

6-year ban for Edinburgh construction agency director

Stephen Joseph John Mason, 45, from Edinburgh has been disqualified as a director for six years.

He was director of Angel Contracting Ltd, a recruitment agency specialising in providing contractors to the construction industry. The company was incorporated in 2017 but went into liquidation two years later.

At this point the Insolvency Practitioner made repeated requests for the company's accounts and other records, in order to carry out their statutory duties to determine whether there was any misconduct that had led to the company's failure and debts.

The records were not forthcoming and the subsequent Insolvency Service investigation therefore could not whether expenditure of nearly £5.5 million from the company's bank account was legitimate business spending. The investigation identified £16,500 paid to an unknown individual, cash withdrawals totalling nearly £6,000 and £3,000 in cheque payments.

Similarly, it was not possible to confirm that the income, also of nearly £5.5 million, recorded in the company's bank account, was from genuine business sales.

The Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy accepted a disqualification undertaking from Stephen Mason after he accepted failing to maintain or preserve adequate accounting records. His ban commences on 4 April 2022.

The disqualification undertaking prevents him from directly, or indirectly, becoming involved in the promotion, formation or management of a company, without the permission of the court.

Rob Clarke, Chief Investigator at The Insolvency Service said:

Companies are under a legal duty to account for their income and expenditure and fulfilling that duty is a key component of the role of a director; there is no place in the corporate arena for those who neglect their responsibilities in this area.

All too often the lack of records to explain transactions is used to cover up other, more serious misconduct and we cannot determine whether that was the case at Angel Contracting, a fact which is reflected in the lengthy ban now in place.

Notes to editors

Stephen Joseph John Mason is of Edinburgh and his date of birth is October 1976.

Angel Contracting Limited company number – SC577815

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](#).

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

Contact Press Office

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

[FTSE executives Penny James and Nimesh Patel appointed co-chairs of the FTSE Women Leaders Review](#)

- Penny James, Direct Line CEO, and Nimesh Patel, Spirax-Sarco Engineering CFO, to steer new FTSE Women Leaders Review
- both leaders will seek to build on the success of Hampton-Alexander and Davies Reviews in urging businesses to open up more opportunities for women at the highest level
- in February the Review published its first report, which found that almost 40% of UK FTSE 100 board positions are now held by women, and announced new recommendations

Penny James and Nimesh Patel have today (Thursday 14 April) been confirmed as co-chairs of the government-backed FTSE Women Leaders Review, which monitors women's representation in leadership positions at the UK's biggest companies.

Following on from the highly successful Hampton-Alexander and Davies Reviews, the FTSE Women Leaders Review urges companies to continue raising their game on gender diversity and open up opportunities to everyone.

Penny James is CEO of Direct Line Group, which encompasses well-known British brands including Churchill and Green Flag, as well as Senior Independent Director at Hargreaves Lansdown. Before joining Direct Line, Penny held a number of senior roles in the insurance industry.

Nimesh Patel is CFO of Spirax-Sarco Engineering, a FTSE 100 company based in the South-West of the UK, having previously served in the same role for the De Beers Group. Nimesh is also a Trustee of ReachOut, a mentoring charity for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Business Secretary Kwasi Kwarteng said:

Companies are more profitable and prosperous when they embrace the talents of the whole population. That's why we want to ensure everyone, whatever their background, has equal opportunity to succeed and achieve on merit.

While our voluntary, business-led approach has opened up more senior opportunities for women, there's always room for improvement.

Penny and Nimesh, with their impressive track records at the highest levels of business, will be perfectly placed to help continue to champion women in the boardroom.

Denise Wilson, who was instrumental to the success of the previous Hampton-Alexander Review, will continue as Chief Executive, bringing with her extensive knowledge and experience that will be invaluable in this next phase.

Minister for Women and Equalities, Liz Truss, said:

I welcome the appointment of the new co-chairs and the recommendations of the FTSE Women Leaders Review. Increasing the representation of women at senior levels is not only the mark of forward-thinking organisations, it's just good business sense.

We will shortly put forward a range of measures to advance equality for women at work, increasing opportunity, and tackling the issues that are holding women back as we look to ensure that everyone can reach their full potential.

CEO of Direct Line, Penny James, said:

I believe that if you are in a position to effect change you should

so I was glad to accept this tremendous opportunity. The case for increasing women's representation on boards and in senior leadership is well known and it's now time to build on the advances, remove barriers to progression and drive further change. I look forward to working alongside Nimesh, Denise Wilson, the Review's CEO who has led the work so successfully, and the Review's supporters to advocate for and encourage business to deliver on its recommendations and provide transparency on progress.

CEO of Spirax-Sarco Engineering, Nimesh Patel, said:

It's an honour to help lead the next phase of this Review which will not only seek to increase the gender representation in the boardroom and in Leadership teams, but will help break the bias, ensuring that there are more women in key senior roles. I'm looking forward to working alongside Penny and Denise to promote the empowerment needed to create a more equal set of opportunities across UK businesses.

Over the last 10 years, the government's unique voluntary approach to improving women's representation – without the use of mandatory quotas – has proven successful.

In February, the FTSE Women Leaders Review published its first report setting out the state of women's representation on boards as of the end of 2021. It found that the UK had climbed to second in the international rankings for women's representation on boards at FTSE 100 level, with almost 40% of UK FTSE 100 board positions now held by women, compared with 12.5% just 10 years ago.

The Review has also set out important new recommendations to encourage British companies to build on this progress including:

- the voluntary target for FTSE 350 Boards and for leadership teams is increased to a minimum of 40% women's representation by the end of 2025
- FTSE 350 companies to have at least one woman in the Chair, Senior Independent Director role on the Board and/or one woman in the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director role by the end of 2025
- extending the scope of the FTSE Women Leaders Review beyond FTSE 350 companies to include the largest 50 private companies in the UK by sales

Background

The FTSE Women Leaders Review is an independent, business-led framework supported by the government, which sets recommendations for Britain's largest companies to improve the representation of Women on FTSE 350 Boards and in FTSE 350 Leadership positions. It is sponsored by KPMG and Lloyds Banking Group.

The FTSE Women Leaders Review tracks progress on 24,000 Board and Leadership

roles and builds on the excellent work of both the Hampton-Alexander and Davies Reviews over the last 10 years. The previous 33% target set in 2016, for Women on Boards was met in the aggregate for the FTSE 350 at the end of 2020, with the number of Women in Leadership just falling short of the target.

Women on Boards – 2021 Progress

Source – BoardEx, 10 January 2022

1. Reported numbers for Women on Boards of FTSE 350, as of 10 January 2022 show:

- FTSE 100 is at 39.1%
- FTSE 250 is at 36.8%
- FTSE 350 is at 37.6%

2. The number of women in the Chair role has increased to 48 across the FTSE 350, up from 39 in 2020.

3. The UK FTSE 100 is in 2nd place when compared internationally to 11 countries also working hard to improve the gender balance on the boards of public listed companies. This is up from 5th place in 2020 and the highest ranking since tracking began.

4. There are 4 companies in FTSE 350 with a women CEO and Chair duo, as of 10 January 2022:

- Admiral Group Plc
- Severn Trent Plc
- Pennon Group Plc
- Direct Line Insurance Group Plc

Note: This will increase to 5 companies in April 2022 as Taylor Wimpey recently announced (7 February 2022) a new female CEO appointment.

5. The number of FTSE 350 Boards that have met or exceeded the previous 33% target has increased to 278 Boards, up from 220 in 2020.

6. The number of FTSE 350 Boards that have met or exceeded the new 40% target is 141, 49 boards in the FTSE 100 and 92 in the FTSE 250.

Women in Leadership – 2021 Progress

Source – FTSE Women Leaders Portal, 31 October 2021

7. Reported numbers for Women in Leadership (defined as the Executive Committee & Direct Reports to the Executive Committee on a combined basis), as of 31 October 2021 show:

- FTSE 100 is at 32.5%
- FTSE 250 is at 30.7%
- FTSE 350 is at 31.5%

8. The number of All-Male Executive Committees in the FTSE 350 has decreased again in the last year to 16, down from 28 in 2020. Source: FTSE Women Leaders data collection portal.

The new recommendations

9. There are 4 new recommendations that were announced in February 2022 to fuel further progress in this next phase:

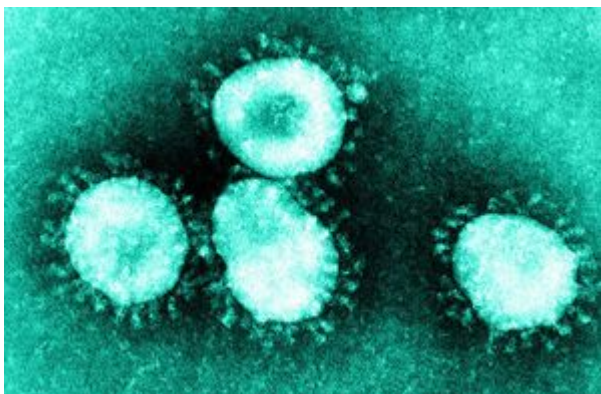
- the voluntary target for FTSE 350 Boards and for FTSE 350 Leadership teams is increased to a minimum of 40% women's representation by the end of 2025
- FTSE 350 companies should have at least one woman in the Chair, Senior Independent Director role on the Board and/or one woman in the Chief Executive Officer or Finance Director role by the end of 2025
- key stakeholders should continue to set best-practice guidelines or use alternative mechanisms to encourage any FTSE 350 Board that has not yet achieved the previous 33% target for the end of 2020, to do so
- the scope of the Review is extended beyond FTSE 350 companies to include the largest 50 private companies in the UK by sales

10. For further information, read the full [FTSE Women Leaders Review report](#) or contact us on info@ftsewomenleaders.com or ftsewomenleaders@beis.gov.uk.

[Valneva COVID-19 vaccine approved by MHRA](#)

Press release

An approval has been granted after the Valneva COVID-19 vaccine was found to meet the required safety, quality and effectiveness standards.



The COVID-19 vaccine developed by Valneva has today been given [regulatory approval](#) by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

The UK's independent medicines regulator is the first in the world to approve the Valneva vaccine which becomes the sixth COVID-19 vaccine to be granted an MHRA authorisation.

It is also the first, whole-virus inactivated COVID-19 vaccine to gain regulatory approval in the UK. With this type of vaccine, the virus is grown in a lab and then made completely inactive so that it cannot infect cells or replicate in the body but can still trigger an immune response to the COVID-19 virus. This process is widely used already in the production of flu and polio vaccines.

Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive, said:

Our approval of the COVID-19 vaccine made by Valneva today follows a rigorous review of the safety, quality and effectiveness of this vaccine, and expert advice from the government's independent scientific advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines."

Professor Sir Munir Pirmohamed, Chair of the independent Commission on Human Medicines, said:

The independent Commission on Human Medicines and its COVID-19 Expert Working Group has carefully considered the available evidence and are pleased to say that we have advised that the benefit risk balance is positive. The vaccine is approved for use in people aged 18 to 50 years, with the first and second doses to be taken at least 28 days apart.

Each type of vaccine has a different pattern of antibody response over time. For the Valneva vaccine, two doses are required before a robust antibody response is raised. This means that people will need to be made aware that protection will only start after two doses.

The storage temperature for the Valneva vaccine – of 2°C to 8°C – is similar to that of a domestic fridge, making it appropriate for use in countries where storage at very low temperatures is not possible.

Notes to Editor

1. The [Conditional Marketing Authorisation \(CMA\) granted](#) by the MHRA is valid in Great Britain and Northern Ireland.
2. The [Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency](#) is responsible for regulating all medicines, vaccines and medical devices in the UK. All our work is underpinned by robust and fact-based judgements to ensure that the benefits outweigh any risks.
3. [The Commission on Human Medicines \(CHM\)](#) advises ministers and the MHRA on the safety, efficacy and quality of medicinal products. The CHM is an advisory non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department of

Health and Social Care.

Contact us

If you are a member of the public or a healthcare professional, contact us on 020 3080 6000 (weekdays 9am to 5pm).

If you are a journalist, contact us on 020 3080 7651 (8.30am – 5pm) or 07770 446 189 (5pm– 830am and weekends):

News centre, MHRA, 10 South Colonnade, London, E14 4PU Email newscentre@mhra.gov.uk

For real-time updates including the latest press releases and news statements, see our Twitter channel at <https://www.twitter.com/mhragovuk>

Published 14 April 2022

[The Murad Code should become the gold standard to deliver justice and accountability: UK statement at the UN Security Council](#)

May I begin by thanking you, Special Representative Pramila Patten.

The relationship and the strength of the relationship between the United Kingdom and your office is something we hold very dear, and we welcome the continued coordination and strength of the work we're doing on this important agenda.

To our brave activists, Mariana Karkoutly and Hilina Berhanu, for your stark insights, and also for your practical recommendations of the responsibilities and also the importance of action from us, the United Nations Security Council.

And of course, to you, Nadia Murad – your determination, your courage, your example has at its heart, a real willpower to build a world for survivors. Simply put, it's an inspiration for me, and I know I speak for every Member of the Security Council. And your testimony today is again reflective of that central objective that we all share.

Today, as we've heard from the very powerful testimonies and the reports of SRSB Patten, we continue to see disturbing reports emerging yet again of rape and sexual violence from Ukraine.

We are now once again reminded that when conflict erupts, sexual violence soon follows.

As we've heard, in northern Ethiopia, Syria and Ukraine, we have witnessed the devastating effects on communities, on families, and especially on women and girls. It is important we come together and stand for these courageous survivors – not just to provide hope, but to provide action, and ultimately justice.

It is clear that impunity continues to be the norm for perpetrators. It should be an exception, and we must try for that.

And frankly put, the fact, here we are, that this is happening, and let us reflect on that, in the year 2022, it is not just unacceptable, it is utterly shocking.

And therefore, we must strive to do more collectively to end the violence, and ultimately, as we heard from each of the very powerful statements, deliver justice and accountability for survivors.

We need to ensure that survivors can safely record their experiences, in a way that strengthens the pursuit of justice.

That is an important first, yet pivotal and crucial, step towards accountability.

However, as we've heard from Nadia Murad's powerful testimony, this is far from a reality for many survivors around the world. And frankly put, we must ask the question of ourselves, why? Why have we failed to protect? Why have we failed in our collective duty to put survivors first?

Despite numerous guidance for those collecting information and evidence from survivors and witnesses, mistakes, frankly, continue to be made. Mistakes, not through any bad intent, yet mistakes which can allow the wheels of justice to slow, and indeed destroy lives.

Too many survivors are not told about what their options are, or given the time and space to make their own choices about how their testimonies are best used.

Too many survivors continue to face unnecessary re-interviewing. 27 times – reflect on that figure, colleagues – 27 times, as one courageous survivor told me, they had to give an interview.

Interviews are being interrupted, they're being overheard, and by that, the impact of those testimonies diluted, and they do not meet the threshold – which too often is put forward as the reason why prosecutions cannot take place.

The consequences can be devastating, soul destroying, ending all hope. Simply put, it is unacceptable.

Survivors are being re-traumatised time and time again. And work to deliver

justice and accountability is being undermined.

So therefore it is vital that we end these harmful practices and put survivors' rights at the very heart of the evidence gathering.

And therefore I am greatly humbled to join Nadia's Initiative and the Institute for International Criminal Investigations in releasing the Murad Code today.

Firstly, Nadia thank you – we've known each other many years – you inspire me and your courage is a powerful example to us all.

The Murad Code is a global code of conduct for the collection of information and evidence from survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.

It has been shaped by survivors, governments, international organisations and civil society.

Because it is our responsibility to place survivors' needs at the heart of our work.

I urge everyone involved in documenting and investigating conflict-related sexual violence to follow the Murad Code. In fact, go further – it should become the gold standard for any NGO, government agency or human rights institution in the field. Putting survivors first and at the centre of investigations should not be optional.

But our collective efforts cannot stop there.

This year, we are exploring all options to strengthen international action, including a new international Convention as proposed by our Foreign Secretary Liz Truss.

From the 28th – 30th November, we will also host an international conference to boost our work, marking ten years since the launch of the UK's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative in November this year.

We will continue to bring faith and belief leaders together in support of survivors through the Declaration of Humanity.

We will make further progress to enhance the rights and wellbeing of children born of sexual violence, following the Call to Action launched in November.

And we will respond robustly to reports of sexual violence in conflict, wherever they occur.

We have heard about the distressing situation in Ethiopia. The nature and scale of reports of sexual violence that have come out of Tigray, Amhara and Afar are deeply disturbing. Yet many communities remain cut off from communications and therefore unable to tell their story.

That is why it was important to us, today, to invite the first Ethiopian civil society representative to brief the Council on the situation in

northern Ethiopia.

And what's more, to hear from an Ethiopian woman who has been integral to feminist youth movements, and who has recently worked with communities across the country who have been affected by conflict-related related sexual violence.

The UK Government has committed more than £7 million to support survivors in northern Ethiopia and improve national accountability systems. We are also providing expertise to build capacity to hold perpetrators to account.

I welcome the African Union's leadership on conflict-related sexual violence. 30 African countries now have a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security – providing an essential framework for addressing this issue and women's political participation in conflict-affected contexts.

We have heard again how rape is being used to destroy the lives of Syrians by various parties to the conflict.

The UK has spent over £4 million through its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund in response since 2016 in response.

We have strengthened the medical documentation of attacks in accordance with international standards, and improved support services for survivors.

I was pleased to see the first conviction for conflict-related sexual violence offences in Syria, delivered in Koblenz in January.

The UK will also continue to support Afghan women, who face some of the highest rates of violence in the world, and are watching the progress made in recent decades unravel.

Islam is clear on equality for girls and rights for women: we continue to press the Taliban on this issue.

We are pushing to integrate services for all survivors of gender-based violence, including sexual violence, into Afghan healthcare provision.

We are also working with the International Rescue Committee, the UN Population Fund and others on programmes to protect women and girls, and provide access to gender-based violence services.

We are collectively shocked at the abhorrent testimonies which are emerging from Ukraine. The reports of rape and sexual violence committed by Russian armed forces must be properly investigated.

That is why the UK has worked with partners to refer the situation in Ukraine to the International Criminal Court, to establish a Commission of Inquiry through the UN Human Rights Council and, with the support of Ukraine, to establish an OSCE Mission of Experts. In March, we announced an additional £1 million in funding for the ICC to help uncover evidence of war crimes.

Sexual violence in conflict is a vile stain on humanity. Wherever it occurs,

it is our moral duty to work together to help survivors, and do all we can, to stamp it out.

To perpetrators – every person in every society must be determined to send a clear and unequivocal message – you will be found, you will face justice, however long it takes.

And to survivors – thank you for the hope, thank you for your courage – we will always stand with you and for you.

Sexual violence is a crime against you, it's a crime against our common and shared humanity.

[‘Drop-in’ on Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management plans](#)

The scheme will become one of the largest coastal flood risk schemes in the country, using innovative and creative solutions, protecting an estimated 10,000 homes.

Since the Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme launched late last year, valuable insight is being gathered from local people to help shape the future of the new flagship large scale coastal defence project.

From 25 April to 5 May there will be face to face drop-in sessions at various locations in Eastbourne, Sovereign Harbour and Pevensey Bay. As well as virtual webinars which will be open for all.

People have the chance to listen to the project team discuss some of the possible future solutions for this coastline and ask questions. There will also be guided walks along the project area with a member of the project team. Webinars are being held on 27 April, 3 May and 6 May.

Further details will be available on the [project website](#)

Nick Gray, the Environment Agency's Flood Risk Manager in the area said:

Our work on the scheme so far has enabled us to understand how much the seafront is valued by local people and the concerns they have on rising sea level and the impact that the climate crisis will have at a local level.

As our plans develop, we are keen to keep local people regularly updated with progress and I urge residents to come along to one of our drop-in sessions and meet with us. We want to work with coastal communities to shape the future management of the frontage

together.

The drop-in sessions will look at what is possible within the project programme and the options available for the coastal frontage. Whilst there are various opportunities available, nothing has been decided yet in the complex process of designing a new coastal future in this area.

The scheme will become one of the largest coastal flood risk schemes in the country. It uses innovative and creative solutions to maximise economic, environmental, and social opportunities to deliver multiple benefits.

Sea levels are projected to rise by over one metre in the south of England. This alongside increasingly powerful storms means the risk of flooding, damage to property and erosion increases all the time. Ultimately this scheme will help make Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne more resilient to coastal flooding.

When completed, the new sea defences will increase protection to an estimated 10,000 homes, key infrastructure, local businesses, heritage sites and nature conservation areas.

Councillor Colin Swansborough, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, said:

I am delighted with how residents are already engaging with the project team and hope that this momentum will continue through to the drop-in sessions that are scheduled over the coming weeks.

The headlines around the project understandably reflect the long-term risk of flooding along the seafront and the sea defence work that is required. However, it is really exciting that the scheme will also be designed to enhance local biodiversity and help the town meet our climate change commitments, such as becoming carbon net zero.

There are face-to-face drop-in events and online sessions planned, so whatever format works best for individuals, there are opportunities to get involved and I encourage as many residents as possible to do exactly that.

The Pevensey Bay to Eastbourne Coastal Management Scheme aligns with the long-term goal of a nation resilient to climate change, green growth and a sustainable future as outlined in the Environment Agency's 5-year plan. 'EA2025' outlines the ways in which the organisation is working towards a greener, healthier future.