Four companies linked to scheme which helped directors walk away from debts and undermine insolvency legislation are shut down

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Companies wound-up in the public interest following Insolvency Service investigations.

- Four companies have been shut down after investigations revealed they were connected to a scheme which helped directors sell struggling businesses for £1 while keeping assets and dropping debts
- The scheme's operators failed to preserve accounting records or assess what had happened to the more than £18 million in combined assets of 75 companies they acquired
- This latest action by the Insolvency Service follows previous enforcement sanctions against companies and directors involved in the Atherton scheme

Four companies linked to a scheme which risks undermining insolvency legislation have been shut down.

Atherton Corporate Partners LLP, Jones & Harlington Ltd, TYA GRP Ltd and TYA Two GRP Ltd formed part of the Atherton scheme, which allowed business owners to keep their assets and drop their debts.

More than £18 million in previously held assets were identified by the Insolvency Service from 75 companies which were sold to Jones & Harlington Ltd, TYA GRP Ltd and TYA Two GRP Ltd.

Atherton Corporate Partners LLP, Jones & Harlington Ltd and TYA GRP Ltd were wound-up at the High Court in London on Tuesday 17 February.

TYA Two GRP Ltd was wound-up at the Court of Session in Edinburgh on Friday 16 January.

Atherton Corporate UK (Ltd), now known as POC Ventures Limited, and Atherton Corporate Rescue Limited, now known as QRG Consulting Ltd, were among seven companies shut down in August 2024 following investigations into the scheme by the Insolvency Service.

Dave Magrath, Director of Investigation and Enforcement Services at the Insolvency Service, said:

> Our previous investigations into the Atherton companies found that they made false promises to struggling business owners, telling them they could walk away from their debts with a 'clean break'.
>
> The directors who took control of these distressed companies failed to do what any responsible director should – they did not preserve records, protect assets, or take steps to act in the best interests of creditors.
>
> When companies sidestep proper insolvency processes, it's often small businesses and suppliers who lose out alongside HM Revenue and Customs. These are taxpayers and

> people who did work or provided goods in good faith and never got paid.
>
> The insolvency system exists to ensure debts are dealt with fairly and schemes like this undermine that protection for everyone.

Shares in the companies in financial distress were transferred to Jones & Harlington Ltd or TYA GRP Ltd or TYA Two GRP Ltd for just £1. These companies took on the liabilities but received no assets.

Once the sale was complete, the original directors resigned. Directors of Jones & Harlington Ltd, TYA GRP Ltd and TYA Two GRP Ltd received payments from Atherton in exchange for taking on directorship of the newly acquired businesses.

The sole director of Jones & Harlington Ltd was Karen Mortimer, who was disqualified as a company director for seven years in October 2025 for her role in the Atherton scheme.

Mortimer, 68, put the creditors of 138 companies at risk of financial loss after taking control of the businesses which were referred to them by Atherton Corporate UK (Ltd) and Atherton Corporate Rescue Limited.

She was also one of the former members of Atherton Corporate Partners LLP along with Neville Taylor, described as a "key figure" in the scheme when he was disqualified as a company director for nine years in January 2025.

Insolvency Service investigations revealed that Taylor, 58, was paid more than a quarter of a million pounds by Atherton Corporate (UK) Ltd to become the sole director of more than 400 companies.

The Official Receiver has been appointed as liquidator of Atherton Corporate Partners LLP, Jones & Harlington Ltd, and TYA GRP Ltd.

Stuart Preston and Julie Tait of Grant Thornton UK Advisory & Tax LLP have been appointed as joint liquidators of TYA Two GRP Ltd.

All enquiries concerning the affairs of Atherton Corporate Partners LLP, Jones & Harlington Ltd, and TYA GRP Ltd should be made to the Official Receiver of the Public Interest Unit: 16th Floor, 1 Westfield Avenue, Stratford, London, E20 1HZ. piu@insolvency.gov.uk.

All enquiries concerning the affairs of TYA Two GRP Ltd should be made to Grant Thornton UK Advisory & Tax LLP, 120 Bothwell Street, Glasgow, G2 7JS. cmusupport@uk.gt.com.

Further information

- Atherton Corporate Partners LLP (company number OC419270)
- Jones & Harlington Ltd (company number 15710786)
- TYA GRP Ltd (company number 15871278)
- TYA Two GRP Ltd (company number SC817921)
- The Insolvency Service can investigate complaints about corporate abuse by live companies. This may include serious misconduct, fraud, scams or dishonest practice in the way the company operates. Further information on our live investigations can be found here
- Directors can find information about their obligations and responsibilities at the Insolvency Service's Director Information Hub
- Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct, is available here.

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/four-companies-linked-to-scheme-which-helped-directors-walk-away-from-debts-and-undermine-insolvency-legislation-are-shut-down