

[News story: Merchant ordered to pay £4,700 for buying fish while unregistered](#)

Lancashire company pleads guilty to buying fish without appropriate MMO registration

Representatives of Dockside Ltd, a company that owns a wet fish shop in Fleetwood, Lancashire, were ordered to pay £4,715.27 by Blackpool Magistrates Court on 26 July 2017.

The company pleaded guilty to purchasing first-sale fish directly from a fishing boat other than as a registered buyer, contrary to regulation 8 of the Registration of Fish Buyers and Sellers and Designation of Fish Auction Sites Regulations 2005.

The court heard how the Marine Management Organisation acted after being made aware the company had been purchasing fish from a number of vessels without being a registered buyer with the MMO. Upon investigation marine officers found the company had purchased £18,487 of fish between April 2014 and September 2016 while being an unregistered buyer of first-sale fish.

The company was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay an additional £2,545.27 in costs and a victim surcharge of £170.

The Registered Buyers and Sellers Scheme is designed to help ensure that fish is traceable from net to plate and to monitor and protect fish stocks. The MMO has [produced a guide](#) on the regulations for buying and selling fish.

[Press release: Foreign Secretary calls for urgent action from Venezuelan government](#)

Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said:

Venezuela stands on the brink of disaster and Nicholas Maduro's government must stop before it is too late. The country is turning on itself – more than 100 have died already – and democracy and basic rights are in jeopardy. The dubious Constituent Assembly vote

has dramatically deepened the problems and ramped up tensions. It is time for the government to see sense and start working with the opposition on a way forward that brings the people of Venezuela back together.

Further information

[News story: Keeping Kids Company](#)

A spokesperson for the Insolvency Service said:

We can confirm that the Insolvency Service has written to the former directors of Keeping Kids Company informing them that the Business Secretary intends to bring proceedings to have them disqualified from running or controlling companies for periods of between two-and-a-half and six years.

As this matter will now be tested in the Court it is not appropriate to comment further.

- The intention to bring disqualification proceedings follow an investigation by the Insolvency Service, an executive agency of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- The proceedings will name all nine former directors; Sunetra Devi Atkinson, Erica Jane Bolton, Richard Gordonn Handover, Vincent Gerald O'Brien, Francesca Mary Robinson, Jane Tyler, Andrew Webster and Alan Yentob. The former chief executive Camila Batmanghelidjh was not formally a director at the time the charity collapsed, however the proceedings will allege that she acted as a de facto director and should therefore also be disqualified from running or controlling other companies

[Press release: Ban for further director of Manchester financial](#)

advisory business

An investigation by the Insolvency Service found that Mr Sharma 31, of Hale, caused funds totalling £42,920 to be transferred to the company's current account, of which at least £25,929 was paid to another company controlled by Rahul Sharma, and individuals connected to him. Mr Sharma's nine year disqualification commenced on 3 July 2017 and will end in July 2026.

Debt Connect was supposed to look after the interests of clients who were in financial difficulties. However Investigators found that during the time when Rahul Sharma was directing the company, Debt Connect did not make all payments due to clients' creditors, including printed cheques not posted out totalling £32,465 which were in a box delivered up to the liquidators, nor did it pay refunds due to clients of at least £9,267.

In addition, Debt Connect had lost its Consumer Credit Licence and been instructed by a Tribunal to return payments received from clients which would not be distributed to their creditors.

Earlier:

- Rajiv Sharma, 58, of Whitefield, Manchester, signed an eleven year disqualification in which he did not dispute that he acted as a director of Debt Connect between at least October 2013 and October 2014 whilst he was already subject to disqualification. His disqualification in relation to Debt Connect commenced on 10 November 2016, and runs until November 2027
- Stephen Bradbury, 60, of Darwen, Lancashire, signed a four year disqualification undertaking. He had been appointed as a director of Debt Connect in October 2013 but abrogated his responsibilities by taking no active role in the company, other than to sign paperwork when instructed by others. This allowed Rahul Sharma to make some of the illegitimate payments. Mr Bradbury's disqualification began on 26 October 2016

Commenting on the disqualifications, Robert Clarke, Investigations Group Leader at The Insolvency Service, said:

Debt Connect's customers were vulnerable individuals who had already experienced financial difficulties and had turned to a debt management company with the expectation that the resolution of their problems would be paramount.

However, there were serious failings within the company; Rahul Sharma failed to ensure all payments were made to clients' creditors and defied a clear Tribunal instruction, and Rajiv Sharma blatantly ignored his existing disqualification. The lengthy bans these men have accepted are wholly justified.

Also, directors such as Mr Bradbury should know that failing to play their part in directing a company is unacceptable, and the Insolvency Service will pursue this as a matter of misconduct.

Notes to editors

Rajiv Sharma was registered with Companies House as a director of Debt Connect (UK) Ltd (company number 04296391) between 15 October 2007 and 1 November 2011. He was disqualified from acting as a director or being concerned in the promotion, formation or management of a company for 6 years from 13 March 2012.

Mr Sharma did not obtain leave of the court when he acted as a director of Debt Connect between at least 31 October 2013 and 28 October 2014.

Rahul Sharma was appointed as a director of Debt Connect between 31 October 2011 and 31 October 2013, although evidence gathered by investigators established that Rahul Sharma continued to act as a director of the company until at least 16 December 2013.

Companies House records show that Stephen Bradbury was appointed as a director of Debt Connect on 31 October 2013, and remained so appointed until the company went into Liquidation.

Debt Connect was incorporated on 01 October 2001. From around March 2009 the company traded from No. 2 Universal Square, Devonshire Street North, Manchester M12 6JH.

When Debt Connect went into Liquidation on 28 October 2014, the company disclosed assets estimated to realise £1,000, and liabilities to creditors of £157,842.

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. Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is [available](#).

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.

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[Detailed guide: Countryside Productivity Scheme](#)

Updated: "How to fill in an Improving Farm Productivity application" guidance updated at pages 20 and 21 to clarify that quotes in a foreign currency need to be converted to £ sterling, and that transaction fees are not eligible for grant funding and should be excluded.

Latest news

The Improving Forestry Productivity, Water Resource Management, Adding Value to Agri-food and Countryside Productivity Small Grant schemes are now closed to new applications.

Some livestock handling items are in short supply

If you've received a grant under the Countryside Productivity Small Grant (CPSG) scheme, you may find that some livestock handling items are in short supply. [Find out what's available to help you submit your grant claim.](#)

Countryside Productivity Scheme

The RDPE Countryside Productivity Scheme provides funding for projects in England which improve productivity in the farming and forestry sectors and help create jobs and growth in the rural economy.

It is administered by the Rural Payments Agency (RPA).

Under the RDPE Countryside Productivity Scheme, there are grants for:

- water resource management and reservoirs
- improving forestry productivity
- adding value to Agri-food
- improving farm productivity
- small grants

The grants are funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

Government guarantees about funding after the UK leaves the EU

The government has guaranteed funding for RDPE Countryside Productivity Scheme grants if these are agreed and signed before the UK's departure from the EU, even if the grant agreements continue after we have left the EU. This is subject to projects meeting the following conditions when the application is assessed:

- they are good value for money
- they are in line with domestic strategic priorities

Who can apply

To find out if you and your project are eligible, please read the relevant handbook below.

Improving Forestry Productivity

The Improving Forestry Productivity scheme is now closed to new applications.

Applications received by the closing date are being processed.

[Improving forestry productivity handbook](#)

(PDF, 3.59MB, 34 pages)

Water Resource Management

The Water Resource Management scheme is now closed to new applications.

Applications received by the closing date are being processed.

[Water Resource Management handbook](#)

(PDF, 2.85MB, 31 pages)

Adding Value to Agri-food

The Adding Value to Agri-food scheme is now closed to new applications.

Expressions of Interest received by the closing date are being processed.

[Adding Value to Agri-food Handbook](#)

(PDF, 1.84MB, 32 pages)

Improving Farm Productivity

[Improving Farm Productivity Handbook](#)

(PDF, 5.16MB, 30 pages)

[How to fill in an Improving Farm Productivity application](#)

(PDF, 968KB, 32 pages)

[Improving Farm Productivity Application Form](#)

(MS Word Document, 112KB)

[Improving Farm Productivity Application Form – appendix](#)

(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 565KB)

What happens next

For the following schemes:

- Water Resource Management
- Improving Farm Productivity

fill in your application form and send it to us. If this is successful, you'll get a funding agreement to sign.

With your grant funding agreement signed, you can start work on your project.

After you've paid for the work, you can claim your money.

For Adding Value to Agri-food, fill in your Expression of Interest form and send it to us. If this is successful, you'll get a full application form to complete.

Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme

The Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme is now closed for applications.

The RDPE Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme provides funding for farmers to purchase equipment to improve the productivity of their farm. The scheme is different to other parts of the Countryside Productivity scheme as it uses an online application process and is targeted at supporting investment for specific pieces of agricultural equipment.

Some livestock handling items are in short supply

If you've received a grant under the Countryside Productivity Small Grant (CPSG) scheme, you may find that some livestock handling items are in short supply. [Find out what's available to help you submit your grant claim.](#)

Who can apply

Farmers (including livestock, dairy, arable and horticultural sectors) can apply for this grant. Please read the handbook below to find out more. This scheme is only open to farmers based in England.

[Small Grant Handbook](#)

(PDF, 1.94MB, 49 pages)

When you can apply

The Countryside Productivity Small Grant scheme is now closed for applications.

To help you apply online for the scheme read

[Countryside Productivity Small Grant – Hints and tips](#)

(PDF, 850KB, 4 pages)

Please remember to check your details on the Rural Payments service before you apply for this grant. You must make sure they exactly match with the details in your application form or your application will be rejected.

If you have any questions

Once you have read the handbook, if you have any questions please email your enquiry to CPSGEnquiries@rpa.gsi.gov.uk.

What happens next

Fill in your application form on line and sign up to the terms and conditions of the scheme. We will email you after the date that the funding round closes to let you know if your application has been approved. When you receive this email you can purchase your items.

After you've purchased all your items, you can claim your money