

Recruiters banned after exploiting agricultural workers

Lincoln-based Simon Melville (42) has been disqualified for 11 years, while his wife, Julie Melville (41) has been banned for 10 years.

Husband and wife are now banned from acting as directors or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Lincolnshire Recruitment Services Ltd was incorporated in June 2012, providing workers for the agricultural industry.

The recruitment firm, however, began to struggle and entered into creditors voluntary liquidation in September 2018. But Lincolnshire Recruitment Services Ltd insolvency brought the company to the attention of the Insolvency Service, who established that Julie and Simon Melville breached regulations intended to protect workers from exploitation.

Investigators uncovered that six months prior to Lincolnshire Recruitment Services Ltd collapse, the Gangmasters & Labour Abuse Authority (GLAA) inspected the recruitment firm in February 2018 before revoking the company's GLAA license.

Inspectors from the GLAA discovered that between July 2017 and September 2018, Simon and Julie Melville failed to make holiday payments to 186 employees, charged employees for safety equipment which should have been supplied free of charge and didn't provide employees with copies of their contracts.

Husband and wife didn't provide clients with formal terms of business, they disclosed employees' personal details to third parties without consent and allowed employees to transport staff to various sites without proper driving licenses or insurance.

Through the GLAA's inspection, it was also uncovered that Julie Melville had acted as the Principal Authority, under the terms of the recruitment firm's GLAA licence. The GLAA, however, had not formally authorised Julie Melville to act as Principal Authority as she had not sent in her application and she only applied to the GLAA following the regulator's unannounced inspection.

Insolvency Service investigators also found that Simon Melville had been illegitimately running Lincolnshire Recruitment Services Ltd in breach of a previous disqualification.

Simon Melville had been disqualified for 9 years in December 2014 following the collapse of Melville Agricultural Contractors Ltd. After the company finished trading, Simon Melville withdrew £45,000 worth of cash which should have been used to pay Melville Agricultural Contractors Ltd tax liabilities.

His wife, Julie, was aware of the ban but breached her own responsibilities as sole director by allowing Simon Melville to run the recruitment firm behind the scenes.

On 9 October 2020, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Simon Melville, after he did not dispute that he acted in breach of his prior ban and he caused Lincolnshire Recruitment Services Ltd to abuse the GLAA's licensing regulations.

Simon Melville's ban is effective from 30 October 2020, while Julie's 10-year disqualification began on 9 October after she did not dispute she allowed a third party to act as a director and caused Lincolnshire Recruitment Services Ltd to abuse the GLAA's licensing regulations.

Sue Macleod, Chief Investigator for the Insolvency Service, said:

Simon and Julie's misconduct was extensive. Their bans are substantial and removing Simon and Julie from the corporate arena will help protect vulnerable workers from experiencing further harm.

GLAA Head of Regulation Nicola Ray said:

Flagrant breaches of our licensing standards will not be tolerated under any circumstances and this is why we revoked the licence of Lincolnshire Recruitment Services back in 2018. Our investigators found eight breaches of our licensing standards, four of which were serious enough on their own to cause the company to automatically fail the inspection.

Since then, we have worked closely with the Insolvency Service to ensure that further action is taken to fully enforce our regulations.

We are pleased with the disqualification undertakings and hope they send a clear message that we will continue to work in partnership to protect vulnerable and exploited workers.

Simon Robert Melville is from Lincoln and his date of birth is May 1978

Julie Melville is from Lincoln and her date of birth is July 1979.

LINCOLNSHIRE RECRUITMENT SERVICES LTD (Company number 08094545)

MELVILLE AGRICULTURAL CONTRACTORS LIMITED (Company number 06344072)

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 restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct](#).

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