and 8.7% which later slowed to 7.2% and 6.4% in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 respectively. Figures from other House Price Indices echo this trend.

While a similar trend can be seen throughout the year for England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Scotland showed annual growth of only 0.1% in Quarter 1 2016.

From 1 April 2015, UK stamp duty was replaced by land and buildings transaction tax in Scotland which, coupled with a significant increase in sales (a large proportion being high-value properties) during March 2015, resulted in an annual increase of 7.6% in the year to Quarter 1 2015. When compared to the unusually high prices in Quarter 1 2016, it resulted in an annual increase of 0.1% for Scotland in Quarter 1 2016.

UK HPI annual rate of change by country and UK

All dwellings from Quarter 1 2016 to Quarter 4 2016

	% Quarter 1 2016	% Quarter 2 2016	% Quarter 3 2016	% Quarter 4 2016
England	8.9	9.5	7.8	6.9
Scotland	0.1	2.7	2.5	2.6
Wales	4.3	4.7	3.9	4.2
Northern Ireland	7.1	7.8	5.9	5.7
United Kingdom	7.9	8.7	7.2	6.4

On 1 April 2016 [Higher rates of Stamp Duty Land Tax](#) were introduced in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for buy-to-let properties and second homes with additional dwelling supplement also introduced in Scotland. How did this impact the UK House Price Index? The biggest impact was seen in transaction volumes as presented below

Number of transactions UK HPI

All dwellings from Jan 2016 to October 2016

March 2016 saw a peak of around 134,000 transactions followed by a subsequent fall in April to 59,000 transactions. The [Council of Mortgage Lenders](#) (CML) data on mortgage completions in the UK show that, in March 2016, the number of mortgage completions had the same peak and subsequent fall in the number of completions as seen in the UK HPI transaction volumes. They showed that the March 2016 peak in mortgage completions was [mainly driven by a large increase \(181%\) in the number of buy-to-let mortgages](#), from 10,400 in February to 29,200 in March.

Looking at the distribution of house prices over the past two years, the most popular price band are those properties worth between £100k and £200k which account for around 40% of all sales, however, we have seen a decrease in the proportion of properties sold for under £200k between 2014 and 2015 which might be due to the strong growth in average house prices over this period.

Distribution of Great Britain house prices as a percentage

	% 2014	% 2015	% 2016
under £100k	13.7	12.6	12.3
£100k to £200k	40	37.4	35.9
£200k to £300k	23.3	23.5	23.2
£300k to £400k	10.3	11.9	12.6
£400k to £500k	5.3	6	6.5
£500k to £600k	2.4	3	3.4
£600k to £800k	2.5	2.9	3.2
£800k to £1m	1.1	1.2	1.3
over £1m	1.4	1.5	1.5

Finally, we look at the local authorities which showed the higher and lowest annual house price growth for 2016. The local authority showing the largest annual growth in 2016 was Slough, where prices increased by 19.6%, this increase may be driven by the development of Crossrail. The lowest annual growth was recorded in the City of Aberdeen, where prices fell by 8.7%, which could be due to the impact of falling oil prices on the local economy.

Top 5 UK Local Authorities, by annual growth in 2016

Top 5 Local Authorities	% change	Average price (£)
Slough	19.6	292,102
Luton	19.2	218,764
Newham	18.1	351,339

Top 5 Local Authorities % change Average price (£)

Barking and Dagenham	17.9	275,134
Thurrock	17.8	246,686

Bottom 5 UK Local Authorities, by annual growth in 2016**Bottom 5 Local Authorities % change Average price (£)**

City of Aberdeen	-8.8	175,006
Aberdeenshire	-2.9	194,371
Argyll and Bute	-2.2	131,384
Kensington And Chelsea	-1.5	1,282,844
North Ayrshire	-1.4	98,238

For more information on the monthly UK House Price Index, associated data downloads and online tools, read the [UK HPI](#).

Press release: UK House Price Index (HPI) for December 2016

From:

First published:

14 February 2017

The UK House Price Index shows house price changes for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The December data shows an annual price increase of 7.2% which takes the average property value in the UK to £219,544. Monthly house prices have risen by 1.4% since November 2016. The monthly index figure for the UK was 115.2.

In England, the December data shows an annual price increase of 7.7% which takes the average property value to £236,424. Monthly house prices have risen by 1.6% since November 2016.

Wales shows an annual price increase of 4.7% which takes the average property value to £148,177. Monthly house prices have risen by 1% since November 2016.

London shows an annual price increase of 7.5% which takes the average property value to £483,803. Monthly house prices have risen by 1.8% since

November 2016.

The regional data indicates that:

[UK Property Transaction statistics](#) show the number of home sales in the UK (seasonally adjusted) increased by 0.2% between November and December 2016, but compared with December 2015 there were 8.5% fewer home sales. See [the economic statement](#).

Sales during October 2016, the most up-to-date Land Registry figures available, show that:

- the number of completed house sales in England fell by 34.5% to 58,853 compared with 89,884 in October 2015
- the number of completed house sales in Wales fell by 25.9% to 3,415 compared with 4,610 in October 2015
- the number of completed house sales in London fell by 44.9% to 6,166 compared with 11,200 in October 2015
- there were 617 repossession sales in England in October 2016
- there were 53 repossession sales in Wales in October 2016
- the lowest number of repossession sales in England and Wales in October 2016 was in the East of England.

[Access the full December UK HPI](#)

Price change by region for England

England by region	Monthly change % since November 2016	Annual change % since December 2015	Average price December 2016
East Midlands	1.0	7.1	£176,790
East of England	1.9	11.3	£281,513
London	1.8	7.5	£483,803
North East	2.3	4.1	£128,631
North West	1.9	6.6	£152,259
South East	1.7	8.5	£316,026
South West	1.3	7.0	£242,808
West Midlands	0.4	7.1	£181,328
Yorkshire and The Humber	2.2	6.5	£154,985

Average price by property type for England

Average price by property type (England)	December 2016	December 2015	Difference %
Detached	£358,812	£331,013	8.4
Semi-detached	£218,802	£203,031	7.8
Terraced	£189,514	£177,739	6.6
Flat/maisonette	£223,008	£205,939	8.3
All	£236,424	£219,582	7.7

Price change for Wales

Wales	Monthly change % since November 2016	Annual change % since December 2015	Average price December 2016
Wales 1.0		4.7	£148,177

Average price by property type for Wales

Average price by property type (Wales)	December 2016	December 2015	Difference %
Detached	£225,788	£213,773	5.6
Semi-detached	£143,125	£135,730	5.4
Terraced	£113,343	£109,745	3.3
Flat/maisonette	£106,443	£101,662	4.7
All	£148,177	£141,520	4.7

Average price by property type for London

Average price by property type (London)	December 2016	December 2015	Difference %
Detached	£907,046	£844,884	7.4
Semi-detached	£576,108	£536,465	7.4
Terraced	£494,231	£462,912	6.8
Flat/maisonette	£430,554	£398,893	7.9
All	£483,803	£450,053	7.5

Sales volumes for England

Month	Sales 2016	England Sales 2015	England Difference %
September	64,311	82,452	-22.0
October	58,853	89,884	-34.5

Sales volumes for Wales

Month	Sales 2016	Wales Sales 2015	Wales Difference %
September	3,492	3,896	-10.4
October	3,415	4,610	-25.9

Sales volumes for London

Month	Sales 2016	London Sales 2015	London Difference %
September	6,698	11,065	-29.5
October	6,166	11,200	-36.5

Funding, buyer and building status for England

England	Monthly price change % since November 2016	Annual price change % since December 2015	Average price December 2016
Cash	1.3	7.3	£221,888
Mortgage	1.7	7.9	£243,757
First-time buyer	1.7	7.4	£198,325
Former owner occupier	1.6	7.8	£268,323
New build	11.5	26.0	£335,416
Existing resold property	0.9	6.4	£230,285

Funding, buyer and building status for Wales

Wales	Monthly price change % since November 2016	Annual price change % since December 2015	Average price December 2016
Cash	0.2	3.8	£143,469
Mortgage	1.5	5.2	£150,985
First-time buyer	1.0	4.3	£127,606
Former owner occupier	1.1	5.1	£172,228
New build	11.6	24.1	£224,423
Existing resold property	0.3	3.5	£144,002

Funding, buyer and building status for London

London	Monthly price change % since November 2016	Annual price change % since December 2015	Average price December 2016
Cash	2.1	7.8	£512,775
Mortgage	1.8	7.4	£474,924
First time buyer	1.9	7.5	£423,249
Former owner occupier	1.8	7.5	£545,667
New build	10.9	23.4	£563,322
Existing resold property	1.1	6.2	£477,549

Repossession

Repossession sales	October 2016
East Midlands	67
East of England	11

Repossession sales	October 2016
London	51
North East	91
North West	122
South East	75
South West	48
Yorkshire and The Humber	85
West Midlands	67
England	617
Wales	53

Notes to editors

1. The UK House Price Index (HPI) is published on the second or third Tuesday of each month with Northern Ireland figures updated quarterly. The January 2017 UK HPI will be published at 9.30am on 21 March 2017. A [calendar of release dates](#) is available.
2. Data for the UK HPI is provided by Land Registry, Registers of Scotland, Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency and the Valuation Office Agency.
3. The UK HPI is calculated by the Office for National Statistics and Land & Property Services/Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency. It applies a hedonic regression model that uses the various sources of data on property price, in particular Land Registry's Price Paid Dataset, and attributes to produce estimates of the change in house prices each month. Find out more about the methodology used from [ONS](#) and [Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency](#).
4. The first estimate for new build average price (April 2016 report) was based on a small sample which can cause volatility. A three-month moving average has been applied to the latest estimate to remove some of this volatility.
5. Work has been taking place since 2014 to develop a single, official HPI that reflects the final transaction price for sales of residential property in the UK. Using the geometric mean, it covers purchases at market value for owner-occupation and buy-to-let, excluding those purchases not at market value (such as re-mortgages), where the 'price' represents a valuation.
6. Information on residential property transactions for England and Wales, collected as part of the official registration process, is provided by Land Registry for properties that are sold for full market value.

7. The Land Registry dataset contains the sale price of the property, the date when the sale was completed, full address details, the type of property (detached, semi-detached, terraced or flat), if it is a newly built property or an established residential building and a variable to indicate if the property has been purchased as a financed transaction (using a mortgage) or as a non-financed transaction (cash purchase).
 8. Repossession data is based on the number of transactions lodged with Land Registry by lenders exercising their power of sale.
 9. For England this is shown as volumes of repossessions recorded by Government Office region. For Wales there is a headline figure for the number of repossessions recorded in Wales.
 10. The data can be downloaded as a .csv file. Repossession data prior to April 2016 is not available. Find out more information about [repossessions](#).
 11. Background tables of the raw and cleansed aggregated data, in Excel and CSV formats, are also published monthly although Northern Ireland is on a quarterly basis. They are available for free use and re-use under the Open Government Licence.
 12. As a government department established in 1862, executive agency and trading fund responsible to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, Land Registry keeps and maintains the Land Register for England and Wales. The Land Register has been open to public inspection since 1990.
 13. With the largest transactional database of its kind detailing more than 24 million titles, Land Registry underpins the economy by safeguarding ownership of many billions of pounds worth of property.
 14. For further information about Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry
 15. Follow us on Twitter [@LandRegGov](#) our [blog](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#)
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News story: Civil news: improvements to electronic CW3 immigration forms

From:

First published:

14 February 2017

Enhancements have been made to application forms in response to provider feedback.

Changes have been made to the following electronic versions of the CW3 form in response to feedback from providers:

- CW3B Imm: Application for extension of Upper Costs Limit (electronic version)
- CW3C Imm: Graduated Fee Scheme – application for extension of Disbursement Limit (electronic version)

The improvements include:

1. more Excel formulas to auto calculate totals
2. additional dropdown menu options
3. removal of requirement for details of work done to date

Process and benefits

There have been no changes to the process for submitting electronic forms, which have the following benefits compared to the Word versions:

- saves time because totals are validated as you complete the form
- electronic signatures accepted so no need to print off, sign and scan before emailing
- forms can be completed online, submitted directly by email and saved on to your system
- documents can still be attached to support applications e.g. ledger/running record of costs
- caseworkers able to process forms more efficiently so decisions made faster

Helpful hints

- when opening form click the 'enable content' button at the top of screen above column 'E'
- section 2 of CW3B form does not need to be completed if you can attach a running record of costs confirming work carried out to date
- remember that all CW3 applications must go to this mailbox:
cw3@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk

Support and advice

If you need help using these forms then support is available from the Mental Health Unit and Escape Cases Team.

Electronic CW3 forms will eventually be mandatory to use and the option to scan and email Word versions instead will be removed. So, it is a good idea to familiarise yourself with the electronic versions.

Further information

[CW3: extension of upper cost limit in controlled work cases](#) – to download electronic versions of CW3B (Imm)

[CW3C: disbursement limit extension](#)– to download electronic version of CW3C

[Escape cases electronic handbook](#) – for detailed guidance on the CW3 process

cw3@legalaid.gsi.gov.uk – to submit your application or ask for help and advice

News story: Government review team launches nationwide modern employment practices tour in London

Last October (2016), Matthew Taylor was asked by the Prime Minister to conduct an independent review to look at whether employment practices need to change in order to keep pace with modern business models.

Matthew and the review's expert panel will launch their nationwide tour, with cities including Glasgow, Norwich, Cardiff, Belfast and Newcastle among those being visited to collect evidence and build an understanding of how people work in different parts of the country.

The team will today (14 February 2017) meet entrepreneurs and workers at Google Campus in east London to find out about the capital's labour market and to understand the impact of new ways of working on employment rights.

They will go on to host a town hall-style event, where workers, employers, business owners and representative groups from London will give evidence on their experiences to help inform the review.

Matthew Taylor said:

Most people recognise that we need as many jobs as possible in our

economy and that the flexibility of our labour market is a strength. But people also want work to be fair and decent and to offer opportunities for progression and fulfilment.

The question is: what can we do to make work better without undermining our country's excellent record on job creation?

We've started working through these complex questions and now is just the right time to hear the views of businesses, employees, the self-employed and the public as a whole.

Business Minister Margot James said:

The Matthew Taylor Review is hugely important in helping us understand whether employment rights need to change to keep up with the various new ways people can work.

It is symbolic that Matthew will launch his country-wide regional tour in London, where thousands of people are already working in ways completely different from only a few years ago.

I'd encourage everyone to take part in the review to make sure their views on the modern labour market are heard.

With 15% of those working in the UK's labour market now self-employed, there has been a rise in the number of people doing 'gig' work – short-term, casual work that is increasingly sought by people through mobile phone apps when they want to work.

These roles can include driving, delivering items and DIY tasks. This is one of the areas the review will consider. The massive expansion of 'disruptive' businesses – where new ways of working and technology come together to create new products and services to better meet consumer demand – is also leading to a change in working practices.

The 3 expert panel members for the Taylor review are:

- Paul Broadbent – Chief Executive of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority (GLA), formerly assistant chief constable at Nottinghamshire Police.
- Greg Marsh (entrepreneur) – Founder and formerly Chair and Chief Executive of onefinestay. He works with Amnesty International as an elected member of the charity's Finance and Audit Committee, and is a Visiting Professor at Imperial College Business School.
- Diane Nicol (employment lawyer) – Diane is a Partner at law firm Pinsent Masons specialising in employment law. She has over 20 years of experience of industrial relations disputes, senior exits and employment terms and conditions.

People can also take part in the review by contributing their experiences and ideas online, and by accessing tickets to the team's town hall-style events

[via the review's Dialogue page](#).