

News story: Regulated adviser banned indefinitely from providing immigration advice and services

In a decision issued on 5 April 2017 the First-tier Tribunal (Immigration Services) found sixty charges brought by the OISC to be proven against Alpesh Patel of Aaryas Careers Ltd following an oral hearing between 23 January and 1 February 2017. Mr Patel had been registered by the OISC to provide immigration advice and services from 16 September 2011 until 2 June 2016 when his registration was cancelled.

Over the course of 2015 Mr Patel, operating out of offices in Hayes and Brentford located in West London, made Tier 2 visa applications for at least 16 complainants using a fake Certificate of Sponsorship. Mr Patel acted as an immigration adviser and recruitment consultant, introducing the complainants to companies that he claimed could provide them with employment and a Certificate of Sponsorship to allow them to remain in the country.

In each case Mr Patel charged between £3,300 and £13,000, usually demanding payment in cash. There was no legitimate recruiting company. There were no real jobs. There were no genuine Certificates of Sponsorship. On each occasion, the complainant's Tier 2 application was refused by the Home Office, because the purported Certificate of Sponsorship was a fake. Each complainant lost thousands of pounds.

In its decision, the Tribunal found the conduct of Mr Patel to be "reprehensible" and held that he had played a major role in this deception. It noted that Mr Patel "has sought, serially, to deceive the Commissioner, and the immigration authorities, and to abuse the material immigration procedures, and has deceived all of those clients whose immigration affairs are the subject of these proceedings and in respect of whom the aforesaid sixty charges have been upheld, and dishonestly deprived each of them of a substantial amount of money".

On 31 May 2017 the Tribunal directed Mr Patel to repay a total of £172,600 to the complainants and £7,460 by way of a penalty to the OISC. The Tribunal also directed that Mr Patel/Aaryas Careers Ltd be prohibited from providing immigration advice and/or services indefinitely.

Speaking about the decision, Deputy Immigration Services Commissioner Dr Ian Leigh said, "Alpesh Patel was entrusted to advise vulnerable people who could not handle their immigration cases on their own... they trusted him and he betrayed that trust by his reprehensible conduct. I am delighted with the outcome in this case."