

Nottinghamshire business supports production of masks for public

- Export Champion creates new line of face coverings as part of coronavirus (COVID-19) response
- Company donates £1 for each face covering bought to local NHS trust

A Department for International Trade (DIT) 'Export Champion' is leading the way in supplying face coverings to its local area and beyond, in response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

Source Control Masks is the trading name of Mansfield-based industrial supplies business Hall-Fast. The business normally exports to over 100 countries including Nigeria and Poland. However, in light of the outbreak, it has refocused efforts to support and increase UK supplies of face coverings for the British public.

The Department for Health and Social Care published [guidance](#) on 11 May 2020 to advise the public to consider wearing face coverings in enclosed public spaces such as shops, trains and buses to help reduce the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19).

With the assistance of DIT advisers, the business is working to secure thousands of face coverings from Asia. The company has sold over 8,000 so far and has said its aim is to keep the UK public safe whilst ensuring medical PPE is reserved for healthcare workers.

The business is donating £1 for every face covering sold online to the Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, their local NHS trust, and has raised £2160 so far.

Hall-Fast previously donated excess PPE stock to the value of £2,000 to their local NHS back in March as lockdown restrictions began.

The company has a long-standing relationship with DIT, becoming an 'Export Champion' when DIT first set up a base in the East Midlands.

Managing Director of Hall-Fast, Malcom Hall MBE:

After the lockdown was imposed in March, I began importing face coverings for purchase. I did this so as to encourage customers not to buy the medical facemasks that ought to be reserved for

healthcare workers.

It's important that we support our NHS by ensuring they have the equipment they need while protecting each other and ourselves.

DIT have been a great help to Hall-Fast and we have a long-standing relationship with the department as it existed in its previous forms. I have received continued support from International Trade Advisors both before and during the pandemic and have benefitted from the government's Coronavirus Business Interruption Loan Scheme.

With no current cure to COVID-19, I want to help keep British people safe and provide the right type of equipment for people as lockdown restrictions ease.

Minister for Exports, Graham Stuart MP:

Hall-Fast is a great example of a UK business taking the initiative during this pandemic as well as supporting their local NHS and the British public.

It's imperative we continue to keep international trade lines open and running, as working together is the only way we will be able to move past the pandemic.

Importing PPE is an important part of the UK's response to COVID-19, and my department is doing all it can to support this.

I commend Hall-Fast for their innovative approach and ability to adapt to need. In doing so they support us all, not least the local community in Mansfield.

Figures show UK Government supporting incomes across all nations during coronavirus

- new figures highlight how UK Government support is protecting jobs and helping individuals across all four nations of UK
- statistics for Coronavirus Jobs Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme show uptake of support schemes across the UK
- new figures also reveal size and sector of businesses furloughing their staff

The new figures show the uptake of Coronavirus Jobs Retention (CJRS) and Self-Employment Income Support Schemes (SEISS) across the UK's regions and nations.

Under the CJRS, up until the 31 May more than 6.4 million jobs were furloughed in England, with more than 628,000 jobs furloughed in Scotland, 316,500 in Wales and nearly 212,000 in Northern Ireland.

Under the SEISS, self-employed individuals in Scotland have made 146,000 claims totalling £425 million; 102,000 claims for £273 million made in Wales; 69,000 claims for £198 million in Northern Ireland. From just over 2 million claims in England, the total is nearly £6 billion.

Across the whole of the UK, 70% of those potentially eligible for support through the self-employment scheme made a claim, with the average value of claim amounting to £2,900.

Rishi Sunak, Chancellor of the Exchequer, said:

Our unprecedented coronavirus support schemes are protecting millions of vital jobs and businesses across the whole of the United Kingdom – and will help ensure we recover from this outbreak as swiftly as possible.

We have extended both schemes so they will continue to provide measured support across the UK as we start to reopen the economy.

Nationally, employers in the wholesale and retail sectors have furloughed the highest number of employers, covering 1.6 million jobs, followed by accommodation and food service employers furloughing 1.4 million.

The CJRS scheme will continue to support jobs until the end of October, with flexible part-time furloughing beginning in July to support businesses as the economy is carefully reopened.

The SEISS scheme has also been extended with those eligible able to claim a

second and final grant in August.

The two schemes are part of a comprehensive economic support package for individuals and businesses including loans, grants, income tax deferrals, rental support, increased levels of Universal Credit, and mortgage holidays.

Further information

1. The Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme and Self-Employment Income Support Scheme Official statistics will be updated every month and can be found [here](#).
2. More information about the CJRS can be found [here](#).
3. More information about the SEISS can be found [here](#).
4. Data provided in this news release is to midnight on 31 May 2020. New information was published on 9 June 2020 showing the total number of claims by scheme and value of claims made by midnight on 7 June 2020.

Dover people smuggler jailed

A Romanian man who attempted to smuggle two Albanian nationals into the UK hidden in a specially adapted minibus has been jailed for more than two years.

On the evening of 5 May, Border Force officers at the Port of Dover stopped a Romanian registered minibus that had arrived on a ferry from Dunkirk.

The vehicle was being driven by Razvan-Iulian Petraru, 34, who was the only visible occupant.

The minibus had been split between a seated passenger area and a rear void – partitioned off by a wood panel – which was loaded with tyres.

An X-ray scan of the vehicle revealed two people hidden in a false roof concealment. The hiding space had been screwed in place and was just 25cm deep, leaving just enough room for the men to lie prostrate in the hiding space. There was no way the men could have accessed the void without assistance.

When removed from the vehicle the men both produced passports that identified them as Albanian nationals with no permission to be in the UK. Petraru was then arrested on suspicion of assisting unlawful immigration into the UK and

the investigation was passed to officers from Immigration Enforcement's Criminal and Financial Investigation (CFI) team.

In subsequent interviews Petraru, of no fixed UK address, declined to answer any questions put to him by CFI officers.

On Monday, 8 June, at Canterbury Crown Court, Petraru admitted charges of assisting unlawful immigration to the UK. He was sentenced immediately to 27 months imprisonment.

Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

Criminals like Petraru, who perpetrate heinous acts like this, have no consideration for the safety of the people they are smuggling – in this instance trapped inside a cramped partition with no means of independent escape.

The message is clear, if you are involved in immigration related criminality you will be caught and jailed.

The two Albanians found in the minibus are being dealt with in line with the immigration rules.

Anyone with information about suspected immigration abuse can contact Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111 anonymously or [visit the Crimestoppers website](#).

[Asset recovery scammers target investors during coronavirus pandemic](#)

Essex and London Properties Ltd was [wound up by the courts](#) in September 2018 and the Official Receiver was appointed liquidator of the company.

Investors in the property investment scheme have since been the target of unsolicited approaches from recovery room scammers, who falsely claim they have funds that can be returned to creditors.

The Official Receiver previously cautioned creditors of Essex and London Properties Ltd about recovery room scammers and is repeating the message ahead of [Scam Awareness Fortnight](#), as the scammers have re-emerged and are using a number of ploys to illicit funds.

Correspondence seen by the Official Receiver has shown that the scammers are using the current uncertainty during the coronavirus pandemic to urge creditors of Essex and London Properties Ltd to work with the unauthorised firms immediately to secure their returns and avoid disappointment.

Other methods being used by the scammers include telling people that money can only be distributed on a 'first-come-first-served' basis and they must pay a fee before the funds can be unlocked.

The unauthorised firms have also sent doctored bank statements showing false payments by the Official Receiver to show that funds are available for distribution and have posed as staff from the Insolvency Service. In one case, an investor was given a residential address to send £3,000 to in an envelope so that the investor could receive further payments.

Joanna Caswell, Deputy Official Receiver, said:

Many investors have reported to us that they have received unsolicited correspondence from firms that claim they have funds to distribute to them. Not only are these letters false but they use scare tactics to frighten people into action.

These schemes pose a serious threat and we strongly advise anyone who invested in Essex and London Properties Ltd to not engage with anyone who claims they can recover your investments. The Official Receiver will never contact anyone offering to recover their money for a fee or recommend another organisation offering the same service.

The Insolvency Service is working in close partnership with other government agencies during coronavirus to share intelligence and contribute to activities to help put a stop to scammers during the pandemic. If you receive unsolicited approaches from people offering to recover your investments, you can report these activities on the [online complaints gateway](#).

Creditors of Essex and London Properties Ltd who have received an unsolicited letter or email should notify the Official Receiver immediately by email to: piu.or@insolvency.gov.uk.

When there are updates on the progress of the liquidation of the company, creditors will be contacted by the Official Receiver directly.

1. Understand the insolvency process

When a company enters liquidation, its assets are realised to repay the debts that caused the company to become insolvent. Investors in the company can register as a creditor with the company's liquidator to stake a claim on the company's assets. The liquidator will distribute any available funds to creditors once the liquidation process has been resolved.

There are no other avenues for the assets to be recovered and realised, so if you are approached by a company that offers one, you should be extremely sceptical.

2. Report anything you think could be a scam

If you believe you are a victim of a scam that relates to a case being handled by the Official Receiver, contact the Official Receiver with details so we can investigate and warn other creditors if necessary. You can also report scams via the [online complaints gateway](#).

Further advice on how to protect yourself from scams is available from the [Financial Conduct Authority](#).

[£63 million for local authorities to assist those struggling to afford food and other essentials](#)

Press release

New funding confirmed for local authorities to help those struggling financially as a result of coronavirus.



Additional money will sit alongside the £6.5 billion of extra support being provided through the welfare system to support the most vulnerable in society.

An additional £63 million has been confirmed by government today (Thursday 11 June) to be distributed to local authorities in England to help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to coronavirus.

Local authorities are already working hard to support those who are vulnerable and this additional funding will contribute to that work.

Many have existing mechanisms to provide this support in a way that suits the needs of their community. This includes provision of cash payments, food

vouchers, or alternative means of support.

This funding will sit alongside the alongside the [£6.5 billion of extra support](#) the government is providing through the welfare system to ensure the most vulnerable in our society are protected throughout this crisis.

Food Minister Victoria Prentis MP, who leads the cross-government Food and Essential Supplies to the Vulnerable Task Force, said:

“The extraordinary circumstances of this pandemic have meant real financial difficulty for many households, with people left facing hard choices.

“To help those who are struggling to afford food and other essentials, today we are announcing an additional £63 million which will be given to and distributed by local authorities to those in need.

“Local authorities are already doing a brilliant job helping the most vulnerable in their communities and this extra money will enable them to help more families and individuals at this extremely difficult time.”

[Further government support](#) is available for those struggling as a result of coronavirus. If you need urgent help, [contact your local council](#) to find out what services are available in your area.

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