

Press release: Furniture director shelved with a 6 year ban

Rebecca Dale-Essex, of London, knowingly removed the money over a 24 day period prior to the company going into liquidation. She was the sole director of Belle Maison Direct Limited, which sold children's furniture until it went into liquidation on 20 April 2016.

£42,000 of the amount removed came after she had informed the local council that her company had insufficient funds to make payments in respect of outstanding business rates. In total, she left creditors, including the council, out of pocket by £140,314.

She provided a disqualification undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy which prevents her from directly or indirectly becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company for six years.

Commenting on the disqualification, Martin Gitner, Deputy Chief Investigator of Insolvent Investigations, Midlands and West at the Insolvency Service, said:

Rebecca Dale-Essex deliberately removed significant amounts of cash from the company that was for her own benefit, leaving little, if anything, for the creditors of her company.

Company directors should note that the Insolvency Service will investigate and remove them from the business environment if they have acted to the detriment of the company creditors.

Rebecca Dale-Essex's date of birth is September 1971 and she resides in London; She was appointed as a director on 28 January 2009.

Belle Maison Direct Limited (Company number 06804657) was incorporated on 28 January 2009 and was placed into Creditors voluntary liquidation on 20 April 2016.

On 7 September 2017, the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Dale-Essex for 6 years, from 28 September 2017.

The matters of unfitness, which she did not dispute in the Disqualification Undertaking, were that:

- Between 19 June 2015 and 13 July 2015, despite knowing the amounts due in respect of Business Rates, she caused BMD to enter into transactions

to the detriment of the company and its creditors totalling of £121,500, which worsened its insolvent position. These monies were funds held in BMD's bank accounts, which she transferred to herself.

- Further, £42,000 of these funds were transferred between 7 July 2015 and 13 July 2015, after she had emailed the Council advising BMD had insufficient funds to maintain repayments to a historic balance outstanding in respect of Business Rates on 7 July 2015.

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.

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.

The agency also authorises and regulates the insolvency profession, 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](#).

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