

# Suspended sentence for bankrupt Devon builder who left victims living in mobile home

James Prentice, 41, from South Devon, was sentenced to 6 months imprisonment suspended for 2 years, ordered to carry out 150 hours of unpaid work and ordered to pay compensation of £4,500 to his victims.

Exeter Crown Court heard Prentice was declared bankrupt in December 2014 and although he could continue working as a builder through his company, JSP Woodworx, the terms of his Bankruptcy Restrictions Undertaking (BRU) meant he could not take more than £500 as a deposit from clients without disclosing he was a bankrupt.

Despite this, between June 2016 and January 2018, Prentice took more than £271,000 to build a retirement home on farmland in Taunton for his victims which he claimed was for his services and to supply goods needed for the project.

Some work did take place but the victims found that it was not done to a satisfactory standard and they dismissed Prentice in October 2017. The victims, then in their late 60s, had to use another builder to finish the building work, paying a further £256,000, and have been stuck living in a caravan ever since.

Prentice was also employed to renovate a home in Devon for two further victims. In November 2016, the defendant told his victims an upfront payment was required 'to get things going', receiving almost £45,000, and then further payments totalling £125,000.

But Prentice was again dismissed shortly afterward as his work was not completed to a satisfactory standard.

Prentice's misconduct continued throughout 2017 where a further £204,000 was paid to the defendant from two other victims. A local business who Prentice had sub-contracted to help with one build also went unpaid.

At no point did Prentice inform his victims of his BRU, the court heard, and all victims stated they would not have used Prentice's services or paid him up front had they been aware.

The Insolvency Service investigated Prentice's conduct following a complaint from one of his victims and invited him for interview. Prentice claimed he had misunderstood the terms of his BRU.

Prentice pleaded guilty to 9 counts of obtaining credit without declaring he was subject of a bankruptcy restrictions undertaking at Exeter Crown Court and sentenced today.

Glenn Wicks, chief investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

James Prentice should have been fully aware of his bankruptcy restrictions yet obtained a substantial amount of funds whilst providing shoddy work for his victims. Prentice acted dishonestly and his actions have left his customers suffering huge financial losses, leaving one couple forced to live in a mobile home instead of their dream retirement home.

Prentice's actions have had a prolonged impact on the people he took funds from. We will investigate bankrupts who do not comply with the terms of their restrictions and action will be taken through the criminal courts where it is appropriate.

James Prentice is from Kingsbridge and his date of birth is January 1980.

James Prentice pleaded guilty and was sentenced on 2 July 2021.

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

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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## [National Core Studies commencement letter, 28 October 2020](#)

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## [UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart on City Region and Growth](#)

## Deals tour

UK Government Minister for Scotland Iain Stewart visited Glasgow yesterday (1st July) to hear about progress on the City Region Deal's many projects and see the completed development of Sauchiehall Street.

Today (2nd July), he visited Carlisle Station to hear Borderland's Growth Deal partners' plans for helping to deliver growth and improved connectivity to the entire region. He also attended a roundtable meeting with Borderlands stakeholders.

The visit to Glasgow came as it was confirmed that City Region Deal leaders have now invested £263 million of its £1.13 billion infrastructure fund.

So far local companies have benefitted from more than £116 million in contracts helping them to build expertise and support jobs.

Minister Stewart said:

It's fantastic such great progress is being made on the Glasgow City Region Deal. These projects are making a real difference to communities: creating jobs, building sustainable public spaces, and attracting further investment to the area.

The deal will play a vital role as we build back better from the pandemic, and we will continue to work closely with local authorities and the Scottish Government to achieve this.

The UK Government is investing more than £1.5 billion into City Region and Growth Deals across the whole of Scotland.

The City Deal is jointly funded by the UK and Scottish governments who are each contributing £500 million, with a further £135 million coming from local authority partners.

The deal, which signed its first agreement in 2014, is also marking its 7th birthday since its inception, with the UK and Scottish governments recently reaffirming their continued commitment and joint working on the deal by accelerating the delivery of £65 million funding to help projects progress to their next stage.

Over 20 years the deal will deliver 21 major infrastructure projects, covering the entire region with a focus on regenerating and revitalising areas with forward-thinking designs that are both sustainable and adaptable to the challenges of climate change.

This includes the £115 million Avenues Programme which is set to transform and redesign many of Glasgow's iconic public spaces with more trees, rain gardens to improve drainage, and active travel routes to make it easier to

move about the city on foot or by bike.

To the North of the City a huge area of polluted land has been cleaned up so a new community can be built with easy access to the city centre; while Europe's first Smart Canal system will help the city manage extreme weather and prevent flooding.

Many projects outside the city are also improving links and supporting revitalisation, including the construction of a new bridge across the Clyde, regeneration at Ravenscraig and Exxon industrial sites, and a new terminal for cruise liner visitors at Greenock.

The £452 million Borderlands Inclusive Growth Deal is also jointly supported by the UK and Scottish governments and local partners.

After his visit to Carlisle, Minister Stewart said:

The Scottish-English borderlands is home to many vibrant communities and innovative businesses with huge potential that the Borderlands Growth Deal, including UK Government investment of £265 million, will help to unlock, so the region can build back better from the pandemic.

At the heart of the deal is a major boost to connectivity for southern Scotland and northern England which will bring significant benefits to the area, and I was very interested to see Carlisle Station and hear about plans to transform it into a major travel hub connecting the entire UK to the Borderlands.

Together with the proposed extension of the Borders rail line from Tweedbank to Carlisle and the UK Government's Union Connectivity Review, to revitalise rail, road, sea and air links between all parts of the United Kingdom, these are exciting times for the Borderlands.

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## **Minister Eddie Hughes thanks councils for efforts in tackling climate change**

In a speech today (2 July 2021) at London Climate Action Week, Eddie Hughes MP (Parliamentary Under Secretary for MHCLG) has recognised the vital work of councils to mobilise their efforts to combat climate change and meet our ambitious net zero targets.

The UK is a global leader on climate change, and in 2019 became the first G7

country to put into law the ambition for net zero by 2050. Our ambitious planning reforms will help us meet this target.

Minister Hughes said councils' expert knowledge of their communities allow them to help deliver net zero across energy, housing and transport in ways most suited to people in their area.

By joining up across functions such as public health, planning, housing and air quality, they can get wider benefits from decarbonisation, such as reducing inequality, community integration and a green economic recovery.

Most councils are already taking some form of action. Minister Hughes cited innovative work across the country – including in the capital, where the London Plan includes measures to ensure the environmental ambition of major developments is included at the start of the design process.

Plymouth meanwhile has installed solar panels on council buildings, saving up to £1.4 million on its energy bills. It is also providing grants to help 500 fuel-poor families make their homes more energy efficient.

Leeds has introduced co-buying schemes for home upgrades, to reduce the cost for families of making their homes more energy efficient. And Hampshire has invested in digital tools to ensure it factors carbon impacts and climate risk into all its decisions.

Minister Hughes said:

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised many fundamental questions about the way we live our lives. As we have all worked from home, we have spent more time in our local neighbourhoods and built ties with the people who live around us.

Building back better from this pandemic means not only ensuring that new development is greener and better for the environment, but that it supports healthy, happy and flourishing communities.

He added that the government's planning reforms emphasise environmental outcomes, not just processes.

This reflects the call from the Climate Change Committee for councils to collaborate with communities and businesses, and with each other, to deliver local projects that support net zero.

MHCLG's achievements to date include:

- Our [National Planning Policy Framework \(NPPF\)](#) sets out how councils should ensure new developments are not vulnerable to climate change. And our [Planning for the future white paper](#) is clear that environmental concerns and our transition to net zero should be embedded in the planning system.

- The [Future Buildings Standard consultation](#) set out proposals to reduce the risk of overheating in new residential buildings by introducing a new overheating mitigation requirement in the Building Regulations.
- From 2025, the [Future Homes Standard](#) will ensure that new homes produce at least 75% less CO2 emissions than homes built now.
- The government has made over £1 billion available to councils to increase the energy efficiency of low-income households in England. So far thousands of homes have been upgraded, and thousands more are signed up.

Minister Hughes added:

The Planning Bill will establish a clear set of rules – from where communities want homes to be built, to the high design and environmental standards that must be met – while complementing the commitments we are making in the Environment Bill.

This includes making it mandatory for the vast majority housing and developments to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity, ensuring new developments enhance the environment, contribute to our ecological networks and conserve our precious landscapes.

[London Climate Action Week](#) is an annual event bringing together world-leading climate expertise to help solve the climate emergency.

LCAW was established to create space for London's climate professionals and communities to come together and find solutions to climate change. Now in its third year, LCAW is the largest independent climate gathering in Europe.

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## [PM statement at press conference with German Chancellor: 2 July 2021](#)

I'm very pleased to welcome Angela here on the last of the 22 visits you have made to the UK in your 16 years as German Chancellor. In the course of that time some things have changed beyond recognition, but for much of your tenure it was certainly a tradition, Angela, for England to lose to Germany in international football tournaments and I'm obviously grateful to you for breaking with that tradition, just for once.

Nonetheless, one thing that has stayed the same is your commitment to the UK-Germany relationship. As you once said, we share the same values. And we share a lot more than that. Germany is the UK's second largest trading partner, three-quarters of a million Brits work for German companies or vice versa. More than 21,000 Germans attend UK Universities and one in five people in this country are driving around in a German car. And today Angela and I have agreed to expand those links because we are expanding our youth exchanges, creating a new cultural dialogue and as we speak an energy superhighway is being established between our countries which will enable British tea to be brewed with the harvest of German sunshine and German Bratwurst will be grilled using British wind power.

Angela you've just addressed the British Cabinet – I hope you enjoyed it- and you're the first foreign leader to do so this century. And what we've also agreed is that from now on the German and UK Cabinets will meet every year to discuss shared issues in the first arrangement of its kind for the UK.

Angela, on behalf of the UK, I want to thank you for your truly historic commitment to not just to the UK-German relationship but to global diplomacy more generally. I think over the last year, 18 months in particular, your scientific expertise has been instrumental in guiding the global response to the pandemic, and, as I was saying, a commitment to science and research is something our countries share and want to develop together.

It is no coincidence that two of the world's most successful coronavirus vaccines – Pfizer Biontech and Oxford-AstraZeneca – came out of German and British labs.

I'm very proud that today we are establishing the new Herschel Medal for German and British women in Astrophysics in your honour – just one, Angela, of the lasting legacies of your leadership.

It's a great privilege to welcome you here today Angela, over to you.