

News story: Lord Duncan holds financial services roundtable

UK Government Minister Lord Duncan has met leading figures in finance, investment and Fintech to discuss a range of issues affecting financial services companies and organisations in Scotland and the UK.

The meeting in Glasgow included representatives from the Bank of England, Scottish Financial Enterprise and the Financial Conduct Authority. They discussed the opportunities arising from the UK's departure from the European Union, the differences between the Scottish and UK economy, as well as the UK Government's support for the FinTech sector.

Lord Duncan said:

It's well known that Scotland's financial sector punches above its weight. We have internationally renowned firms, cutting edge technology and some of the brightest minds in the business. That's why it is so important that I hear directly from representatives from these businesses in order to hear directly what their concerns are, and where they see areas of development as we leave the EU.

Fintech is an area that I'm keen to hear more about – and something that the UK Government is fully behind. Earlier this year the UK Government published the Fintech Sector Strategy, which outlined how the government would act to make the UK the best place to start and grow a Fintech business and looked at areas where we could help remove barriers to entry and growth faced by these firms.

I was pleased to welcome Stephen Ingledew, the Chief Executive of FinTech Scotland which is an example of the benefits of collaboration between the government and the private sector. It's really important that the UK Government, Scottish Government and organisations such as those represented today work closely together for the benefit of the sector.

During a speech last month the Chancellor said that we are standing on the brink of a technological revolution – with leaps and bounds being made in AI, robotics, biotech, Fintech, and a whole lot more. We need to capitalise on this and be ambitious in our development – working with other leaders to share knowledge and expertise. We have Fintech Bridges with Singapore, South Korea, China, Hong Kong, and Australia, which builds on collaboration between us and those countries – enhancing bilateral trade and investment flow.

It is obvious that there is a bright future and a wealth of opportunities for these companies and the whole sector, and I look

forward to discussing them in more detail.

Lord Duncan updated the group on the UK Government's Chequers position, and confirming that we are seeking a financial services regulatory and stability arrangement. This will provide stability for the EU-UK financial ecosystem, preserving mutually beneficial cross-border business models and economic integration.

The UK Government's negotiating position is critical to Scotland's future. That is why the course agreed at Chequers was one intended to enhance our prosperity and security outside the EU and build a country that works for everyone.

[News story: Bogus Croydon immigration advisers convicted of fraud](#)

On Tuesday 26 June 2018 Commonwealth Evaluators Ltd., and the leading members of the company were convicted at Croydon Crown Court on 12 counts comprising offences of fraud and the unlawful provision of immigration advice and services following a nine week trial brought by the Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner (OISC).

Swaye Binns, 39, of Croxted Road, Dulwich was the founder and CEO of the company which offered immigration advice and services. His twin brother Sheldon Binns, 39, of Cannon Street Road, Bow was a director in the company for a period when the company was incorporated in July 2014. Swaye Binns' partner, Tara Robinson, 33, also of Croxted Road, Dulwich was employed as a manager responsible for the day to day running of the business. Donald Hill, 37, of Uckfield Road, Mitcham, a long time friend of Swaye Binns, was brought into the company as director responsible for managing company finance.

The company was based in Croydon and advertised legal services, according to its Companies House profile. In fact this company was providing unregulated immigration advice and services to unsuspecting clients who were seeking to obtain Leave to remain in the UK. The services offered were tailored to appeal to citizens of Commonwealth countries, promoting a niche area of immigration law relating to the Right of Abode. In particular, this service was directed at the Caribbean community. The company promoted their services on television and radio, in community newspapers and at public events in London and Birmingham. Clients nationwide who were experiencing difficulties with their immigration status responded seeking help.

Each client was charged £2000 for immigration advice and Home Office applications were submitted on their behalf claiming a Right of Abode. In meetings held at their Croydon office clients were falsely told that their

unique position as Commonwealth citizens provided an automatic Right of Abode in the UK based on their heritage. However, unknown to these clients, Swaye Binns himself was an illegal overstayer and the subject of a deportation order resulting from a conviction in 2003 which resulted in a term of imprisonment.

Complaints started coming in to the OISC in August 2014 when disgruntled clients had their applications refused by the Home Office, later discovering that the company was unauthorised to provide these services as they were not regulated. Commonwealth Evaluators initially claimed to be authorised by the OISC, the statutory regulatory body for immigration advisers in the UK. This was not true. The company later declared that it was operating under the supervision of the Solicitors Regulation Authority, but this was also found to be fraudulent.

In a desperate attempt to continue trading, Tara Robinson made an application for registration as an approved immigration adviser with the OISC in early 2015. However the application was found to contain false information, claiming that the company was not advising clients at that time. The application was refused.

Working in collaboration with the Home Office, the OISC traced in excess of 260 clients who had been duped and gathered evidence from them to prosecute the company. Many of these clients attended court and gave evidence as to how they had been deceived into parting with their life savings only to find that their immigration problems were made far worse. Many have lost vital documents which has caused further issues as Commonwealth Evaluators refused to return them until their fees were settled in full.

Commonwealth Evaluators Ltd. were sentenced yesterday (19 July 2018) at Croydon Crown Court. Swaye Binns, the company CEO, was sentenced to imprisonment totalling 4 years. Sheldon Binns was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment suspended for 14 months and 150 hours of unpaid work. Tara Robinson was sentenced to 20 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years and 280 hours of unpaid work. Donald Hill was sentenced to a Community Service Order of 100 hours.

Swaye Binns was disqualified from holding any directorship for 5 years and a Criminal Behaviour Order banning him from working in the field of immigration indefinitely. Donald Hill was also disqualified from holding any directorship for 1 year. In addition, Donald Hill was ordered to pay compensation in the sum of £1000. Sheldon Binns and Tara Robinson were each ordered to pay compensation in the sum of £700. There was no order for costs.

Commonwealth Evaluators Ltd. was fined a notional £100 and will be struck off from the Companies Register on 19 August 2018. At the conclusion of his prison sentence the current deportation order against Swaye Binns will be activated.

Sentencing, Her Honour Judge Smaller said:

“You have been convicted on the clearest evidence of fraud. Commonwealth

Evaluators was a professional looking company with an impressive looking website. That is not a compliment. It outlines the sophisticated nature of the fraud. I have no doubt that clients of the company were under the impression that they were receiving the services of lawyers. Your company was not qualified from the outset and you knew that. It is clear that you portrayed yourselves as dedicated to serving your Jamaican community. In fact you caused a great disservice to those in your community and others besides. Immigration firms have to be regulated because they deal with the most vulnerable in society.”

About Swaye Binns, the Judge said ” You styled yourself as a successful businessman with an income to match, helping yourself to money from the company bank accounts. You talked of aiming to be head of an international organisation and specialists in the field. You have nothing more than an aspirational understanding of running a company and a complete disregard for keeping within the law. Your dishonesty is a self-aggrandising fantasy. You are arrogant, grandiose, self-interested, blinkered and greedy. When challenged about your behaviour you have reacted with further dishonesty. Whether you thought you were helping anyone I am unsure but you were really interested in the money. I am satisfied that you are dishonest through and through. This is serious offending over a sustained period of time with a high impact on vulnerable victims.“

Speaking about the case, the OISC Deputy Commissioner, Dr Ian Leigh, said:

“The OISC is here to ensure that people seeking immigration advice are treated fairly by qualified people they can trust. In the largest case ever prosecuted by the OISC, Commonwealth Evaluators were exposed operating outside the law, preying upon vulnerable clients within their own community without regard for their protection or the consequences. I am delighted with the outcome of this case, and I hope it sends a clear message to anyone considering providing unregulated immigration advice and services.”

[Press release: DVLA assists production companies from Hollyoaks to Hollywood](#)

Providing registration numbers and mock driving licences for production companies is one of the services DVLA carries out that people may not know about.

Over the years DVLA has assisted production companies by issuing mock licences for use in a scene. These include Emmerdale (ITV), EastEnders (BBC) and Hatton Garden (ITV).

DVLA has also supplied registration numbers for use by the Grand Tour (Amazon Prime), Saturday Night Takeaway (ITV) and major Hollywood pictures such as

Transformers.

DVLA also provided registration numbers for magazine shoots, adverts and programmes including Hollyoaks (Channel 4), Vera (ITV), Shetland (BBC One) and Rownd a Rownd (S4C).

Jody Davies, DVLA Personalised Registrations Sales Manager, said:

While we may not get our name included in the credits, we're proud to have helped so many production companies over the years find their perfect registration number.

Our [personalised registrations website](#) helps motorists find their perfect number every day. And with prices starting from £250 you don't need a studio's budget to make your car stand out.

Notes to editors

Follow DVLA Personalised Registrations on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) for the latest updates and information.

[Press release: June 2018 Transaction Data](#)

HM Land Registry completed 1,701,272 applications in June compared with 1,723,578 in May and 1,690,237 last June, of which:

1. Transaction Data is published on the 15th working day of each month. The July Transaction Data will be published at 11am on Tuesday 21 August 2018 at [HM Land Registry Monthly Property Transaction Data](#).
2. The monthly Transaction Data showing how many applications for new titles, leases, splitting titles, updating existing titles, official copies of the register and search and hold queries (official searches) were received, reflects the volume of applications lodged by customers using an HM Land Registry account number on their application form.
3. We are challenging ourselves to reassess our language to make our terms understandable to both our commercial and our citizen customers. This is in line with our commitment set out in the [Business Strategy 2017-2022](#) under the 'simplicity' element of our ambition.

4. Completed applications in England and Wales shown by region and by local authority include postal applications as well as those sent electronically.
5. Transaction Data excludes: pending applications, bankruptcy applications, bulk applications and discharge applications (to remove a charge, for example a mortgage, from the register).
6. Transactions for value are applications lodged involving a transfer of ownership for value. For an explanation of other terms used, see [abbreviations used in the transaction data](#).
7. Most search and hold queries (official searches) carried out by a solicitor or conveyancer are to protect the purchase and/or mortgage. For example, a search and hold query will give the buyer priority for an application to HM Land Registry to register the purchase of the property. This can give an indication of market activity.
8. Reasonable skill and care is used in the provision of the data. We strive to ensure that the data is as accurate as possible but cannot guarantee that it is free from error. We cannot guarantee our data is fit for your intended purpose or use.
9. Transaction Data is available free of charge for use and re-use under the [Open Government Licence](#) (OGL). The licence allows public bodies to make their data available for re-use.
10. If you use or publish the Transaction Data, you must add the following attribution statement: Contains HM Land Registry data © Crown copyright and database right 2018. This data is licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.
11. HM Land Registry's mission is to guarantee and protect property rights in England and Wales.
12. HM Land Registry is a government department created in 1862. It operates as an executive agency and a trading fund and its running costs are covered by the fees paid by the users of its services. Its ambition is to become the world's leading land registry for speed, simplicity and an open approach to data.
13. HM Land Registry safeguards land and property ownership worth in excess of £4 trillion, including around £1 trillion of mortgages. The Land Register contains more than 25 million titles showing evidence of ownership for some 85% of the land mass of England and Wales.

14. For further information about HM Land Registry visit www.gov.uk/land-registry.
 15. Follow us on Twitter [@HMLandRegistry](https://twitter.com/HMLandRegistry) our [blog](#) and [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
-

[News story: This is Sellafield](#)

The NDA summit 2018 drew in a national and international audience of leaders from Government, site stakeholder groups, local authorities and the entire NDA estate to hear about the latest issues and progress in the nuclear industry.

As well as premiering a new Sellafield video, Rebecca also delivered a presentation which showed some of the background and 'hidden' work needed to deliver the success of gaining access to the Pile Fuel Cladding Silo.

[This is Sellafield](#)

The Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) Permanent Secretary Alex Chisholm was at the event and said:

In recent years Sellafield Ltd has met significant milestones in retrieving hazardous waste from its legacy ponds and silos. Real progress has been made with reducing delays and cost overruns, which demonstrates the hard work of the management teams and workforce to drive improvements and I have no doubt this trend will continue.

These major successes at Sellafield have been years in the making. It follows on from a significant amount of work to develop and understand the scale and nature of the risks and to devise innovative solutions. I am really pleased to see the National Audit Office reporting that work at Sellafield has taken a real turn for the better.