

Fraudster who falsely applied for government grants jailed

Michael Frempong-Taylor (45) appeared at Southwark Crown Court on 25 October 2019 where he was jailed for two years after he was convicted of three counts of fraud and three counts of false accounting.

Formerly of Barking, Essex, but currently residing in London, Michael Frempong-Taylor was also disqualified by Judge Gledhill QC from acting as a company director for eight years.

The court heard that Michael Frempong-Taylor was a Director of Germinate Business Limited. The company provided IT and management consultancy services and was an accredited supplier for the Government's Growth Vouchers programme.

The Government scheme ran between January 2014 and March 2015 and aimed to encourage small businesses to access expert advice.

Businesses registered to the scheme received a voucher that offered up to £2,000 to cover half the costs of buying strategic business advice from accredited private sector suppliers.

Business would then agree for the supplier to submit a claim form for payment, which would include proof that the business had received the advice and paid the accredited supplier half of the cost of that advice. The supplier would then claim the other 50% of the cost of this advice from the Government up to maximum value of £2,000.

Mr Frempong-Taylor made £6,000 worth of applications for payments to the Government. But following confidential investigations, the Insolvency Service found that three of the applications and connected invoices were fraudulent as Germinate had not done any work for these businesses.

Sentencing Michael Frempong-Taylor, Judge Gledhill QC said:

I take the view this is a very serious offence due to its sophistication, you were near defrauding the department of thousands of pounds. You would undoubtedly have done more had the scheme not ended. You were deliberately targeting public money for your own benefit.

In addition to his prison term, Michael Frempong-Taylor has been disqualified as a director for eight years. He is now banned from being involved, directly or indirectly, in the formation, promotion or management of a business.

Ian West, Chief Investigation Officer for the Insolvency Service, said:

Michael Frempong-Taylor cynically and intentionally tried to reap personal reward from a programme intended to help small businesses grow.

This sentence should act as a warning to any other directors tempted to fraudulently apply for government funds that the consequences are severe.

Michael Frempong-Taylor is of Barking, Essex.

Germinate Business Limited (04979352).

The sentence result was announced at Southwark Crown Court by Judge Gledhill

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of other 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:

[Airbus New Year's reception 2020](#)

The Cinnamon Club is always a great venue.

Believe it or not, this isn't the first Indian restaurant to have caught Airbus's passion for aviation.

Several years ago, the story goes that a curry house in Filton spent £5,000 putting the cockpit of a Hawker jet inside the restaurant to attract Airbus staff in for dinner.

One to try for next year's reception, perhaps?

The Prime Minister is sorry he can't be here tonight – but sends his best wishes for the New Year.

And he'll see Guillaume (Faury, CEO Airbus) – as will I – at the Farnborough International Air Show in July – if not before.

Now – ladies and gentlemen – as Business Secretary, there are some firms that are easy to get excited about.

And Airbus is certainly one of them.

From flapping planes, to flying taxis. From chasing comets, to exploring

Mars. No other company is quite like yours.

And while Airbus is undoubtedly a European company – it's also something of a national treasure.

For decades, the UK has had the privilege – and it is a privilege – of being one of Airbus's 4 'home nations'.

And it was great to hear Guillaume say that Airbus remains committed to the UK.

So please rest assured that we also remain absolutely committed to Airbus – and to the industry as a whole.

In November we increased our funding to the European Space Agency to record levels, signalling our commitment to international collaboration.

And – of course – we will continue to support the EU's efforts to negotiate a settlement to the current World Trade Organization (WTO) dispute.

Both now and once we've left the EU.

Yet, today, we should all be feeling optimistic.

UK aerospace continues to go from strength to strength – with new figures showing the number of people working in the sector rose by 2,000 in 2018.

I'd like to congratulate Guillaume – and Airbus – on another fantastic year for deliveries in 2019.

And 2020 promises to be even better.

A new year, a new decade, a new top team at Airbus, a newly elected government and – above all – a new sense of confidence in the future.

To me, it feels like that moment after take-off when you hear the 'ping' of the 'fasten-your-seatbelt' signs turning off.

We're rising out of the clouds of Brexit uncertainty and finally have a clear view of the political horizon.

Today, we have a real chance to build a stronger, greener United Kingdom.

And I – for one – can't wait to crack on with my department's priorities:

- leading the world in tackling climate change
- solving the Grand Challenges facing our society – from healthy ageing, to developing autonomous vehicles and space technologies
- and making the UK the best place in the world to work and grow a business

As we build a better future for our country – your contribution will be crucial.

We are immensely proud that Airbus's flagship Research and Technology programme 'Wing of Tomorrow' is taking place in the UK.

It's a great example of government and industry working, and investing, together, in the carbon fibre wings of the future.

A massive opportunity for Airbus – but also for the hundreds of companies in UK supply chains who help design and assemble the best wings in the world.

So that in 1, 2 or 3 decades' time, Airbus engineering will still be a UK icon.

Of course, in the future, it's not just the wings which will change – but the way planes are powered.

Today, we're just 8 days into a new decade of decarbonisation.

And Airbus already have a head-start.

Last month, they celebrated the first flight of one of their 'Beluga' Super Transporters with Sustainable Aviation Fuel.

An aircraft over 50-feet high and nearly 200-feet long being powered – in part – by recycled cooking oil!

In 2018, sustainable fuels covered just 0.1% of the industry's needs. So there's a massive opportunity to grow this – greening existing power sources as we develop new ones.

On hybrid technology, Guillaume must have a certain sense of 'déjà vu'. At the start of the last decade, when he was Peugeot's Executive Vice-President for R&D in 2011, he helped launch the world's first diesel-electric hybrid.

And now, since becoming Airbus CEO, Guillaume has led a big push towards electrification – something Airbus can be proud of.

Having legislated for net zero emissions by 2050 and with COP26 taking place in Glasgow later this year, we need companies to find solutions on decarbonising transport.

And through the Aerospace Technology Institute, we are backing the E-Fan X hybrid demonstrator, developed by the 'dream team' of Airbus, Rolls-Royce and Cranfield University.

Its first flight next year will be a huge step towards one of Airbus's most ambitious goals: creating the technology to fly a 100-passenger aircraft based on electric and hybrid-electric technology within the 2030s timeframe.

A breakthrough which would literally change our lives – and help create the net zero world we all want to see.

Ladies and gentlemen, Lord Kings Norton, Cranfield University's first Chancellor, once wrote:

It is one thing to have an idea. It is another to have the technical ... ability to give it flesh. It is still another to have the tenacity of purpose to drive through to success.

He wrote these words about jet engine inventor Frank Whittle.

And, today – we're at the start of another aerospace revolution.

Airbus undoubtedly has the ideas and ability.

And under Guillaume's leadership – I believe you have the 'tenacity of purpose' to pull it off.

So please know that through the tests and trials, the demonstrators and development, the UK will stand firmly by your side.

Together, I know we can succeed. Thank you.

[British High Commissioner presents his credentials](#)

Dr Turner has arrived in December last year succeeding Thomas Drew.

British High Commissioner Dr Christian Turner said:

It is a huge privilege to be working in Pakistan and leading the UK's largest diplomatic mission. The UK is home to over 1.5 million British people of Pakistani origin and this shows the depth of relationship between the two countries and their people. I am looking forward to further strengthening this bond.

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Notes to editors

For updates on the British High Commission, please follow our social media channels:

Rail update: Northern franchise

Passengers in the north have had to put up with unacceptable services for too long. We understand how frustrating this has been for people and we are taking action to make sure that performance improves.

On 16 October 2019 I informed the House, through the Transport Committee, that I had issued a request for a proposal to the current Northern franchisee, Arriva Rail North (ARN) and to the Operator of Last Resort as the first phase of securing options for the continuation of passenger services on the Northern franchise. This was triggered by concern over the financial position of ARN.

It has now been confirmed to me from the most recent available financial information that the franchise will only be able to continue for a number of months. The proposal I requested from ARN is being evaluated. Following completion of this process I will consider whether to award ARN a short-term management contract or whether to ask the Department of Transport's own Operator of Last Resort to step in and deliver passenger services. Longer-term decisions on the franchise will be made in the light of the recommendations of the [Williams Rail Review](#).

My decision on which short-term option to choose will be made in accordance with the key principles set out in the statement on how I use my rail franchising powers. This includes:

- protecting the interests of passengers
- ensuring business and service continuity
- preserving the interests of taxpayers by ensuring value for money
- the continued quality of the franchise proposition

In order to inform this decision, the department will assess the extent to which each option performs against these principles. Our value for money assessment will be based on a number of criteria, including which option returns most money to the taxpayer, the risks attached to each, and the value of any improvements in passenger services. I intend to announce my decision before the end of January 2020.

To clarify, the current financial position of the Northern franchise will not impact on the railway's day-to-day operations. Services will continue to run and there will be no impact on staff.

Contingencies fund advance: pending approval of the supplementary estimate 2019 to 2020

I hereby give notice of the Department for Transport's intention to seek an advance from the [Contingencies Fund](#).

The department requires an advance to meet its cash requirements pending parliamentary approval of the supplementary estimate 2019 to 2020.

The department is operating within the budget agreed in the main estimate, however, we will be seeking an increase in our net cash requirement in the supplementary estimate. Accessing the contingency fund is to allow the department to move cash around the group to support existing expenditure consistent with existing Parliamentary estimates and does not represent additional spending.

When the main estimate was submitted for approval, part of Network Rail's (NR) grant-in-aid was excluded. The grant funding for NR in Control Period 6 was agreed shortly before the main estimate was finalised and in the transition from loan funding to grant funding the full value of the required grant was not captured in the department's net cash requirement. It was the department's intention that the final classification and cash requirement would be covered by the supplementary estimates process.

The advance will be repaid immediately following approval of the supplementary estimate. We have taken steps to review our processes and capture lessons learned, to prevent any similar issues from happening again.

Parliamentary approval for additional cash of £3.6 billion will be sought in a supplementary estimate for the Department for Transport. Pending that approval, urgent expenditure estimated at up to £3.6 billion will be met by repayable cash advances from the Contingencies Fund.