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***News Release***

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**Edinburgh VAT fraudster sentenced**

An Edinburgh builder, who stole almost £120,000 of VAT that he had charged his customers, has been jailed for 20 months after he was investigated by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC).

David Hay, 56, from Hyvot Grove, ran firms that oversaw major building and renovation works in Edinburgh, Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. He was fully aware of his obligations to charge and pay VAT and admitted to investigators that he “just never got round to paying over the VAT” – in spite of his claim that he knew he would “get caught eventually”.

Anne Marie Gordon, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“Crooks like Hay create an uneven playing field, undercutting the honest businesses who do pay what is due. That’s something we won’t tolerate. Instead of passing on the VAT he charged customers to fund vital public services, he chose to keep it for himself even though he knew we would catch him.

“If you know of anyone who is committing tax fraud you can report them by calling our 24-hour Hotline on 0800 59 5000.”

**Notes for editors**

1. David Hay, (DOB 05/02/60), from Hyvot Grove, Edinburgh, was sentenced to 20 months in prison, when he appeared at Edinburgh Sheriff Court yesterday (Wednesday 16 November). He pleaded guilty at an earlier hearing in September to being knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of VAT contrary to the VAT Act 1994. The total value of the VAT fraud was £118,666.
2. Images are available on HMRC’s Flickr site [www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk](http://www.flickr.com/hmrcgovuk)
3. Follow HMRC’s press office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice

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**Press enquiries only please contact:**

Stephen Cassidy

Tel: 03000 511 593

Email: [Stephen.cassidy@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:Stephen.cassidy@hmrc.gsi.gov.uk)

Out of hours Tel:         07860 359544

**Website** [www.gov.uk/hmrc](http://www.gov.uk/hmrc)