

# Press release: Injury claims boss jailed after removing company funds before closure

Bury-based Darren Christopher Bullough appeared at Bolton Crown Court on Wednesday 14 November after he pleaded guilty to one count of fraudulently removing funds and another count of failing to provide company books and records to the liquidator.

The court heard that Direct Assist Ltd was first incorporated in June 2007 and was a personal injury claims management company with two registered offices in Bury and Bolton.

Darren Bullough (46) was the sole director but seven years later, the company struggled financially after they lost a client who was their main source of business. This resulted in a petition being lodged at court to wind-up Direct Assist in September 2014 in relation to a £658,000 unpaid tax bill.

However, following the petition to wind-up the company, a substantial amount of money was removed from the company's accounts.

The company bank account was frozen to stop any more funds being removed, as well as preventing creditors losing out further, and after Direct Assist formally entered into compulsory liquidation in March 2015, an investigation was launched by the Insolvency Service.

Enquiries were made difficult as investigators could not find any evidence of company records from July 2013 onwards and this would have covered the period when the funds were taken.

However, investigators were able to discover that in the months before a winding-up order was made by the court resulting in the closure of Direct Assist, Darren Bullough fraudulently removed close to £51,000 between September and December 2014.

Around £28,000 went to family members, £3,600 worth of cash was removed from the company's bank account and £18,500 was spent on Direct Assist's credit card. Darren Bullough even made his first removal just one day after the winding-up petition was presented to the courts.

At court, Judge Stead also made a Disqualification Order for 7 years. The ban prevents Darren Bullough from directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

John Fitzsimmons, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

"Darren Bullough was well-known as someone who led an extravagant lifestyle, spending money on expensive property and fast cars. But he recklessly removed

funds from his business knowing that Direct Assist was in financial difficulty.

“We welcome the courts substantial sentence and their recognition of the severity of Darren Bullough’s offences as not only was this money not his to do with as he pleased but by removing the funds, he denied payment that was rightfully owed to the company’s creditors.”

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 administers the insolvency regime, investigating all compulsory liquidations and individual insolvencies (bankruptcies) through the Official Receiver to establish why they became insolvent. It may also use powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK. In addition, the agency deals with disqualification of directors in corporate failures, 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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