

Manchester surveyors wound-up after misleading clients

Ellis and Co Surveyors Limited, based in Stretford, Manchester, was wound-up in the public interest on 16 March 2020 at the High Court in Manchester before District Judge Obodai. The Official Receiver has been appointed liquidator of the company.

The court heard that Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd was incorporated in July 2013 and began to cold call businesses by telephone, followed by a site visit, seeking to sign up businesses to a long-term contract.

Ellis and Co Surveyor's offer was to manage the client's business rates by making representations to the Valuations Office and secure reductions in the rateable value of the business.

The Insolvency Service, however, became aware of complaints about Ellis and Co Surveyors' activities and instigated confidential enquiries.

Investigators uncovered that the company's telesales team and field representatives made exaggerated claims to prospective clients about the likelihood of a successful appeal on their business rates, as well as the amount that would be saved.

Despite incomplete records provided by Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd, investigators discovered that the company's success rate was no more than 15%, which contrasted to what clients were told.

Between 2014 and 2018, Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd turned over £2.6 million using methods that exploited their clients.

Several clients who signed contracts with Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd reported they found it difficult to engage with the company and received minimal progress on their case. Once contact with the surveyors had been made, clients complained that staff were rude, threatening and unprofessional.

Investigators also uncovered that when Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd was incorporated, the company had appointed a director but this person was a decoy to conceal the identity of the person in control of the company.

The person who had been running the company behind the scenes, Joanne Boslem, admitted to investigators that she was only appointed as a director 5 years later in October 2018.

Joanne Boslem said that she wanted to hide her activities because she had been a principal shareholder in two similar companies – David Scott Surveyors Ltd and C & R Surveyors Limited – which at the time of Ellis and Co Surveyors' incorporation were being wound up in the courts for similar trading activities.

Scott Crighton, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Companies are responsible for providing correct information to their clients and should not over-promise services they cannot guarantee. But this is exactly what Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd did when they told prospective clients that they could reduce their business rates.

Our investigations proved that Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd misled their clients and the court agreed in granting the application. By winding up Ellis and Co Surveyors Ltd, the Insolvency Service have put a stop to the company's activities, preventing further harm.

All public enquiries concerning the affairs of the company should be made to:

ELLIS & CO SURVEYORS LIMITED – company registration number 08601180 – was incorporated on 8 July 2013. The company's registered office is at Alexander Bursk, Parkgates, Bury New Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 0JW.

The petition was presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 3 December.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). [Information about how to complain about a live company.](#)

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