

Press release: New Charity

Investigation: Combined Funds Limited

The Charity Commission, the independent regulator of charities in England and Wales, has opened a statutory inquiry into Combined Funds Limited and frozen the charity's bank accounts. The inquiry was opened on 27 March 2018.

The purposes of Combined Funds Limited are to advance religion in accordance with the Jewish Orthodox faith and to relieve poverty, and they do this by making donations to other charitable organisations. In the financial year ending 2016, the charity had an income of over £700,000 with net assets over £6.5m. The charity also has 9 trading subsidiaries.

The Commission initially opened a compliance case in 2017 following concerns that the charity had been operating for a prolonged amount of time without having registered with the Commission. The Commission notified the charity's trustees of the issue and they have since submitted an application to register. During this engagement, the Commission assessed the charity's financial accounts and bank records and identified a number of serious regulatory concerns over the governance and administration of the charity.

The Commission is concerned in particular about potential conflicts of interest and connected party transactions given that the 3 trustees of the charity are all related and in 8 of the trading subsidiaries the sole director is also a trustee of the charity.

Despite the charity's main activity being making grants to other charitable organisations, there is no formally agreed grant-making policy in place. Therefore it is unclear how beneficiaries are selected, whether any due diligence is carried out or whether there are appropriate processes in place to monitor the end use of the funds.

The inquiry will look at:

As a result of its concerns the Commission has made an order under Section 76 of the Charities Act to the charity's bank, restricting any application of the charity's funds without the prior written approval of the Commission. The charity's registration application is currently on hold pending the outcome of the inquiry.

It is the Commission's policy, after it has concluded an inquiry, to publish a report detailing what issues the inquiry looked at, what actions were undertaken as part of the inquiry and what the outcomes were. Reports of previous inquiries by the Commission are available on GOV.UK.

Ends

Notes to editors

1. The Charity Commission is the regulator of charities in England and

- Wales. To find out more about our work see the [about us](#) page on GOV.UK.
2. Search for charities on our [check charity](#) tool.
 3. Section 46 of the Charities Act 2011 gives the Commission the power to institute inquiries. The opening of an inquiry gives the commission access to a range of investigative, protective and remedial legal powers.
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Press release: Cash collection bosses disqualified for holding onto £5.8m

Doreen, Sean, Joanne and John Baker were all were directors of Coin Co International Plc (Coin Co) based in Burgess Hill, West Sussex, providing cash collections in transit services to local government, public bodies, charities, other organisations and businesses. The company also provided counting and foreign exchange coinage services.

The company was incorporated in January 1995 and its cash-in-transit services were undertaken under agreements which stipulated that the money collected, for example from car parks, was counted, banked and paid over to the customer.

However, Coin Co fell behind with payments of collected funds to their clients from at least March 2013, more than a year before it went into administration in November 2014, breaching contracts it had entered into.

At administration, Coin Co had assets of £1,866,066 and liabilities of £11,397,211 and investigators looked at the company's activities, discovering several instances of mismanagement.

In one case, four different customers were owed £5.8 million by Coin Co who had collected funds on their behalf but had not returned the money, directly breaching previous agreements.

The directors did not dispute the findings of the investigation, which, among other things, found that, they:

- held on to £5.7m of clients money, in contravention of their contract
- caused or allowed the company to breach commercial agreements relating to a coin collection service provided to a number of clients
- allowed the company to fall behind with payments of collected funds to its clients from at least March 2013

John, Doreen, Joanne and Sean Baker, provided disqualification undertakings to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy, Innovation and Science, effective from 3 May 2018, for eight years each.

Doreen, Sean and Joanne Baker were appointed directors on 30 January 1995 and John Baker was appointed as a director on 1 January 1998. The disqualifications prevent the directors from directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company for the duration of their terms.

Robert Clarke, Investigations Group Leader at the Insolvency Service commented:

It is clear that companies handling money on behalf of others have a duty to ensure that funds collected are duly paid over to the rightful owners, under the agreements entered into. Directors who fail in these duties will be investigated and removed from the corporate arena for a lengthy period.

Any individual who is registered as a director must make themselves aware of the duties such a position carries with it, and further that they are able and willing to carry out those duties and ensure that the business for which they hold responsibility is managed in compliance with its obligations under agreements entered into or they too may face disqualification in the event of failure.

Notes to editors

Coin Co International Plc (Company number 03015844) was incorporated on 30 January 1995 and went into administration on 27 November 2014. At Administration it had assets of £1,866,066 and liabilities of £11,397,211.

Both John (Date of birth: June 1947) and Doreen Baker (Date of birth: July 1946) reside in Hassocks, West Sussex. Sean Baker (Date of birth: 22 June 1970) resides in Burgess Hill, West Sussex and Joanne Baker (Date of birth: 10 February 1972) resides in Brighton.

In giving their disqualification undertakings, John Francis Baker, Doreen May Baker, Sean Baker and Joanne Baker, did not dispute that:

- they caused or allowed Coin Co International Plc ("Coin Co") to breach commercial agreements relating to a coin collection service provided to a number of clients, in that Coin Co failed to pay client monies collected on behalf of clients, at least four of which entered into contracts which specifically stated that ownership of funds collected never passed to Coin Co, resulting in an amount outstanding to those clients at the date of the Administration of at least £5,757,759 included in a total amount outstanding to all cash in transit clients of at least £6,154,948, which is material to Coin Co's deficiency at administration of £8,078,316
- Coin Co entered into agreements with clients for the collection, counting and banking of coins received, for example, from pay and display car parks and charity collections

- Coin Co fell behind with payments of collected funds to its clients from at least March 2013
- at least four contracts entered into with clients specifically stated that the funds collected were not the property of Coin Co and must be paid over to the clients within a specified number of days. Coin Co would then invoice the client for the agreed service charge outstanding to them. These four clients were due £5,757,759 at administration in relation to funds held by Coin Co not paid over as per the terms of their contracts. These monies dated back to collections made from July 2013 onwards, and were due to be paid over between four and ten days after the cash was collected
- from at least 1 October 2013, when the co-directors were in dispute with a major client as to Coin Co's claim that historic sums were owed to Coin Co by that major client in respect of replenishments, they caused or allowed Coin Co to act at risk of and to the detriment of clients other than the major client (the other clients) in that:
 - in the knowledge that the major client denied owing sums to Coin Co for replenishments the co-directors failed to preserve monies collected on behalf of the other clients, instead intermingling monies collected on behalf both of the major client and of the other clients and making payments to the major client from the monies so intermingled
 - despite demands from the other clients that monies collected on their behalf be paid over in accordance with contractual obligations, the Mr Baker and his co-directors failed to make payments when due to the other clients and to otherwise preserve monies collected from them, causing detriment to the other clients who at the date of Administration were owed a total of at least £5,688,133.

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 administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency authorises and regulates the insolvency profession,

deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, 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](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7637 6498

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[News story: Immersive technologies for pupils with autism: apply for funding](#)

The [Education Authority of Northern Ireland](#) (EA) has up to £150,000 to invest in projects that use immersive technologies to improve the outcomes of pupils with autism.

Improve education, emotional and social skills

About one in 40 pupils in Northern Ireland has a diagnosis of autism. The condition affects the way they relate to people, situations and their immediate environment.

Immersive technologies such as augmented reality and virtual reality have the potential to improve their education, emotional and social skills.

The EA wants to develop educational tools that can be used within a classroom environment. These should target the needs of 3 to 19-years-old with an autism spectrum disorder diagnosis.

In the first phase, the EA will issue contracts to organisations for feasibility studies. More contracts could be awarded in a further 2 phases to develop the best ideas and test them at scale.

The competition is run under SBRI (the Small Business Research Initiative), which helps the public and private sectors come together to solve challenges facing government.

Competition information

- the competition opens on 30 June 2018, and the deadline for applications is 23 July 2018
- it is open to any organisation that can demonstrate a route to market

for its idea

- successful projects will attract 100% funded development contracts
- tender documentation to apply will be available on [e-TendersNI](#) from 30 June 2018
- a briefing event will be held at the [Dundonald Office](#) on 29 June 2018

[News story: Agency joining Government Hub](#)

From 18 June 2018 the Agency will be moving out of its current location in Victoria to a new, modern office in Canary Wharf.

The relocation follows the establishment in 2016, [announced by the Cabinet Office](#), of a new Government Hub for more than 5,000 civil and public servants in East London.

The centres moving include:

Members of staff working for the [National Institute for Biological Standards and Control \(NIBSC\)](#) will be staying at their current location in South Mimms – their address remains unchanged.

Dr Siu Ping Lam, Director of Licensing, MHRA said:

We are delighted to have secured new, modern accommodation in a London location, which we know is important to both our staff and our stakeholders.

We are looking forward to this exciting move as part of the creation of a more modern Civil Service.

The Agency's new contact address will be:

10 South Colonnade
Canary Wharf
LONDON
E14 4PU

All telephone numbers will remain the same.

Press release: Social Security Advisory Committee: Professor Sir Ian Diamond appointed as next Chair

Sir Ian will take up post on 1 August 2018 after the current Chair of the Social Security Advisory Committee (SSAC), Paul Gray CB, stands down.

Esther McVey said:

I am delighted to welcome Sir Ian to the role of SSAC Chair. He will bring a wealth of relevant experience and skills to the role. I look forward to working with Sir Ian, and am confident that the committee will continue to provide valuable advice under his leadership.

I would also like to thank the committee's outgoing Chair, Paul Gray CB, for the high quality and constructive support that has been provided to the department over the past 6 years. I wish him every success in his future endeavours when he stands down from the committee in July.

Sir Ian Diamond said:

I am delighted to have been invited to become the next Chair of SSAC, indeed, I consider it to be a privilege. Social security touches on the lives of everyone over the course of a lifetime, therefore the committee has an important responsibility to provide high quality and evidence-based advice to government. I look forward to rising to that challenge, supported by the wealth of talent that already exists within the committee's current membership.

The Social Security Advisory Committee

The [Social Security Advisory Committee](#) is an independent advisory body of the Department for Work and Pensions. The committee's role is to:

- give advice on social security issues
- scrutinise and report on social security regulations (including tax credits)
- consider and advise on any matters referred to it by the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions or the Northern Ireland [Department for Communities](#)

The post of SSAC Chair attracts a salary of £22,000 per annum for a time

commitment of at least 5 days per month. Professor Sir Ian Diamond has waived his entitlement to this remuneration.

The [Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments](#) regulates all appointments made by the Secretary of State to the Social Security Advisory Committee. The post of SSAC Chair is subject to pre-appointment scrutiny by the Work and Pensions Select Committee.

Professor Sir Ian Diamond

Professor Sir Ian Diamond, who was knighted in 2013 for his services to social science and higher education, is the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University of Aberdeen. He also holds the following non-executive roles:

- Chair of British Universities and Colleges Sport
- Deputy Chair and Chair of the Audit Committee, Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS)
- Chair of Department for International Development (DFID) Research Advisory Group
- Trustee, National Centre for Social Research
- Trustee, Iona Cathedral Trust
- Trustee, Population Investigation Committee
- Chair of Edinburgh College of Further Education
- Chair of Plan International UK
- Board Member, UK Research and Innovation
- Board Member, UK Statistics Authority
- Board Member, University of Aberystwyth

Professor Sir Ian Diamond takes up his 5-year appointment as SSAC Chair from 1 August 2018. Current Chair, Paul Gray CB, stands down on 31 July 2018.

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