

The Phoenix that did not rise from the ashes

In a case last year, Traffic Commissioner for Scotland Claire Gilmore refused an application for a standard international public service vehicle operator's licence made by Mr James Kilpatrick .

The applicant has a lengthy history in operator licensing. Since 1998, he has been called to several public inquiries, been issued with warnings, lost his repute, had his licence revoked and his vocational driving entitlement suspend as well as being found to have used another operator as a front.

In December 2014, the Deputy Traffic Commissioner considered an application made by the applicant for a restricted public service vehicle operator's licence. The Deputy Traffic Commissioner refused the application having concluded that the applicant did not have the required repute or financial standing to be granted an operator's licence.

In 2021, he applied again, this time for a standard international public service vehicle operator's licence. Despite Mr Kilpatrick having an existing and long-standing business, Phoenix Travel, he chose to apply for the licence in his own name as a sole trader. Phoenix Travel had already benefitted from substantial COVID grant funding from the local authority. Mr Kilpatrick however, created a new coach hire business in the name of J Kilpatrick t/a J Kilpatrick Coach Hire' in the middle of the pandemic. He then applied for a bounce back loan in the name of that business. Mr Kilpatrick repeatedly asserted that he had done nothing wrong in applying for the funding that he had. He was adamant that he had stuck to the letter of the law. However, James Kilpatrick t/a J Kilpatrick Coach Hire was not an existing business as at 1 March 2020 which had lost revenue as a result of the pandemic. It was not, therefore, entitled to receive a bounce back loan. Had he disclosed that fact, the bank ought not have loaned him any money under the scheme.

The traffic commissioner said "This applicant has sought to hide behind trading names and obscure from sight his opportunistic exploitation of state backed crisis funding arrangements for personal gain. He has obtained large sums of taxpayer backed low-cost funding when he was not entitled to do so. He has done so whilst responsible operators in my jurisdiction have continued to strive to comply with the rules, operating in some of the most difficult circumstances our society has ever encountered. The applicant has, however, been caught out again."

The commissioner also directed that a copy of the decision in this case should be sent to Action Fraud for them to investigate whether there has been any impropriety on the part of Mr Kilpatrick in applying for the bounce back loan in the manner in which he did.

Further details can be found [here](#).

[Sex abuser has sentence for child sexual offences increased following ULS referral](#)

News story

Benjamin Johnson, found guilty of sexual offences against a child, has had his sentence increased after his case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP.



A man found guilty of sexual offences against a child has had his sentence increased after his case was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP.

Benjamin Johnson, now 36, was 14 when he began sexually abusing the victim, then aged 6. The abuse continued over a 4-year period, with the offences occurring regularly when the two would spend the night at the same house.

On 2 December 2021, Johnson was sentenced to 3 years and 3 months' imprisonment at Chester Crown Court.

Following the sentencing, the Solicitor General referred Johnson's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme.

On 10 February the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 6 years' imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP said:

For a period of four years Benjamin Johnson engaged in a sordid and sustained series of indecent assaults against a young child. No sentence can undo the damage he has caused, but Johnson's increased sentence better reflects the severity of his offending, and shows that those who target and exploit vulnerable children can expect

robust punishment.

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Foreign Secretary's meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov, 10 February 2022

Press release

Foreign Secretary Liz Truss met Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov during her visit to Moscow.



A Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office spokesperson said:

In her meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, Foreign Secretary Liz Truss said that the aggressive build-up of Russian forces on Ukraine's border threatened Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. She made clear that Russia needed to live up to the international commitments it had entered into.

She added that any further Russian invasion of Ukraine would have massive consequences and incur severe costs. Russia needed to deescalate, withdraw its forces from the border and pursue a diplomatic path as NATO allies had offered.

The Foreign Secretary further emphasised that Russian aggression was counterproductive and had increased tensions, to which NATO and Ukraine had to respond. The Foreign Secretary noted the right of every nation to choose its own security arrangements. She rejected the notion that improving one nation's security threatened

another's.

The Foreign Secretary said as Permanent Members of the UN Security Council, the UK and Russia had a responsibility to maintain international peace and security and the pair discussed cooperation on addressing Iran's nuclear programme and the situation in Afghanistan.

The Foreign Secretary noted that our differences were with the aggressive policy of the Russian government towards Ukraine, not with the Russian people. She highlighted the cultural and educational links between Russia and the UK and invited Foreign Minister Lavrov to visit the UK in the coming months. The UK wanted to see an improved bilateral relationship, but this depended on Russia choosing to deescalate and taking the path of diplomacy.

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[PM statement in Warsaw: 10 February 2022](#)

It's great to be back in Warsaw, thank you again Mateusz for your characteristically warm welcome.

The reason I'm here is because Poland is absolutely critical to our collective European security and the lesson of the last 100 years is that when Poland is threatened with instability, or aggression on the borders of Poland, then we are all threatened and we're all affected.

And I just want to be absolutely clear, when Poland is threatened then the UK stands ready to help, as indeed Poland has always stood ready to help the United Kingdom.

So I'm very pleased again to have the chance to talk to you Mateusz, you're absolutely right in what you said. Much of what we talked about in November has come to pass and that's why earlier today the UK's 45 Commando Unit touched down in Poland.

And those 350 troops join the 150 British troops who arrived here in December in response to instability on the Belarusian border, and the 150 British troops who contribute to NATO's enhanced Forward Presence, are standing shoulder to shoulder with our Polish counterparts to bring stability and security not just to Poland, but to Europe and I would say to the world.

I've just come from seeing Jens Stoltenberg in NATO, where the message I have

given, and the one the UK has been giving to all our counterparts, is that we need to work together now to achieve de-escalation and to persuade Vladimir Putin to de-escalate and to disengage.

And as we tirelessly pursue the path of diplomacy to bring an end to the tensions on Ukrainian borders, it is important to remember why we are doing this and why we're putting together this package of sanctions against a possible invasion, why we're doing so much to support and protect Ukraine.

And it's exactly as Mateusz has just said – we won't accept, Poland and the UK won't accept, a world in which a powerful neighbour can bully or attack their neighbours.

And we won't accept it because we believe all people – no matter where they are born – have a right to live safely, choose who governs them and to decide what organisations they aspire to have membership of.

Or, indeed, what bodies they want to cease being members of.

And we will not compromise on that principle.

It's now more than 80 years Mateusz since Polish pilots came to my own constituency of Uxbridge and South Ruislip in West London to help my country in our fight for freedom. We stood side by side to uphold our values and our principles then, and we stand side by side today.

Thank you all very much.

[UK officials travel to Afghanistan, 10 February 2022](#)

Press release

The UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs and the Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim of the UK Mission to Afghanistan held talks with the Taliban.



A government spokesperson said:

UK representatives returned to Afghanistan today for talks on how to respond to the country's deepening humanitarian crisis.

Nick Dyer, the UK's Special Envoy for Famine Prevention and Humanitarian Affairs, Hugo Shorter, Chargé d'Affaires ad Interim of the UK Mission to Afghanistan and Hester Waddams, Deputy Head of Mission and Political Counsellor, UK Mission to Afghanistan met senior Taliban officials including Mawlawi Amir Khan Muttaqi and Abdul Haq Wasiq.

As well as discussing the dire humanitarian situation, officials made clear to the Taliban the UK's serious concerns about human rights, including those of women, girls and minorities, and the treatment of women's rights activists.

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