

News story: 3 directors of office fit-out firms disqualified

The move follows the [Competition and Markets Authority's \(CMA\) finding on 12 April 2019](#) that 6 office fit-out companies broke competition law at least once – and in some cases on multiple occasions – during the period from 2006 to 2017.

Fourfront, Loop, Coriolis, ThirdWay and Oakley were required to pay fines totalling more than £7 million. Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. (JLL) was not required to pay a fine, having brought the conduct to the CMA's attention under the CMA's leniency programme. Each company was found to have participated in "cover bidding" in competitive tenders, colluding on the prices they would bid for contracts.

Mr Robb Simms-Davies, a former director of Bluu Solutions Ltd, Bluuco Ltd and Tetris Projects Ltd, has been disqualified for 5 years.

Mr Trevor Hall, a former director of Cube Interior Solutions Ltd, has been disqualified for 2 years and 6 months, and Mr Oliver James Hammond, a former director of Area Sq. Ltd, has been disqualified for 2 years.

Bluu Solutions Ltd, Bluuco Ltd and Tetris Projects Ltd are part of the JLL group of companies. Bluu Solutions Ltd and Bluuco Ltd were acquired by JLL in 2015. Cube Interior Solutions and Area Sq. Ltd are part of the Fourfront group of companies.

All 3 were directors of their respective companies at the time of the illegal cartel activity and contributed to a number of the competition law breaches. Mr Simms-Davies contributed to 12 breaches affecting contracts with a total value of over £13.5 million. Mr Hall and Mr Hammond each contributed to 2 breaches. In the case of Mr Hammond the affected contracts were worth over £4.3 million. The contracts in the case of Mr Hall had a total value of over £1.2 million.

As a former director within the JLL group, Mr Simms-Davies would have been immune from director disqualification but had his protection withdrawn because he did not submit to a voluntary interview with the CMA. Continuous and complete cooperation with the CMA's investigation is a condition for leniency.

The undertakings disqualify these individuals from acting as directors or being involved in the management of any UK company. The CMA is continuing to investigate whether to seek the disqualification of other individuals in this case.

It is important that company directors understand that they have a personal responsibility for ensuring that their companies comply with competition law. Failure to do so puts in question their fitness to be a director of a

company.

This brings the total number of director disqualifications secured by the CMA to 9 since December 2016 when the CMA took the policy decision to use this power actively as part of ensuring personal responsibility.

[Guidance is available on the CMA website](#) to help directors understand how to avoid disqualification. Anyone who suspects they may have witnessed or been involved in a cartel should report it at www.gov.uk/stopcartels.

For more information, [view the case page](#).