

# £50 million to boost islands' economy

Press release

The UK Government has announced it will invest £50 million in the Islands Growth Deal



The Prime Minister is to announce today [23 July] the UK Government is committing £50 million to Orkney, Shetland and the Western Isles, unlocking the islands' economic potential.

Mr Johnson will be marking one year as Prime Minister with a visit to Scotland. He will reaffirm his commitment to supporting all parts of the UK through the coronavirus pandemic.

The multimillion pound Islands Growth Deal will provide investment for local projects across the Scottish islands, driving sustainable economic growth and creating jobs. It will also help to attract further private and public sector investment.

Projects set to be supported by the Islands Growth Deal could include some which are developing space technology while others are researching new renewable energy systems. The deal will also support projects that will boost tourism and housing.

The announcement, made ahead of the Prime Minister's visit to Orkney, means that every part of Scotland is now covered by the innovative growth deals and takes UK Government's investment in deals across Scotland to more than £1.5 billion.

To date, this funding has supported innovative and exciting projects across Scotland including: a new concert hall in Edinburgh – reaffirming the city as a global cultural leader, a feasibility study of the Borders Railway – looking at improving transport links between England and Scotland, and the world-leading Oil & Gas Technology Centre in Aberdeen.

Scottish Secretary, Alister Jack, who will accompany Mr Johnson on his visit today, said:

The City Region and Growth Deals will be crucial to our economic recovery from coronavirus. Today's announcement means that every corner of Scotland will benefit from these and takes the UK Government's investment in growth deals across Scotland to more than £1.5 billion.

These deals are just part of the unprecedented support that the UK Government is providing to people and businesses in Scotland during this time. We have supported 900,000 jobs in Scotland with our furlough and self-employed schemes, including 11,600 across the islands.

We look forward to working with our partners across the islands and the devolved administration in Scotland to develop innovative and effective proposals.

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## [Restaurateurs disqualified for abusing the tax regime](#)

Paul Anthony Podvoiskis (68), from Sherbourne, Warwickshire, received a five year court-ordered disqualification, while Allan Ho (52), from Coatbridge, North Lanarkshire, accepted a nine year disqualification undertaking.

The pair caused the companies they were directors of to abuse the tax regime and they are both banned from acting as a director or directly or indirectly becoming involved, without the permission of the court, in the promotion, formation or management of a company.

Paul Podvoiskis was the director of Candy Experience Limited, which ran public houses and restaurants across the south west of England. This included Ringwood, Cadnam and Lymington in Hampshire, as well as three restaurants trading under the name Alcatraz Bar & Brasserie in Bournemouth and Poole in Dorset, and Camberley in Surrey.

However, Candy Experience failed to submit monthly VAT returns from August 2015 up until the date of liquidation; owed outstanding PAYE and National Insurance contributions dating back to 2014/15; and the company failed to settle its tax liabilities. At the point of liquidation, the tax authorities claimed more than £470,000, which remains outstanding.

Further enquiries established that Candy Experiences' bank records received more than £3.8 million into its account. Just over £115,000 was paid to the

tax authorities and £1,153 in business rates was paid to the local authorities. The remaining £3.68 million, however, was used by Candy Experience to pay trade creditors, wages and other operational costs, including more than £779,000 paid to a connected company.

Allyan Limited traded as a takeaway restaurant called Canton Cuisine from Union Street, Larkhall. However, the company ceased to trade in November 2018 before being wound-up by the courts in July 2019 following a petition from the tax authorities.

After the company was liquidated, investigators uncovered that for nearly six years between November 2010 and August 2016, Allan Ho caused Allyan Limited to deliberately suppress its sales and delivery income in order to conceal its true tax liabilities.

The tax authorities raised several tax assessments to recover tax owed and by November 2018, Allyan Limited's tax liability increased to more than £500,000, which also included penalties for deliberate concealment. In the absence of payment from the company the tax authorities lodged a winding up petition resulting in the company being placed into compulsory liquidation on 30 July 2019.

Paul Podvoiskis appeared at the High Court in London between 30 June and 2 July 2020 where ICC Judge Burton made a five year disqualification order against him. His ban ends on 8 October 2023 – the court took into account a previous undertaking accepted by Paul Podvoiskis – and Judge Burton also awarded costs in the region of £47,000

On 30 June 2020, the Secretary of State accepted a disqualification undertaking from Allan Ho, after he did not dispute that he concealed tax liabilities to the detriment of the tax authorities. His ban comes into effect on 28 July 2020.

Keith Owen, Director of Investigations and Enforcement Services for the Insolvency Service, said:

The majority of directors take their responsibilities seriously but Paul Podvoiskis and Allan Ho both deliberately caused their companies to abuse the tax regime, when they failed to pay the correct amount of tax.

Both restaurateurs have received substantial bans for their misconduct and this should serve as a clear warning to other directors that neglecting their statutory duties could lead to being removed from the corporate arena.

### **Alan Ho and Allyan Limited**

Allan Ho is of Coatbridge and his date of birth is May 1968. Allyan Limited (Company Reg no. SC384284).

## Paul Podvoiskis and Candy Experience

Paul Anthony Podvoiskis's date of birth is September 1951. Candy Experience Limited (Company Reg no. 07959121). It was previously called '8 Rivers Bars Limited' from 21 February 2012 to 11 June 2014.

The principal trading names and addresses of these are as follows:

- The Old Beams at Ibsley, Ringwood
- The Sir John Barleycorn at Old Romsey Road, Cadnam
- The Hobbler Inn, at Southampton Road, Battramsley, Lymington
- Alcatraz Bar & Brasserie at 127 Old Christchurch Road, Bournemouth
- Alcatraz Bar & Brasserie at 40-42 High Street, Poole
- Alcatraz Bar & Brasserie at 39-41 Obelisk Way, Camberley

## About disqualifications

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 restrictions](#).

[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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## [Coal Authority repairs grade I listed hotel in Nottinghamshire](#)

The Coal Authority has worked closely with the owner of Thoresby Hall to repair minor subsidence damage, both inside and out, which followed a crack in the ground underneath the corner of the landmark building.

The £150,000 project started at the beginning of March 2020 with the main objective to minimise disruption to guests. However, work was soon paused when the COVID-19 lockdown was introduced and the hotel closed.

As restrictions were eased, our contractors returned to site at the end of May, following strict government guidance to safely and swiftly complete the job in June, enabling Warner Leisure Hotels to prepare for reopening in July.

Carrying out repairs in the Great Hall at Thoresby Hall.

Coal Authority project manager Rob Pilmore said:

There were a few challenges, including initially carrying out the repairs without disturbing guests staying at the hotel.

Due to the protected status of the hall and nature of the works, which included repairing carved stonework and the large decorative ceilings, we also required experienced stonemasons and specialist decorators.

Once restrictions were lifted and we were back on site the project was completed within a month. Our framework contractors have done a fantastic job – they've since been approached to carry out work on other hotels in the group.

Stuart Billington, head of property and capital Investment at Warner Leisure Hotels, said:

The works have been completed to the highest standard and the collaboration between the Coal Authority, their contractors and Warner Leisure Hotels worked incredibly well.

With these works carried out and our continuing investment, we are able to maintain Thoresby Hall in all its glory for future generations to enjoy, while our guests can relax and explore the surrounding area for years to come.

Repainting the Library ceiling at Thoresby Hall.

The Coal Authority has been working to make a better future for people and the environment in mining areas for more than 25 years.

As part of our commitment to keep communities safe we have a coal mine hazard line – which can be called 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on 01623 646 333.

Thoresby Hall was built from 1864 to 1871 and is now a 4 star, 200 room hotel. Thoresby Colliery, Nottinghamshire's last coal mine, opened in 1925 and closed in 2015.

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# Half of all private and voluntary sector fostering placements offered by just 6 companies

Press release

Ofsted has published statistics on private and voluntary providers of children's homes and independent fostering agencies (IFAs).



New Ofsted data shows that half of all private and voluntary fostering placements nationally are concentrated in just 6 providers. That equates to placements for over 18,000 children.

Published for the first time as management information, Ofsted's statistics show that the 6 largest providers own 66 independent fostering agencies (IFAs), around a fifth of all IFAs. The top two providers own 47 IFAs, offering over 11,000 fostering places between them, making up 31% of all places offered by private and voluntary IFAs nationally.

Across England, 93% of all IFAs have been judged either good or outstanding by Ofsted. The proportion of good and outstanding IFAs owned by the largest providers is higher than the national average, at 98%.

The data also reveals that around a third of all private and voluntary children's homes are run by just 10 providers, a similar position to last year.

Ofsted has previously raised concerns about the lack of suitable care placements for vulnerable children, with national supply not matching the local needs of children.

Ofsted's National Director for Social Care, Yvette Stanley, said:

Demand for children's social care services continues to outstrip supply, and the need for placements for the most vulnerable children is only likely to rise in the wake of COVID-19. We have

repeatedly raised the issue of overall sufficiency of placements for looked after children.

The domination of the fostering market by a small number of operators creates an additional concern that the loss of any of the bigger providers could leave major gaps in supply. We worry that the narrowing of the market on top of the sufficiency issue is storing up trouble for the future.

## **Notes to editors**

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# **UN Human Rights Council 44: UK's closing statement**

The 44th session of the Human Rights Council concluded on Friday 17 June, adopting important resolutions on Syria, Belarus, Eritrea, Discrimination against Women and Girls and other pressing issues. I would like to extend my gratitude to the HRC President and Secretariat for their efforts and creativity that allowed the session to take place smoothly in a hybrid format.

As the international community works together to face the challenges presented by coronavirus (COVID-19), it is crucial that states continue to meet their human rights obligations and take steps to mitigate the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on women and girls, and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged members of society, including refugees and members of ethnic, religious and belief minorities, and ensure that they are actively included in response and recovery efforts.

I welcome the Council's adoption of the latest Syria resolution, which focuses on the regime's continued practice of enforced disappearance and arbitrary detention. Given the additional risks posed by coronavirus, the regime must release all those arbitrarily detained.

The resolution also highlights the latest report by the Commission of Inquiry, which found reasonable grounds to believe that war crimes and crimes against humanity had been committed during the military offensive in Idlib. Russia and China's reprehensible use of their vetoes at the Security Council to reduce cross-border aid access into Northern Syria will lead to further loss of life. The resolution rightly demands that the regime and its allies

allow urgent, unimpeded, humanitarian access to alleviate the continued suffering of millions of vulnerable Syrians.

The UK delivered a cross-regional joint statement on Hong Kong and Xinjiang on behalf of 28 countries. It is important to bring these issues to the Human Rights Council, given China's ongoing human rights violations in Xinjiang, and the unprecedented nature of China's actions in Hong Kong. As the Prime Minister has said, the imposition of legislation related to national security in Hong Kong is a clear and serious breach of the Sino-British Joint Declaration. The statement also reiterated our shared concerns about Xinjiang, and encouraged the High Commissioner for Human Rights to provide regular information on both situations. I am encouraged that the statement brought together a broad group of states to call on China to uphold its international commitments and human rights obligations.

I also welcome the adoption of the resolution on Eritrea. The UK supports the work of the Special Rapporteur, and I was pleased to see her mandate renewed for another year. I welcome Eritrea's engagement over the past year, but encourage further efforts to make tangible progress on key areas, such as reform of national service, and the implementation of UPR recommendations.

The adoption of the resolution on Belarus ensures that the Belarusian government continues to be held to account for its failure to meet its human rights obligations. I call for the release of those arbitrarily arrested and detained for exercising their right to freedom of expression and assembly as the country prepares for the Presidential election. I also urge Belarus to allow the Special Rapporteur access as a concrete step towards increased international cooperation.

I am pleased that the UK co-sponsored the resolution on the elimination of Female Genital Mutilation. FGM is an extremely harmful practice, causing severe and lifelong physical, psychological and emotional harm to women and girls. The UK is proud to be a leading donor in the effort to support and accelerate the Africa-led movement to end FGM. There is still much more to do and we will continue our work to support the global ambition to end FGM by 2030.

I am also pleased that the UK co-sponsored the resolution on Elimination of Discrimination against Women and Girls. I welcome its recognition of the disproportionate impact of coronavirus on women and girls. We must work together to eliminate discrimination and gender-based violence, and ensure that women's rights, including comprehensive sexual and reproductive health and rights, are central to the global recovery.

I am pleased that all the amendments that sought to weaken the text failed; it is encouraging to see the international community defend language on women's rights. The UK firmly supports the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all women and girls. Women and girls' control over their own lives and bodies is fundamental to gender equality, and we will continue to work with others to protect this.

I welcome the adoption of the resolution on Freedom of Opinion and



Expression, which the UK was pleased to cosponsor. Freedom of opinion and expression are essential in any functioning democracy; people must be allowed to discuss and debate issues freely, and to challenge their governments. During the session we highlighted our concern about the recent ruling in the case of the journalist Maria Ressa in the Philippines.

The Human Rights Council continues to play an essential role in holding to account those who violate or abuse human rights, particularly now, as the coronavirus pandemic brings unprecedented humanitarian challenges and disruption to economies and societies, and has a negative impact on the enjoyment of human rights around the world. As we seek election to the Council later this year, the UK remains strongly committed to supporting the Council and the wider international community in championing human rights.