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 ***News Release***

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**Catering business gang served up a £240k fraud**

The mastermind of a six-strong gang that laundered £240,000 by setting up a fake catering business, has been jailed for three and a half years.

Michael Akindele, 50, of Carshalton, Surrey, set up the firm to fraudulently claim VAT payments totalling £240,974.29, and, with five others, laundered the money through their bank accounts.

But investigators from HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) swooped after they found the gang had hijacked an innocent person’s identity to start the business. The fraud was uncovered by HMRC’s VAT repayment taskforce, set up to identify those who fraudulently claimed VAT repayments.

Investigators also found Akindele had set up other fake businesses including a newsagents, tobacconist and IT consultants as part of the fraud.

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

“This gang thought they were above the law and that they could get away with cheating the system. They were wrong and they are paying the price for their greed.

“Tax cheats take money from the public services we all rely on. Anyone with information about tax fraud can contact our hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Akindele, a director of TGL Logistics, based in Mitcham, Surrey - which handles exports mainly to Nigeria - and accomplice Abdul Mohamed, 30, of Chiswick, West London, both admitted money laundering at Kingston Crown Court on 31 March 2017. Akindele also pleaded guilty to cheating the public revenue.

The gang was sentenced at Kingston Crown Court on 3 October, 2017. As well as the three and a half years handed down to Akindele, Mohamed was sentenced to six months in jail, suspended for 15 months. He must also do 120 hours of unpaid work.

Four others, who pleaded guilty, were alongside them in the dock: Akindele’s wife Abimbola an accountant, 44; Sunday Adejobi, 36, of Finsbury Park, North London; Abiodun Gbadamosi, 42, of South Ockenden, Essex; and Kayode Sangosanya, 45, of Shepherd’s Bush, West London. They all admitted money laundering and were each sentenced to three months in jail, suspended for 12 months, and 100 hours of unpaid work.

**Notes to Editors**

1. Michael Akindele, DOB 16/01/67, a company director, of Newent Close, Carshalton, Surrey, admitted money laundering and cheating the public revenue and was sentenced to three years and six months in jail.
2. Abdul Mohamed, DOB 30/11/1986, of Ellesmere Court, Chiswick, West London, admitted money laundering and was sentenced to six months in jail, suspended for 15 months, plus 120 hours of unpaid work.
3. Abimbola Akindele, DOB 11/08/1973, an accountant of Newent Close, Carshalton, Surrey, admitted money laundering and was sentenced to three months in jail suspended for 12 months, plus 100 hours of unpaid work.
4. Sunday Adejobi, DOB 26/04/1981, of Stapleton Hall Road, Harringay, North London, admitted money laundering and was sentenced to three months in jail suspended for 12 months, plus 100 hours of unpaid work.
5. Kayode Sangosanya, DOB 04/11/1971, a manager at TGL Logistics, of St Stephen’s Avenue, Shepherd’s Bush, West London, admitted money laundering and was sentenced to three months in jail suspended for 12 months, plus 100 hours of unpaid work.
6. Abiodun Gbadamosi, DOB 27/12/1974, of Ayron Road, South Ockendon, Essex, admitted money laundering and was sentenced to three months in jail suspended for 12 months, plus 100 hours of unpaid work.
7. HMRC taskforces target specific high-risk sectors where there is a risk that some are not paying the tax they owe. Since taskforces began in May 2011, more than 140 taskforces have been launched, bringing in more than £540 million.
8. Taskforces bring together various HMRC compliance and enforcement teams for intensive bursts of activity targeted at specific sectors and locations where there is evidence of high risk of tax evasion and fraud. The teams visit traders to examine their records and carry out other investigations.
9. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice.
10. HMRC's Flickr channel: [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk).

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