

Software developer banned for abusing £850,000 of investments

Adam Alexander Valdemar Norton (35), from Salford, was the director of ANorton Holdings Limited and used the trading name 'Volution Fit'. The company was incorporated in September 2018 and provided virtual software and support to gyms and fitness clubs.

The company, however, went into administration in November 2020 before going into liquidation in August 2021 and triggering an investigation by the Insolvency Service.

Investigators uncovered that Adam Norton secured £849,999 worth of investments – provided in two tranches – to help develop a mobile application.

Adam Norton, however, received the investments into his personal bank account rather than into the company's. The software developer also provided false copies of bank statements to the investors, which incorrectly showed the bank account was held in the name of ANorton Holdings rather than his own.

On 22 August 2022, the Secretary of State accepted a 12-year disqualification undertaking from Adam Norton in which he did not dispute he caused ANorton Holdings Limited to provide incorrect bank details and false bank statements on 3 separate occasions, to an investment company for the purposes of obtaining funds.

Neil North, Deputy Head of Insolvent Investigations for the Insolvency Service, said:

This was a gross abuse of his investors' trust and Adam Norton has been removed from the corporate arena for a substantial amount of time.

The software developer's ban sends out a clear message that where a corporate vehicle is being used to facilitate actual or potential fraudulent activity, we will not hesitate to use our powers to remove dishonest or reckless directors from the business environment.

Director Adam Alexander Valdemar Norton is of Salford and his date of birth is July 1986.

Company ANorton Holdings Limited (Company Reg no. 11549441).

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 other restrictions](#).

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

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[Greens call for protection of people and planet](#)



11 November 2022

Reacting to news that the UK economy shrunk in the last three months [1], the Green Party of England and Wales called for protections for people and the planet.

Adrian Ramsay, co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, said:

“GDP is a poor and limited measure of sustainable economic activity, but news that the UK economy on this measure has shrunk must not be used by the government as an excuse to cut public services or delay investing to tackle climate change.

“Wages are falling, prices are rising and at COP27 analysis by the Global Carbon Project shows that despite the need to cut emissions by half by 2030 to restrict global heating to 1.5C and avoid the most devastating impacts of the climate crisis, emissions are rising [2].

“We need a radical shift in economic priorities to protect people from poverty, properly fund schools and the NHS, and ensure the urgent shift to a net zero economy takes place now. This would create more sustainable economic activity while also reducing carbon emissions.”

Notes:

[1]

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/grossdomesticproductgdp/bulletins/gdpfirstquarterlyestimateuk/latest>

[2] <https://www.globalcarbonproject.org/carbonbudget/>

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UK Defence cyber skills to be boosted through industry partnership

- Defence personnel to be upskilled in tackling cyber threats
- Industry collaboration to increase UK's cyber resilience
- Work follows National Audit Office praise for the department's approach to conflict digitisation

The Ministry of Defence will collaborate with Immersive Labs, an industry leader in cyber resilience, to support the department's new Digital Skills for Defence programme to build stronger digital skills, and follows a successful trial by the British Army.

Tested against industry benchmarks, the collaboration will see personnel from the Army, Royal Navy, Royal Air Force, Strategic Command and Civil Service engaged, with access to 1,600 realistic simulations and hands-on cybersecurity labs to evaluate individual and teams in decision-making against the latest threats.

As the recent National Audit Office (NAO) [report on the MOD's Digital Strategy](#) noted, the Department is showing good practice when it comes to the challenge of modern conflict rapidly digitising, affecting Defence work and how the Armed Forces operate in the battlefield.

Minister for Defence Procurement, Alex Chalk said:

The NAO has rightly highlighted our focus on remaining at the forefront of digital capability, which is crucial as the shape of the modern battlefield continues to change at unprecedented speed.

Utilising the best technology and brightest minds in industry will only serve to bolster the rank of cyber experts focused on protecting the UK.

Exploiting digital capabilities and data is fundamental to our success in modern military operations and to the effective running of Defence. Building on the feedback from the NAO report, the department is striving to build a workforce with the digital skills it needs to deliver the digital transformation of defence.

The report acknowledged positive progress being made by the department on bringing together and aligning such digital practitioners across Defence. However, with a shortfall of homegrown talent and a very competitive market across the public and private sectors, the collaboration with Immersive Labs will also help identify cybersecurity talent to fill open roles and bolster the ranks of UK cyber experts.

Director of Functional Integration, Claire Fry said:

The Digital Skills for Defence programme is crucial in our drive to provide the right digital skills and capabilities across Defence to take advantage of the opportunity brought about by the ever-increasing pace of technological change.

Immersive Labs is one of a number of organisations we are working with to deliver training that will upskill our workforce. This will enable us to champion our One Defence Mindset and create an environment where our digital skills can flourish in a unified, connected and digitally integrated way.

MOD established the Digital Skills for Defence programme to deliver critical digital skills for Defence Leaders, Digital Professionals, and the whole Military and Civilian workforce. The programme is fundamental in building and retaining operational and business advantage. MOD's ambition goes beyond education, seeking to transform to a learning culture where teams work collaboratively across the organisation.

UK Defence cyber skills to be boosted through industry partnership

Individuals and teams across Defence will be upskilled to confront the latest cyber threats and prove cyber readiness, through a partnership announced today

Human rights in Belarus: Joint statement to the OSCE

Mr. Chair, I am delivering this statement on behalf of Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lichtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, the Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Ukraine, the United States, and my own country Canada.

Two years ago, on 5 November 2020, Professor Wolfgang Benedek presented the [independent report on the human rights situation in Belarus under the OSCE's Moscow Mechanism](#) to the Permanent Council. The conclusions were clear: The 9 August presidential election was neither free nor fair, and “massive and systematic” violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms had been committed by the Belarusian security forces.

One year ago, on 4 November 2021, as a response to the deteriorating human rights situation and the Belarusian authorities' failure to respond satisfactorily to the recommendations addressed to them in the Moscow Mechanism report, [a group of 35 OSCE participating States invoked the Vienna \(Human Dimension\) Mechanism requesting information on a number of serious concerns](#). Unfortunately, one year later, we today note with regret that the recommendations for Belarusian authorities in the Moscow Mechanism report remain unaddressed, and our concerns for the human rights situation in Belarus are more dire than ever.

Over the past two years, the authorities in Belarus have continued their brutal and unprecedented crackdown on defenders of democracy in Belarus, including civil society and independent voices. The exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly, and association, is severely repressed, and those attempting to act on those rights and freedoms are systematically detained, abused, and subjected to other forms of intimidation and only harassment. According to credible reports, the number of political prisoners is now more than 1,350. This includes many ordinary Belarusians who simply protested in 2020; journalists, media actors, opposition figures, and human rights defenders, sentenced in some cases to well over a decade simply for exercising their fundamental rights. As a consequence, tens of thousands of Belarusians have been, and continue to be, forced to flee the country, to leave their homes and in some cases loved ones behind due to the untenable situation.

In addition, several credible, international reports have documented the continued pervasive use of torture and other ill-treatment. The Belarusian authorities have further increased harassment and intimidation efforts by widening of the scope of the death penalty to vaguely defined “attempted terrorist activities”. This is an alarming step, the real objective of which is to further increase repression against defenders of democracy. Mr. Chair, In the initial letter invoking the Vienna Mechanism on 4 November 2021, we asked for information from the Belarusian authorities on a number of concerns, including on the credible reports on continuing unjust arrests and detentions, as well as the targeting of opposition figures. The Belarusian Delegation's reply did not acknowledge our legitimate concerns on any of these issues; for example, the Belarusian Delegation simply took exception to the term ‘political prisoner’.

The inadequate responses we have continued to receive from the Belarusian authorities, combined with the deteriorating developments we have witnessed over the past year, clearly demonstrate there is no change in approach by the Belarusian authorities.

On the contrary, in recent months, the Belarusian authorities have

intensified the brutal and unprecedented repression of the Belarusian people, and has on top of that been facilitating Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine in violation of international law.

Mr. Chair,

Even as the human rights situation in Belarus has continued to deteriorate, the Belarusian Delegation has often claimed to seek dialogue on these issues here in the Permanent Council. The Vienna Mechanism is a tool for such dialogue, but it requires the Belarusian authorities to engage substantially, realistically and honestly on the subject. It requires the Belarusian authorities to recognise our legitimate continuing concerns, which mirrors those of civil society, independent media, and human rights defenders.

Against this backdrop, we repeat our questions raised under the OSCE Vienna Mechanism in the Permanent Council. We encourage the Belarusian authorities to consider these questions carefully and to provide genuine answers to this Council, including a detailed explanation of their reactions to the recommendations contained in the 5 November 2020 report under the OSCE Moscow Mechanism.

Finally, we call for the immediate and unconditional release of all political prisoners in Belarus. We urge the Belarusian authorities to fully implement their international obligations and OSCE commitments, and to make use of the OSCE's tools and mechanisms to help resolve the continuing human rights crisis.

Thank you.