



PRESS RELEASE

CONTRIVED ACCIDENT LANDMARK FOR QBE AFTER SENTENCING IN A UNIQUE CASE

London, 27 April 2010

The latest successful collaboration by the counter fraud teams of QBE, the specialist business insurer, and law firm DWF has seen two people given a suspended sentence and one a sentence of conditional discharge. Sentencing also included a curfew order for one of the accused and costs awarded against them.

The group were all involved in staging an accident with a hire car in Stoke-on-Trent and tried to claim thousands of pounds in compensation from QBE.

In December 2007, Christopher Colin Huson hired a Toyota Auris from Afford Rent-a-Car before staging an accident with a Honda Accord in which Azhar Ul Hassan, Raheela Khan and another man were travelling. Following the accident, Huson admitted liability and three people submitted claims for compensation.

They all claimed the “accident” happened on Trentham Road in Trentham before moving the hired vehicle to nearby Meadow Lane.

The fraudsters planned to make it look as if a car that they had hired had collided into the back of a car they owned. But the fraud was discovered following enquiries by insurance investigators and Staffordshire Police.

Tests carried out on both cars revealed collisions with masonry objects rather than each other, suggesting the car had been deliberately damaged elsewhere before the “accident” was reported.



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Matthew Crane, Managing Director of QBE European Operations' Motor division said: "QBE works closely with all its policyholders to protect their interests and at the same time offer them an outstanding service in claims handling. In this instance, Afford Rent-a-Car were callously targeted for the sole purpose of personal financial gain. Fraudulent activities such as this have the potential to raise costs and risks for Afford Rent-a-Car and our other clients."

Crane continued: "QBE is committed to combating the ever-growing problem of fraud, and we will continue work with the police and industry bodies to achieve this goal."

Martin Stockdale, a senior solicitor at DWF who led the defence for QBE said: "Together with QBE and Afford Rent-a-Car we brought this case to Staffordshire Police and are pleased with the sentence handed out. Fraud like this is costing policyholders an estimated £40 extra onto their premiums."

Tony Moore, Director of Afford Rent-a-Car commented: "We are a local business, which services local people. We work closely with our Insurers, QBE and the authorities to identify and prevent fraudulent claims. On this occasion we were ruthlessly targeted for the purpose of making a financial gain from a contrived car accident. It is instances like these that cause increases in our running costs and which has an overall effect on what we charge our genuine customers for the services we provide. We will continue to work alongside our Insurers to ensure such claims are identified and prevented. We would like to extend our gratitude to the efforts of Staffordshire Police, our Insurers QBE and their solicitors DWF."

The Insurance Fraud Bureau estimates 'crash for cash' scams cost insurance companies £350m a year.



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Notes to editors

About QBE

QBE Insurance Group is Standard & Poor's 'A+' rated and is one of the world's leading international insurers and reinsurers, headquartered in Sydney, Australia. We operate out of 47 countries across the globe, with a presence in all key insurance markets, and are lead underwriters within our chosen markets, setting rates and conditions. For the year ended 31 December 2009, the company underwrote gross written premium totalling £7,241.86 million and held shareholders' funds of £5,670.07 million.

QBE's European Operations, which accounts for 35% of QBE Group turnover, is a leading specialist in London market and European commercial lines business. It provides a wide range of insurance cover, including property, motor, liability and professional indemnity across a broad range of business types and sizes.

QBE is proud to be the Official Insurance Partner of the Guinness Premiership and England Rugby. Our partnerships with two elite properties in the sport will allow QBE's brand to continue to develop and business to grow.

