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 **News Briefing**

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**Gold haul seized by HMRC set for £750,000 auction**

Eight gold bars seized by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) and valued at almost £750,000, are being auctioned off with proceeds going back into the public purse.

Weighing around 16kg altogether – equivalent to the weight of an adult Staffordshire Bull Terrier – the bars were seized at Manchester Airport in November 2018. They were concealed in a lunchbox of a passenger’s hand luggage destined for Dubai.

The ingots are valued at more than £750,000 in current gold prices and, will be sold by Wilsons Auctions on Thursday 3 September.

HMRC investigators used new civil proceeds of crime powers for the first time to apply for forfeiture of the bars, which was granted by Manchester and Salford Magistrates on 2 July 2020. The 2017 Criminal Finance Act now enables ‘listed assets’, including precious metals, seized using Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 (POCA) to be subjected to forfeiture in the same way as cash deemed to be from the proceeds of crime.

Gill Hilton, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“This is the first time HMRC has used these powers to seize and forfeit a listed asset, and it should act as a deterrent to criminals looking to trade assets such as precious metals. If they are the proceeds of crime or intended for unlawful conduct, we now have the powers to take them from criminals and use the money for public services.

“The money raised through the auction will go straight back into the public purse, to be spent on vital services such as hospitals and schools.

“We are determined to cut off the funds that finance serious crime in the UK. In the last year alone, HMRC has recovered more than £166 million of illicit proceeds using its civil and criminal proceeds of crime powers.

“I would urge anyone with information on fraud to report it to HMRC on [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk/report-an-unregistered-trader-or-business), or call our fraud hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Michael Streight, Government Sales Coordinator, Wilsons Auctions, said, “Wilsons Auctions is delighted to once again be realising a significant amount of 24ct gold bars on behalf of HMRC through its upcoming Online Luxury Assets Auction. Having successfully sold over £1 million worth of gold for HMRC in a previous auction, we are proud to continue realising these luxury seized assets, with the money raised ultimately going back into the public purse.”

The auction will be held online, beginning at 2pm on Thursday 3 September. For more information visit <https://www.wilsonsauctions.com/timed-auction/listings?salecode=202367>

HMRC always looks to recover the proceeds of crime from those who try to cheat the system. Since the creation of our dedicated Proceeds of Crime unit three years ago, we have recovered more than £700 million for the public purse, seizing everything from cash to jewellery to luxury cars.

**Notes for editors**

1. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter [@HMRCpressoffice](https://twitter.com/hmrcpressoffice)
2. Anyone with information about any type of tax fraud can call our fraud hotline on 0800 788 887 or online at [www.gov.uk/report-an-unregistered-trader-or-business](https://www.gov.uk/report-an-unregistered-trader-or-business).

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