

Press release: Death by dangerous driving sentence increased

A man who caused his friend's death in a fatal collision, and then tried to frame the victim, has today had his sentence increased after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred it to the Court of Appeal.

Aaron Guest, 28, killed his passenger, Ben Priest, 23, in a car crash by driving too fast and failing to notice a bend in the road. Although Guest was injured, he was able to climb out of the car. He then attempted to mislead police into believing that Mr Priest had been driving the car by moving his body and planting the car keys on him.

At the time of the offence, Guest was under the influence of both alcohol and drugs. He was also already disqualified from driving and subject to a suspended prison sentence for a number of offences, including other driving offences.

Guest was originally sentenced in December 2018 to 5 years and 3 months in prison at Worcester Crown Court. Today, the Court of Appeal has increased his sentence to 7 years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

It was only a matter of time before Guest's dangerous and irresponsible behaviour caused serious harm. Previous restrictions placed upon Guest endeavoured to prevent this, but he continued to flout the law, leading to the tragic death of his passenger Ben Priest. Guest proceeded to show further contempt for the law by attempting to frame his victim, and I hope that the Court's decision today brings some comfort to Ben Priest's family at this difficult time.

News story: March 2019 update: Invasive non-native species and grey squirrels

A plan to tighten rules around releasing invasive non-native animals which threaten our native wildlife will come into effect in October 2019, the Government today (1 March) confirmed.

Invasive species cost the economy an estimated £1.7 billion per year. One of the best-known is the grey squirrel, which threatens our native red squirrel and causes significant damage to forestry in the UK.

The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 that the Government will lay before Parliament at the beginning of March represents no change to the keeping of grey squirrels in UK law.

There is no requirement on vets to euthanise any injured or healthy squirrels that are brought into rescue centres.

It has been illegal to import and keep these animals under existing British legislation dating from 1937. These actions will remain illegal under the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order in line with the [EU Regulation \(1143/2014\) on invasive alien \(non-native\) species](#) and domestic policy.

Under the [Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981](#) it is also currently an offence to release grey squirrels without a licence. The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order will mean that [Natural England](#) will no longer issue release licences for grey squirrels.

Biosecurity Minister Lord Gardiner said:

Invasive non-native species, including the grey squirrel, not only challenge the survival of our rarest species but damage some of our most sensitive ecosystems, costing the economy more than £1.7 billion per year.

This order prevents the release of these animals back into the wild to help protect the endangered red squirrel, with only 15,000 left in England. There is no requirement for vets to euthanise injured or healthy squirrels as a result of this order.

This move will bring England into line with established policies in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, where release licences are not issued.

The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order will come into effect during October 2019.

Under the EU Regulation, it is a requirement for management measures to be put in place for widespread invasive species. There will be an upcoming period of consultation on the Government's proposed management measures for these species.

To allow for this period of consultation, keeping and release licences issued by Natural England will be extended until the Order comes into force in October 2019.

The UK will continue to uphold international obligations as an EU member state and also as a responsible partner nation working closely with other

countries to protect our native wildlife and forestry landscapes for future generations to enjoy.

The Government has a long-term strategy to help control grey squirrel populations where they are identified as a specific threat to forestry or to existing populations of red squirrels. The Grey Squirrel action plan is published [online](#).

Any companion animal of a listed species – that was kept before it was included on the EU list – may continue to be kept in secure accommodation, as long as it is not able to breed until the end of its natural life.

News story: Crowd safety app to launch following Home Office funding

A new app to keep people safe in crowded places will be used at a major London location, after an award of almost £250,000 from the Home Office.

The app, called The Krowd, is the first project to be launched publicly under a scheme set up in response to the terror attacks in 2017.

The [Improving Crowd Resilience competition](#) was launched in July 2017 and forms part of the Government's efforts to do more with the private sector to encourage them to help tackle the security challenges facing the UK.

It sought to fund innovative projects which would train the public to spot security threats and allow them to report those threats.

The app, created by Devon-based developers KrowdThink, allows people in crowded places to speak directly with on-site security teams, allowing visitors to report suspicious activity or potential threats in real-time using their phones.

Images are then sent instantly from the crowd and can assist the security team to assess a threat.

In the first example of an ICR funded project reaching market, the Krowd App will be used at Broadgate Quarter in central London.

Security Minister, Ben Wallace said:

We are bringing government and industry together to develop tools designed to keep us all safe as we go about our day-to-day lives.

I am delighted that this initiative has already started to yield some ground-breaking technologies, like this app, and I look

forward to further such innovations.

The Krowd App was one of several which shared £1 million funding as part of the Defence and Security Accelerator facilitated ICR programme announced in the weeks following the London Bridge terror attacks.

Geoff Revill, KrowdThink Managing Director said:

I am delighted that The Krowd App is going to be rolled out commercially. Our dedication to producing a truly interactive and effective crowd safety tool has paid off.

The funding and support from the Defence and Security Accelerator and the Home Office has given us expert insight, significantly accelerating our ability to move forward commercially.

We have created a unique product that we are confident will make crowded places and events fundamentally safer.

Using the app's venue mapping feature, security staff can locate the perceived threat and rapidly direct staff to the situation. The app can also allow security staff to message the people at a venue directly, guiding them to safety.

The app will be available for the public to use in the coming weeks.

The [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) is a cross-Government organisation, launched in December 2016 that finds and funds innovations that can support UK defence and security quickly and effectively, and support UK prosperity.

Press release: 5 office fit-out firms to pay £7 million fine for breaking competition law

Following a Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation, each company has admitted to breaking competition law at least once during the period of 2006-2017, in some cases on multiple occasions.

The firms, based in London and the Home Counties, provide services such as fit-out, design and refurbishment of commercial and non-residential premises. Office fit-out is part of the construction sector.

Each company has admitted to participating in "cover bidding" in competitive

tenders, colluding on the prices they would bid for contracts. Typically, cover bidding involves companies agreeing with each other to place bids that are deliberately intended to lose the contract, thereby reducing the intensity of competition. This type of illegal behaviour can lead to customers paying an artificially inflated price or receiving poorer quality services.

These cover bids affected 14 contracts with a variety of customers, ranging from a City law firm to a further education college.

The 5 companies have formally admitted that their actions constituted a breach of competition law. They have therefore agreed to pay the following fines that reflect a number of factors including the companies' size and financial position, and their role in the cartel behaviour:

- Fourfront has agreed to pay £4,143,304
- Loop has agreed to pay £1,090,816
- Coriolis has agreed to pay £7,735
- ThirdWay has agreed to pay £1,780,703
- Oakley has agreed to pay £58,558

Andrea Coscelli, the CMA's Chief Executive, said:

The CMA is concerned it is seeing a lot of evidence of anti-competitive conduct in the construction industry, and we have already taken a number of cases in this sector. Today's fines reinforce the message that the CMA will not tolerate competition law being broken.

As shown by the total of £7 million in fines agreed today, we will not turn a blind eye to illegal behaviour and we will impose penalties where we find laws have been broken. This can include seeking disqualification of company directors.

Any business found to have infringed the Competition Act 1998 can be fined up to 10% of its annual worldwide group turnover, and directors of the companies concerned can be banned from holding directorships for up to 15 years.

The CMA runs a [Leniency Programme](#) to encourage businesses and individuals to come forward with information about their involvement in a cartel. Businesses which come forward and co-operate with the CMA may be granted immunity from penalties or a significant reduction. In this case, JLL brought information about the conduct to the CMA's attention and, in accordance with the CMA's Leniency Programme, will therefore not receive a fine. Under the Leniency Programme, Loop will receive a 25% discount to its fine for coming forward with information about its participation in the cartel behaviour, and co-operating with the CMA.

Further information can be found on the [design, construction and fit-out services](#) case page.

Notes to Editors

1) The CMA is the UK's primary competition and consumer authority. It is an independent non-ministerial government department with responsibility for carrying out investigations into mergers, markets and the regulated industries and enforcing competition and consumer protection laws. For CMA updates, follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

2) A Statement of Objections has been issued to the parties today, setting out the CMA's provisional decision that there has been an infringement. The addressees of the CMA's Statement of Objections and the nature of their admissions are:

Undertaking	Addressee	Fine	Admissions of cover bidding	Of which it acted as a leader or instigator in
Fourfront	Area Sq Limited, Cube Interior Solutions Limited, Fourfront Group Limited, Fourfront Holdings Limited	£4,143,304	10 instances (8 involving Area Sq Limited and 2 involving Cube Interior Solutions Limited)	4
Loop	Loop Interiors Limited, Loop Interiors London LLP	£1,090,816 (inclusive of a 25% discount for leniency)	5 instances	1
Coriolis	Coriolis Projects Limited	£7,735	2 instances	None
ThirdWay	ThirdWay Interiors Limited, The ThirdWay Group Limited	£1,780,703	1 instance	None
Oakley	Oakley Interiors Limited	£58,558	1 instance	None
JLL	Jones Lang LaSalle Inc., Bluu Solutions Limited, Bluuco Limited, Tetris Projects Limited	No fine (immunity under leniency)	12 instances (10 involving Bluu Solutions Limited and 2 involving Tetris-Bluu Limited)	7

Jones Lang LaSalle Inc. acquired Bluu Solutions Limited and Bluuco Limited in 2015.

3) A party under investigation may enter into "settlement" if it is prepared to admit that it has breached competition law and is willing to agree to a streamlined administrative procedure for the remainder of the investigation. In return, the CMA imposes a reduced penalty fine on the business where settlement would achieve clear efficiencies, resulting in the earlier adoption of any infringement decision and/or resource savings. Fourfront,

Loop, Coriolis, ThirdWay and Oakley have settled the case with the CMA and therefore, in calculating the above fines, a discount of 20% was applied to the penalty that would otherwise have been imposed, to reflect the resource savings to the CMA in this particular case as a result of the companies' admission and agreement to a streamlined administrative procedure.

4) Anyone who has information about a cartel is encouraged to contact the CMA by using our [online form](#), calling the cartels hotline on 020 3738 6888 or email cartelshotline@cma.gov.uk.

5) Media queries should be directed to press@cma.gov.uk, on 020 3738 6460.

Press release: Government announces up to £26 million for vulnerable rough sleepers

Vulnerable people sleeping rough across the country will receive specialist tailored support they need to recover from life on the streets and find accommodation, thanks to a £26 million fund announced today (1 March 2019) by the Housing Minister, Heather Wheeler MP.

Councils will be able to bid for the extra investment to fund innovative local schemes which help those sleeping rough and struggling with mental health problems or substance misuse issues into a home as a priority, and provide the wrap-around help they need get back on their feet.

Councils will use the funding to:

- create teams of 'Navigators' – specialist support workers who will work tirelessly as a single point of contact to help people off the streets and into recovery by directing them to the services they need, such as mental health support, substance misuse counselling and housing advice services
- establish dedicated lettings agencies for rough sleepers – specialist agencies which provide homes and advice for those sleeping on the streets, supporting them into affordable and stable accommodation
- set up specialist rough sleeping Somewhere Safe to Stay 'hubs' – new hubs which will ensure those on the streets have access to professional help and guidance to start their recovery, including immediate shelter and tailored mental health support
- introduce Supported Lettings schemes – helping vulnerable people sleeping rough to sustain tenancies – properties that they may not otherwise be able to access

Funding announced today forms part of the government's [rough sleeping](#)

[strategy](#), which aims to end rough sleeping for good backed by investment of £100 million.

Minister for Housing and Homelessness, Heather Wheeler MP said:

No one should ever have to face a night on the streets, and steps are being taken to ensure people are never faced with this as their only option.

These are vulnerable people who need specialist support to get back on their feet and turn their lives around.

The funding announced today will ensure those sleeping on the streets across the country have access to the professional help and guidance they need to start their recovery – taking us one step closer to our ambition to end rough sleeping for good.

Today's announcement follows the publication of the latest annual rough sleeping statistics, which shows the number of people sleeping rough has fallen for the first time in 8 years – with a decrease of 19% in the 83 areas supported through the government's Rough Sleeping Initiative.

To date, councils have used the investment to create an additional 1,700 beds and 500 rough sleeping support staff – meaning there are more people in warm beds tonight as a result of government funding.

Bidding for this fund is open from today and will close on 29 March 2019. Ministers will announce successful councils later this year.

In [August 2018](#), the government unveiled its [rough sleeping strategy](#), which sets out the next steps towards achieving the aim of supporting everyone off the streets and into a home and to end rough sleeping for good, backed by £100 million of funding.

The Rough Sleeping Initiative funds 83 councils with the highest number of rough sleepers across the country.