



HM Revenue
& Customs



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Gambling Hampshire builder jailed for VAT fraud

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A former builder, who falsely claimed £750,000 of VAT repayments to pay for gambling and living expenses, has been jailed for two years and eight months.

Peter Howes, 58, of Waterlooville, Hampshire, submitted fraudulent VAT returns to HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) between June 2011 and October 2017. He claimed he was working as a builder and entitled to VAT repayments on his taxable purchases. But investigators found Howes hadn't

been working and had simply made up the figures on his VAT returns.

Richard Wilkinson, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Howes committed VAT fraud to fund his gambling habit, and is now in jail for his crime. He stopped working as a builder and used the tax system as his personal bank account. It is simply not acceptable to steal from UK taxpayers and the public services we all rely upon.

“HMRC will continue to pursue those criminals who attack the tax system. We ask anyone with information about suspected VAT fraud to report it to us online or contact our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Howes fraudulently claimed £750,602 under his former trading name of ‘P D Howes Building and Development’. He received around £9,500 each month, and spent the money on gambling and his general lifestyle. HMRC withheld £19,875 of the money claimed while investigations took place.

On 25 June 2018, at Portsmouth Crown Court, Howes pleaded guilty to the fraudulent evasion of VAT. He was jailed for two years and eight months at the same court on 27 June 2018.

Notes for Editors

1. Peter David Howes (22/02/1960), unemployed, a former builder most recently of Saxon Close, Clanfield, Waterlooville, Hampshire. He was charged on 29 May 2018.

2. Howes pleaded guilty on 25 June 2018 to the fraudulent evasion of VAT, contrary to Section 72(2) of the Value Added Tax Act 1994.

3. Anyone with information regarding suspected VAT fraud is encouraged to report it online at <https://www.gov.uk/report-vat-fraud> or contact the HMRC Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.

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HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) is the UK's tax authority.

HMRC is responsible for making sure that the money is available to fund the UK's public services and for helping families and individuals with targeted financial support.

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