

UK Government helps more than 57,000 businesses in Wales

- More than 55,000 loans worth more than £1.5 billion have been offered under the Bounce Back Loans Scheme
- More than 2,200 loans worth £503 million have been offered under the Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme
- 97,000 people in Wales have benefitted from the Self Employment Income Support Scheme.

Businesses in Wales benefited from more than £2 billion of UK government-backed loans to protect and support jobs.

More than 57,000 loans have supported businesses across all sectors, protecting jobs. But the retail and construction sectors have benefitted the most, demonstrating how government support helped those businesses that were impacted hardest by the pandemic.

Similarly, the self-employment income support scheme has benefitted business people across all sectors, with 97,000 people in Wales benefitting from SEISS, with an average claim of £2,400.

Secretary of State for Wales, Simon Hart, said:

The pandemic has created huge uncertainty for employees, the self-employed and business owners, but the support UK Government has provided has brought stability to thousands businesses across Wales.

Firms large and small in Wales have received more than £2 billion in UK government-backed loans to protect jobs and these businesses will help drive the economy as we look to build back stronger from the pandemic.

The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, said:

Throughout this crisis, we have provided more than £280 billion of support to protect jobs and livelihoods up and down the country.

We are committed to continuing to ensure jobs are protected and opportunity is created. Companies across Wales have benefitted from support through government-backed loans, including a chain of pet

supply superstores, Pet Place, based in Conwy.

Sion Pritchard, managing director of Pet Place, said:

We've always designed our online presence to supplement the revenue our physical stores generate, so the sudden and vast increase in online orders presented a major challenge. While we've been able to successfully redeploy our resources, we wouldn't have been able to move so quickly or meet the working capital demands of such an exercise without the emergency funding from CBILS, particularly given the level of investment we've put into our stores in the last year.

Our overall business has been by no means immune to the economic effects of the current pandemic but, with the support of CBILS and our lenders, we've been able to meet them head on while keeping our employees safe and our suppliers paid in full.

At the start of Winter, the Chancellor announced that more than a million businesses who took out a Bounce Back Loan will now receive further protection from the Covid crisis through flexible repayments, under the new Pay as You Grow system, which gives businesses more time to repay. Since then, the Government has extended the loans schemes until March, and given businesses the ability to 'top-up' their loans if they need to.

The Government has invested more than £280 billion throughout the pandemic to protect millions of jobs and businesses, including extending the self-employed and furlough schemes through to April to give businesses the certainty they need to plan over the coming months.

[37th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Lebanon](#)



The United Kingdom recognises that 2020 was a challenging year for Lebanon. Lebanon should ensure that the Port explosion, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the economic crisis do not disproportionately affect the most vulnerable.

The UK welcomes the Lebanese Armed Forces and Internal Security Forces' recent engagement with civil society. We urge Lebanon's security forces to strengthen internal investigation mechanisms, and ensure full compliance with international human rights obligations.

We recommend that Lebanon:

1. Afford migrant workers full legal protections in line with Lebanon's international commitments on forced labour and discrimination.
2. Adopt an open, merit-based process when selecting national candidates for UN Treaty Body elections.
3. Repeal the criminal defamation provisions of the Penal Code, and reform Article 317 of the Code to limit criminalisation to; incitement to discrimination, hostility, and violence.

Thank you.

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Fines handed to Bradford security businessmen for infringement of the Private Security Industry Act

They were charged with failing to supply information to the Security Industry Authority (SIA) despite repeated requests; this is a breach of the Private Security Industry Act (PSIA) 2001.

Three security company directors – Basit Sultan, Muhammad Aslam and Usman Raees – failed to appear at Bradford Magistrates' Court on the appointed date. They were each fined £660 in their absence and required to pay costs of £300 and a victim surcharge of £66.

Nathan Salmon, of the SIA's Criminal Investigation team, said that the men will no longer be able to work in the private security industry in the UK and commented that:

It is a licensing requirement that security professionals must provide business information to the SIA when requested, within a reasonable time frame. There was no attempt at compliance from any of these individuals, even giving allowances for the restrictions imposed by COVID-19. They will not be able to work in the private security industry as their licences will be suspended and they will also have criminal records.

It is an ongoing issue in West Yorkshire that some security businesses are not providing information. The SIA have been investigating several security businesses in West Yorkshire, which all appear to be closely linked with each other.

We will continue to pursue and take action against businesses that flout regulation and we are determined to root out poor business practices in the private security industry.

Basit Sultan from Oldham was a director of Sintry Facility Management Ltd between 24 January 2019 and 04 November 2019. The SIA sought information from Sultan about Sintry's dealings with a Bradford construction company. The SIA wrote to Sultan repeatedly in September and October 2019 requesting information, but he failed to respond. This lack of compliance with the PSIA meant that the SIA brought a prosecution against him.

Muhammad Kamran Aslam from Huddersfield was formerly a director of Bluesec Services Ltd between 22 December 2016 and 06 March 2019. SIA investigators sought information about Bluesec's dealings with the construction industry. A

letter requesting information was sent to both Aslam and Bluesec Services Ltd about their deployment of security officers. The SIA did not receive a reply and prosecuted Aslam for non-compliance.

Usman Raees from Bradford was also a former director of Bluesec Services Group Ltd between 21 November 2017 and 28 November 2017. The SIA sought further information from Raees about the deployment of security officers. SIA investigators wrote to Raees on 16 September 2019 and sent subsequent follow up letters in October 2019 but there was no response. Raees was prosecuted by the SIA on 22 December 2020.

SIA investigators also sent an initial request for information to door supervisor Junaid Zafar, from Batley, on 20 March 2020. He became a director of Sentinel Security Group Ltd on 28 February 2020.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Zafar sought extra time to reply to the SIA, which was granted on 09 April. Zafar failed to supply the information and instead wrote on 29 June 2020 to say that his company had filed for liquidation. The SIA subsequently prosecuted him.

On 22 December Zafar pleaded guilty to one count of infringement of the PSIA and was fined £150. He is also required to pay court costs of £150 and a victim surcharge of £34. Zafar now has a criminal record for non-compliance with the PSIA and will not be able to work in the UK's private security industry.

Notes to editors:

- by law, security operatives working under contract must hold and display a valid SIA licence
- [read about SIA enforcement and penalties](#)
- the offence mentioned in the above news release is: Private Security Industry Act 2001, Section 19 (failing to provide information relating to an investigation)

Further information:

- The Security Industry Authority is the organisation responsible for regulating the private security industry in the United Kingdom, reporting to the Home Secretary under the terms of the Private Security Industry Act 2001. Our main duties are: the compulsory licensing of individuals undertaking designated activities; and managing the voluntary Approved Contractor Scheme.
 - For further information about the Security Industry Authority visit www.gov.uk/sia. The SIA is also on [Facebook](#) (Security Industry Authority) and [Twitter](#) (SIAuk).
 - Media enquiries only please contact: 0300 123 9869, media.enquiries@sia.gov.uk
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Metallurgy firms abandon merger during CMA investigation

Press release

The CMA no longer intends to refer the merger of TTI and Tronox to an in-depth investigation, after Tronox's announcement to abandon the deal.



Tronox and TiZir Titanium and Iron (TTI) are involved in the supply of materials used in the production of titanium dioxide, a white powder used in every-day items such as paint, sunscreen, paper and plastics. TTI is one of the 2 main global suppliers of chloride slag, one of the most important minerals used to make titanium dioxide pigment, and Tronox is one of the main producers of titanium dioxide pigment.

In its initial Phase 1 investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that Tronox intends to use all of TTI's chloride slag in its own production of titanium dioxide and halt future sales of chloride slag to third parties. This would leave Rio Tinto, TTI's main chloride slag competitor, with what is effectively a monopoly position.

The CMA found that the removal of TTI as a main competitor from the market could significantly limit customer supply and lead to higher prices for chloride slag globally, as well as for titanium dioxide in the UK and Europe. Although other minerals are available to make titanium dioxide, the CMA found that customers have limited substitutes for chloride slag.

The CMA subsequently announced it would proceed to refer the deal to an in-depth Phase 2 investigation as undertakings offered by Tronox were not a clear-cut solution to the competition concerns identified. The CMA will now not refer the deal for an in-depth Phase 2 investigation, subject to appropriate assurances from the parties that the transaction has been abandoned.

More information is available on the [Tronox Holdings / TiZir merger inquiry page](#).

For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or press@cma.gov.uk.

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[37th Universal Periodic Review: UK statement on Micronesia](#)

World news story

The UK delivers statement on Micronesia at the 37th Session of Universal Periodic Review (UPR), sharing recommendations to improve their human rights record.



Universal Periodic Review takes place in Geneva.

Thank you, Madam President,

The United Kingdom appreciates the Federated States of Micronesia's continued participation in the UPR process. We commend [the Federated States of] Micronesia's efforts to implement the recommendations from its last review, despite capacity and resource constraints, and we welcome the ongoing consultation with civil society in this process.

The United Kingdom commends [the Federated States of] Micronesia on the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. We further welcome the Government's preparation of a report into the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child and encourage further action in this regard.

The United Kingdom acknowledges the challenges facing [the Federated States of] Micronesia in their efforts to address their human rights obligations, especially in the face of the growing impact of climate change, and we

encourage the Government to draw on available international technical assistance and expertise in this area.

We recommend the Federated States of Micronesia;

Thank you, Madam President.

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