



## finance news

## first conviction under Bribery Act 2010

On 18 November 2011, the first person to be convicted of an offence under the Bribery Act 2010 was sentenced to six years in prison. The Act, which came into force on 1 July 2011, states that a person is guilty of an offence where they offer, promise or give financial advantage to another person where the person intends the advantage to bring about an improper performance of a relevant function or an activity by another person or to reward such improper performance or where a person knows or believes that the acceptance of the advantage offered, promises or given in itself constitutes the improper performance of a relevant function. The maximum penalty for individuals found guilty of bribery is ten years imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

Munir Patel, a former magistrates' court administrative officer, admitted accepting a £500 bribe to "get rid of a speeding charge" and pleaded guilty. Police told the Court that M Patel accepted bribes from 53 individuals to help them escape prosecution for similar offences, earning over £20,000 in the process. In sentencing Mr Patel to imprisonment for three years for bribery offences and six years for misconduct in public office, His Honour Judge McCreath commented "that these were very serious offences" and that "The involved a very substantial breach of trust".

Considering the level of publicity involving the introduction of the Bribery Act, it is unsurprising that the Judge wished to take a hard lined approach with the sentence given and stated: "It is important that those tempted to behave in this way understand that there will be serious consequences. Sentences for this sort of offence must act to deter offending of this kind."

For more information, please contact:

**Richard Humphreys**, partner in our Finance group in **Oxford**, at [richard.humphreys@bllaw.co.uk](mailto:richard.humphreys@bllaw.co.uk) or on 01865 254243

**Dominic Pinder**, solicitor in our **Commercial Litigation** team in **Oxford**, at [dominic.pinder@bllaw.co.uk](mailto:dominic.pinder@bllaw.co.uk) or on 01865 258007.

**London**

Watchmaker Court  
33 St John's Lane  
London  
EC1M 4DB

**Southampton**

New Kings Court  
Tollgate  
Chandler's Ford  
Eastleigh  
SO53 3LG

**Oxford**

Seacourt Tower  
West Way  
Oxford  
OX2 0FB

**Portsmouth**

Harbour Court  
Compass Road  
North Harbour  
Portsmouth  
PO6 4ST

Tel: 020 7405 2000  
DX: 53323 Clerkenwell

Tel: 023 8090 8090  
DX: 155850 Eastleigh 7

Tel: 01865 248607  
DX: 723000 Oxford 5

Tel: 023 9222 1122  
DX: 124490 Portsmouth 9

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