

Press release: Insolvency Service slams the brakes on Bangor car dealership scam

Gwyn Merion Roberts, director of Menai Vehicle Solutions Limited, a car dealership in Bangor, North Wales has been disqualified for 10 years after scamming members of the public out of nearly £1 million.

His company took money from customers but then failed to provide the vehicles that had been paid for. It also failed to pay customers for vehicles sold on their behalf.

Roberts gave an undertaking to the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, which prevents him from becoming directly or indirectly involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company for 10 years, beginning from 5 September 2017.

Menai went into liquidation on 21 October 2015 owing at least £1,250,000 to customers and other creditors.

The Insolvency Service's investigation concluded that Menai operated a practice whereby it sold new vehicles to members of the public for less than the cost incurred by Menai in purchasing them from dealers. This encouraged new custom but inevitably resulted in Menai becoming unable to meet its liabilities, resulting in new customer deposits being used to finance the purchase of vehicles for older customers.

The business model was unsustainable and Menai either failed to provide vehicles to customers after having taken payment for the vehicles or failed to forward funds to customers after selling vehicles on their behalves.

This resulted in losses to at least 40 members of the public totalling at least £969,011.

In several instances, Roberts provided banking documents to customers, showing payments had been instructed to car dealers for the purchase of the vehicle they had ordered, only to subsequently revoke the instruction.

Commenting on the disqualification, Robert Clarke, Chief Investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

This is an unfortunate case in which members of the public suffered significant losses as a consequence of the inexcusable financial practices adopted by Mr Roberts.

The lengthy period of disqualification is testament to how

seriously the Insolvency Service views this misconduct.

The Insolvency Service will not hesitate to act where members of the public have lost out as a result of malpractice leading to insolvency.

Notes to editors

Menai Vehicle Solutions Limited (CR0 No.06494362) was incorporated on 05 February 2008. Menai operated from premises at Unit 8, Intec Parc Menai, Bangor, Gwynedd LL57 4FG, which were also its registered address.

Mr Roberts (date of birth 13 December 1968) was a formally appointed director between 20 May 2011 and liquidation, and the sole appointed director of Menai after 14 June 2011.

Menai went into Liquidation on 21 October 2015. On 15 August 2017 the Secretary of State accepted a Disqualification Undertaking from Mr Roberts effective from 5 September 2017, for ten years.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/corporate-insolvency-effect-of-a-d-isqualification-order>.

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 (<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/insolvency-service>).

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