

**London Boroughs of Brent & Harrow  
Trading Standards Joint Advisory Board  
13 November 2019**

**FOR INFORMATION**

**OPERATION SNOWBALL: THE PROSECUTION OF A ROGUE  
ROOFING GANG**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

On 11<sup>th</sup> October 2019, four men involved in a roofing fraud and subsequent money laundering which cheated vulnerable residents out of more than £750,000 were sentenced to 18 years' imprisonment following Brent and Harrow Trading Standards largest ever investigation.

The purpose of this report is to bring the matter to the Joint Advisory Board Members attention.

**2.0 Recommendations**

2.1 That Joint Advisory Board Members consider the report and make comments where appropriate.

**3.0 Details**

3.1 The investigation began in September 2017, after two Harrow residents, aged 84 and 86, were cold called by bogus roofers who claimed that minor repair work was required on their properties. The repairs and costs rapidly escalated with the vulnerable residents eventually making payments totalling £350,000 for the unnecessary works.

3.2 Trading Standards enquiries led to the discovery of three more elderly victims in Enfield, Havering and Bromley. In two cases, roofs were left exposed when the vulnerable victims refused to pay more money. Appendix 1 shows a photograph of how one of the properties was left after the victim refused to pay more money.

3.3 When our investigators analysed financial records they discovered that much of the money was transferred through a web of bank accounts before being funneled out of the UK to Dubai, China and Singapore in a sophisticated international money laundering operation.

- 3.4 Officers found that a further £400,000 sent to one of the company accounts in January 2018, was in fact payment for a fictitious investment bond, leaving a 92-year-old without his life savings, intended to pay for his wife's care.
- 3.5 Between September 2017 and March 2018, a total of £870,000 was taken from the six victims with £150,000 eventually being recovered by the banks.
- 3.6 Five dawn raids were executed by our Trading Standards Service across England and Wales during May 2018, leading to the arrest of two of the defendants on suspicion of conspiracy to defraud and money laundering. A further defendant was in Lithuania at the time and later interviewed.
- 3.7 Two further warrants were executed in London in September 2018 and a fourth defendant was interviewed for his role in the transfer of large sums of the money via various company bank accounts.
- 3.8 Mobile phones, laptops and diaries recovered from the defendant's homes provided crucial evidence of the offences along with prosecution witnesses which included building surveyors and a forensic accountant.
- 3.9 Sentencing followed unanimous guilty verdicts after a lengthy 6-week trial at Harrow Crown Court. Harpreet Singh Randhawa and Harinder Singh Arora were convicted of conspiracy to defraud and sentenced to 5 years and 2 ½ years respectively. Mahmoddun Nobi Siddique and Vytautas Glinskas were convicted of money laundering and sentenced to 6 years and 4 ½ years respectively.
- 3.10 His Honour Judge Cole called it a "systematic and callous roofing fraud which involved significant planning and deliberate targeting of vulnerable people" and stated "this was a very professional and well conducted case by Trading Standards".
- 3.11 The Judge also disqualified Randhawa, Siddique and Glinskas for being a director of a company for 8 years.
- 3.12 During the two-year investigation, the Trading Standards Service obtained 82 witness statements, over 2000 pages of exhibits, executed 7 entry warrants resulting in the seizure and analysis of 17 electronic devices, conducted 5 interviews under caution and carried out 24 communication data checks in relation to telephone, website and IP addresses relating to the defendants.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 A confiscation timetable has been set under the Proceeds of Crime Act for the recovery of assets from the defendants and an application will also be made for compensation for the victims. An application for the Service's incurred court costs will also follow.

#### **5.0 Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no legal implications.

## **6.0 Equality Implications**

6.1 There are no equality implications.

## **7.0 Consultation with Ward Members and Stakeholders**

7.1 There is no requirement to specifically consult Ward Members about this report.

## **8.0 Human Resources Implications**

8.1 There are no current staff implications

### **Contact Officer**

Any person wishing to obtain more information should contact Anu Prashar, Acting Senior Regulatory Service Manager Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley Middlesex HA9 0FJ. Telephone: (020) 8937 5515, [anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk](mailto:anu.prashar@brent.gov.uk)

ANU PRASHAR  
ACTING SENIOR SERVICE MANAGER

## **APPENDIX 1**

- 1) A photograph of how one of the properties was left after the victim refused to pay more money.