

Press release: Antrim Area Hospital visit

Earlier this morning the Secretary of State, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, visited Antrim Area hospital to see at first hand the issues and challenges that our current Health Service professionals face on a daily basis, and how the current political instability and lack of devolved institutions in Northern Ireland continues to add further burdens to an already pressurised health system.

The Northern Health Trust, of which Antrim Area Hospital is one of the major hospitals provides services for a population of approximately 471,000 – the largest resident population in Northern Ireland. Over recent months, the Trust have launched a reform and modernisation of the services they provide with a strong emphasis on maximising the range and sustainability of local services as well as ensuring integrated, and locality based community services delivered in partnership to allow and support people to live independently and avoid hospitalisation as far as possible.

Speaking after his visit, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

I was absolutely delighted to be able to visit Antrim Area Hospital and witness the truly remarkable work that is delivered by the doctors, nurses and support health care professionals on a daily basis. They provide a modernised approach to healthcare, ensuring local people can avail of a range of services close to their home locality. But the lack of devolved institutions provide uncertainty for those providing vital front line services.

Public services will suffer if there continues to be political stalemate. Budgets need to be established in order to provide much needed services for the public. That is why I am urging the political parties to continue to talk and find a way through the outstanding issues. It remains important that an agreement is reached which enables the restoration of devolved government – this is absolutely critical for Northern Ireland and its people.

Whilst I recognise some of the issues are difficult, they are not insurmountable. The window in which this can happen is narrow, but it is my hope that the politicians will do all in their power to help to bring about the resumption of secure devolved government, an objective supported by the majority of the people in Northern Ireland, is our shared aim.

We owe it to the entire community to deliver the best outcome for Northern Ireland – strong devolved government with locally accountable Ministers.

Press release: Multi-million pound boost for community-led services

Communities Minister Andrew Percy today (6 April 2017) announced a multi-million pound cash boost to community-led efforts giving local people greater control over local services.

More than 54 projects will receive a share of over £3 million communities funding to help deliver additional services.

A third of the projects receiving funding will focus on offering personalised schemes to improve people's health and general wellbeing. Other schemes will tackle social isolation, help people find a job, and support those facing homelessness.

Communities Minister Andrew Percy said:

Making a real difference to people's lives doesn't always happen by Whitehall diktat. It also comes from the dedication and inventiveness of local people who know their area best and the issues most important to them.

That's why we're supporting these innovative projects which provide tailored services that make a real difference to people's lives.

The Communities Fund

The [Communities Fund](#) was launched in December 2016 and totals £3.25 million. It's targeted at providing dedicated and personalised support to some of the most vulnerable people in society and those people who are struggling to manage.

Similar programmes have shown that significant benefits can be achieved from small amounts of funding that help local community projects to try different approaches to local priorities. For example, a community-led project in Ilfracombe, Devon, has addressed the high levels of youth unemployment in the town by creating 50 apprenticeships. This has saved around £1 million in benefits and is now funded by local partners. It has since expanded to 100 annual apprenticeships, with more than 50 young people helped into full time

employment.

Communities Fund projects include:

Colchester Borough Council and Essex Public Health

A project in Colchester involving local schools, high street retailers and doctors' surgeries. It aims to get more people out walking and socialising as a way to improve health and wellbeing.

Local residents will play a game on the street by tapping specially designed boxes on lampposts with a fob to earn points. An earlier pilot scheme with over 10,000 residents saw a huge jump in levels of fitness, with those meeting Department of Health guidelines on daily exercise reaching 48% from the previous 27%.

Plymouth City council

Plymouth City Council, with Devon and Cornwall Housing, NHS England and Royal British Legion, will deliver employment skills to local homeless people and other hard to reach groups. They will be given the opportunity to learn how to mend bicycles from expert mechanics.

The regular training will also give them the opportunity to earn qualifications. The workshop will also be open to the public, so customers will be able to take advantage of the skills of the newly trained bike mechanics and in turn allow them to develop customer service skills.

Further information

The Communities Fund was launched in December 2016. See [more information](#) on this website. View a [list of the Communities Fund recipients](#) (PDF, 84.4KB, 4 pages) .

The [Localism Act 2011](#) gives communities more say locally, from regulars running their local pub and protecting other treasured assets, to ambitious plans for new development, new jobs and better targeted local services.

Want to get involved in your community? See the [My Community website](#) for details on how to go about it.

[Press release: Newtownards shooting](#)

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

Shooting someone in the elbows, knees and ankles is barbaric. The criminals who did this do not represent anyone. No one in Northern Ireland wants this; people want to live in a peaceful society. I urge anyone with information about this shooting to contact the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Press release: Evaluations suggest ways to further improve merger review

A pair of reports published today make recommendations for ways in which the CMA can provide even better results for consumers and the wider economy by making improvements in the way it investigates mergers.

Sheldon Mills, CMA Senior Director, Mergers, said:

Businesses require our merger investigations to be prompt, thorough and fair and I am pleased that these evaluations into both our assessment of entry/expansion in merger cases and our remedies process recognise that we already produce good work.

We are always open to adapting our processes in light of new information and we are now planning to implement some changes following these reports.

In the [first report](#), the CMA commissioned KPMG to review 8 cases, investigated by the CMA or its predecessor bodies the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) and the Competition Commission (CC), where mergers were cleared on the basis of entry or expansion of rival firms in the relevant market.

KPMG recommended that in future cases the CMA should take greater account of the potential cost of new entry into a market, the ability for firms to expand and the impact of local market conditions, including regulatory changes.

The second report, [Understanding past merger remedies](#), builds on previous research, so that it now includes the evaluation of 15 merger remedies. The evaluation, which includes interviews with the companies involved as well as customers and competitors, looks at the effectiveness of the different types of mergers remedies used as well as the CMA's remedies processes. The CMA is currently assessing the report to identify further improvements it can make in future phase 2 investigations.

These evaluation reports are the most recent from the CMA, continuing a valuable programme of reviewing past cases to understand what lessons can be

learned and identify what improvements can be made. The learnings from these reports will help ensure that the CMA's future merger decisions and approaches to remedy design deliver better outcomes for consumers, businesses and the UK economy.

Notes for 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 law. From 1 April 2014 it took over the functions of the CC and the competition and certain consumer functions of the OFT, as amended by the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013. For more information see the [CMA's homepage](#) on GOV.UK.
2. For CMA updates, follow us on Twitter [@CMAgovuk](#), [Flickr](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Facebook](#).
3. Enquiries should be directed to Simon Belgard (simon.belgard@cma.gsi.gov.uk, 020 3738 6472).

Press release: Pension Trustee companies retired

Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd administered nine occupational pension schemes and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd, was the trustee of three of those schemes, namely, the Focusplay Retirement Benefit Scheme, the Focusplay No 2 Retirement Benefit Scheme and the P.S.P. Retirement Benefit Scheme.

The court action follows an investigation by the Insolvency Service which found the companies did not market the various schemes but approved a series of investments which were then offered to the general public through a network of introducers and sub-introducers.

Those who chose to take up the offer were charged an initial fee of up to £1,645 in addition to a percentage annual management fee which could be as much as £2,500, with total fees generated by the nine schemes being in excess of £3.5m over 3 years.

The investigation also found the companies failed to adequately carry out their trustee role by neglecting to obtain independent investment advice, failing to comply with their own governance statements and by failing to

adhere to pensions legislation and guidance issued by the Pensions Regulator; In particular, by making loans from the schemes to the sponsoring employer as well as to associated companies and individuals.

The court heard there had been a failure to ensure share certificates were obtained in return for investments made, that the companies had operated with a lack of transparency, particularly in not ensuring that investors were aware their funds were being put into high risk investments, and that members of the schemes were offered contrived and artificial employment in order to comply with guidance then in place.

Scott Crighton, Group Leader with Company Investigations North said: –

The Insolvency Service will investigate and bring to a halt the activities of companies that fail to meet the required standard for dealing with investment funds placed with them by members of the public and that are found to be operating against the public interest.

For their own protection, members of the public need to be wary of any uninvited contact offering them a free pension review and to be aware that many of the products on offer are unregulated and high risk or may even be outright scams and the safest course of action is to simply ignore them.

Notes to editors

Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd – company registration number 07235880 – was incorporated on 27 April 2010. The company's registered office is at 1 Navigation Business Village, Navigation Way Ashton On Ribble, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2YP.

Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd – company registration number 08207804 – was incorporated on 10 September 2012. The company's registered office is at 1 Navigation Business Village, Navigation Way Ashton On Ribble, Preston, Lancashire, PR2 2YP.

The petitions to wind-up Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd were presented under s124A of the Insolvency Act 1986 on 16 February 2017. The Official Receiver was initially appointed as Provisional Liquidator of both Gleeson Bessent Trustee Services Ltd and Gleeson Bessent Trustees Ltd on 16 March 2017 and was then appointed as Liquidator of both companies on 28 March 2017.

Company Investigations, part of the Insolvency Service, uses powers under the Companies Act 1985 to conduct confidential fact-finding investigations into the activities of live limited companies in the UK on behalf of the Secretary of State for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS). Further information about live company investigations is [available](#)

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](#).

Media enquiries for this press release – 020 7674 6910 or 020 7596 6187

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on: