

# Press release: Stolen Spencer masterpiece returned to owners

Cookham from Englefield by Sir Stanley Spencer was on loan to the Stanley Spencer Gallery in Cookham in 2012 when thieves broke in through a window and removed it.

The owners said they were devastated at the loss of the painting, which was of great sentimental value.

However they were compensated for the loss of the painting by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport under the Government Indemnity Scheme. The scheme provides UK museums and galleries with an alternative to commercial insurance, which can be costly. It allows organisations to display art and objects that they might not have been able to borrow due to high insurance costs.

Five years after the theft of Cookham from Englefield, police discovered the painting hidden under a bed during a drugs raid on a property in West London.

A 28-year-old man was sentenced at Kingston Crown Court in October after he pleaded guilty to conspiracy to supply class A drugs and acquiring criminal property. He also admitted a charge of handling stolen goods. Last month the owners were finally reunited with their painting

Arts Minister Michael Ellis said:

Spencer is one of our most renowned painters and a true great of the 20th century. It is wonderful that this story has had a happy ending and the painting has been returned to its rightful owners.

This has been made possible because of the Government Indemnity Scheme. It exists to protect owners when lending their works to public galleries. Without it there would be fewer world class pieces on display across the country for people to enjoy.

Detective Inspector Brian Hobbs, of the Met's Organised Crime Command, said:

I am pleased to say that the painting has now been returned to its owners. The seizure of the painting was the result of proactive investigation by the Organised Crime Command, which resulted in a significant custodial sentence for the defendant found in possession of the painting.

Detective Constable Sophie Hayes, of the Met's Art and Antiques Unit, said:

The Art and Antiques Unit was delighted to assist with the recovery and return of this important painting. The circumstances of its recovery underline the links between cultural heritage crime and wider criminality. The fact that the painting was stolen five years before it was recovered did not hinder a prosecution for handling stolen goods, demonstrating the Met will pursue these matters wherever possible, no matter how much time has elapsed.

Sir Stanley Spencer (1891 – 1959) was an English painter known for his works depicting Biblical scenes of his birth place Cookham. He is one of the most important artists of the 20th century and during the Second World War was commissioned by the War Artists' Advisory Committee.

It is estimated that the Government Indemnity Scheme saves UK museums and galleries £14 million a year. In the last ten years of the scheme, only 12 claims for damage and loss have been received. This incident is the first one where an item covered by the Scheme has been stolen and successfully returned to its original owners. In line with the rules of the Government Indemnity Scheme for return of the painting, the owners repaid the amount they had received in settlement of the claim minus the cost of repairs and depreciation.

Notes to editors:

- The Government Indemnity Scheme is administered by Arts Council England on behalf of DCMS.
- In the event of loss or damage to an object or work covered by the scheme, the government compensates the owners.

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## **Press release: PM message one year after London Bridge attack: 3 June 2018**

The attack on London Bridge and Borough Market was a cowardly attempt to strike at the heart of our freedoms by deliberately targeting people enjoying their Saturday night with friends and family.

Today we remember those who died and the many more who were injured, and also pay tribute to the bravery of our emergency

services and those who intervened or came to the aid of others.

The many stories of courage demonstrated that night will always stay with me – such as Ignacio Echeverria, who died after confronting the terrorists with the only thing he had, his skateboard, and Geoff Ho, who spent almost two weeks in hospital after being stabbed in the neck as he shielded his friends.

Among the eight people who were tragically lost that night were seven foreign nationals, from four different nations. This is a reflection of our great cosmopolitan capital, whose energy and values brings together people from across the world, and a tragic reminder that the threat from terrorism transcends borders and impacts us all.

My message to those who seek to target our way of life or try to divide us is clear – our resolve to stand firm and overcome this threat together has never been stronger.

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## **News story: New free website for schools to advertise vacancies**

Education Secretary Damian Hinds has launched a clampdown on agencies charging schools “excessive” fees to recruit staff and advertise vacancies, in a drive to help save money and enable teachers to focus on what matters in the classroom.

Many schools rely on supply teachers at some point in the year to cover short and longer term vacancies, or pay for adverts to recruit the staff they need. Some agencies charge schools costly finder’s fees if headteachers want to make supply staff permanent and do not set out how much they are charging on top of the basic wages paid to supply staff.

To help combat these costs, the Secretary of State has announced a free website has been launched to advertise vacancies, which currently costs schools up to £75 million a year. This website will include part-time roles and job shares to help keep experienced teachers working in the classroom and make schools attractive 21st Century workplaces.

In another step to tackle unnecessary costs, Mr Hinds will launch a new nationwide deal for headteachers from September 2018 – developed with Crown Commercial Service – providing them with a list of supply agencies that do not charge fees when making supply staff permanent after 12 weeks.

The preferred suppliers on the list will also be required to clearly set out

how much they are charging on top of the wages for staff. This will make it easier for schools to avoid being charged excessive fees and reduce the cost burden on schools of recruiting supply teachers through agencies.

Today's announcements follow the Education Secretary's pledge at the [National Association of Head Teachers' annual conference in May](#) to work with schools and drive down unnecessary cost pressures so schools can get the best value for every pound they spend and bring in the best staff.

Education Secretary Damian Hinds said:

Great schools are made by great teachers, so I want to reduce teacher workload to make it a more fulfilling profession and help schools bear down on costs so they can invest more on their frontline.

Every pound that's spent on excessive agency fees, or on advertising jobs, is a pound that I want to help schools spend on what really matters: making sure every child, whatever their background, is inspired to learn and to reach their potential.

We have the most talented generation of teachers yet, and there are record numbers working in our schools. These measures will help us to build on this, making it easier for headteachers to recruit the staff they need and ensuring teaching continues to be an attractive, rewarding profession.

The vacancies website will initially be launched in Cambridgeshire and the North East, with a view to rolling it out nationally by the end of the year.

By 2020, core school funding will rise to a record £43.5 billion – its highest ever level and 50% more per pupil in real terms than in 2000 – and the introduction of the National Funding Formula will address historic disparities in the system.

Today's announcement is the latest in a series of steps taken by the department to help schools deliver the best value for money and ensure resources can be targeted at the frontline.

This includes national deals, which can save a typical school 10% on energy and up to 40% on printers, piloting new 'buying hubs' to bulk buy and help schools get best value for money from procurement as well as a network of advisers to working with schools and provide practical support on how to use their budgets more effectively.

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# Press release: Winners of the 2018 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service announced

Winners this year range from [FISH Neighbourhood Cafe](#), an organisation situated in Barnes, Mortlake and East Sheen in Greater London, which combats loneliness and social isolation in older and vulnerable people, to [The Monday Night Club](#) who provide social opportunities and sport activities for adults with learning difficulties in Worcestershire.

The unique UK national honour was created by Her Majesty to mark the Golden Jubilee in 2002 and to recognise the outstanding contributions made to local communities by groups of volunteers.

See the full list of

[winners](#)

(MS Excel Spreadsheet, 31.7KB)

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Tracey Crouch, Minister for Sport and Civil Society, said:

Everyone who has received this award should be incredibly proud. Their service, commitment and care has a profoundly positive impact on communities throughout the country and I am delighted they have been recognised with this prestigious award.

The record number of recipients this year is testament to the strength of the voluntary sector and I am sure this trend will continue into the future. If you know any organisations that deserve to be recognised, make your voice heard and nominate them for next year.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service Independent Committee Chair, former broadcast journalist Sir Martyn Lewis said:

This year's record number of Queen's Award awardees are a powerful testimony to the remarkable achievements and innovative ideas which characterise volunteering in the UK. They prove that, more than ever, volunteers beavering away at grassroots level are the active lifeblood of our communities, identifying all kinds of problems and issues and tackling them with enthusiasm, talent and a high degree of success.

The recipients of the Queen's Award are at the very top of a formidable volunteering movement in the UK involving millions of

our citizens, and going from strength to strength.

Any volunteer-led group made of two or more people can be nominated for the award. Visit the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service website for more details.

Nominations for the 2019 awards close on 14 September 2018.

## **ENDS**

### **NOTES TO EDITORS**

About the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service:

This is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK to recognise exceptional service within their communities. The recipients of the award are announced each year on 2 June – the anniversary of the Queen's Coronation.

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## **Press release: HMRC saves public £2.4M by stopping fraudsters**

Scammers create websites that look similar to HMRC's official site and then direct the public to call numbers with extortionate costs in comparison to the low cost and no cost service HMRC provides. These sites promote non-HMRC premium rate phone numbers as a means of reaching HMRC but these are merely call forwarding services which connect callers to HMRC at a significant price. HMRC's own 0300 numbers are mostly free or charged at the national landline rate. In other cases, sites charge for forwarding information to HMRC which can be provided free of charge through [hmrc.gov.uk](https://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

HMRC has successfully challenged the ownership of these websites, masquerading as official websites, and taken them out of the hands of cheats. Analysis has shown that had HMRC not taken this action then the public would have lost £2.4m to these phone scams.

Treasury Minister, Mel Stride MP the Financial Secretary to the Treasury said:

We know that HMRC is the most spoofed government brand as criminals try to take advantage of the fact that everyone has some involvement with the tax authority. In this particular case, scammers try to dupe the public into paying large sums for services that are available for free or low cost.

This is a brazen con, charging premium rates whilst simply redirecting calls to the real HMRC numbers that are available at low or no cost. It is a testament to the hard work of HMRC that they have prevented criminals extracting £2.4m from the public.

The public should go direct to gov.uk to obtain genuine HMRC contact numbers. These will not be premium rate numbers. People should be alert for sponsored adverts, websites charging for government services which would be expected to be free and those with disclaimers denying association with HMRC or government.

Consumer Minister Andrew Griffiths MP said:

Anyone can fall victim to scams and the cost can be devastating, so it's great to see HMRC cracking down on these bogus websites and protecting the public's purse.

This Scams Awareness Month I'm encouraging anyone who has fallen foul of false phone numbers to speak up, so we can stamp scams out.

## Further information

- This announcement comes at the start of scam awareness month organised by Citizens Advice which is running throughout June
- In 2017 HMRC took a formal approach to denying others ownership of misleading domains, so far 105 domains have been recovered which were being used to host a range of misleading content.
- The specific tactics and costs on each site vary, but the maximum cost of a call is £3.60 a minute, capped at £36 per call. Anecdotal reports show the average victim reporting a cost of around £15 per call.
- Check [GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk) for information on how to avoid and report scams and recognise genuine HMRC contact.
- Follow [HMRC Press Office](#) on Twitter.
- HMRC's [Flickr channel](#)