January 2023

South Wales Police and His Majesty’s Revenue and Customs (HMRC) are conducting a criminal investigation into a number of suspected offences concerning a single employee of Unite the Union (Unite) together with several companies, concerning the criminal offences of bribery, fraud, money-laundering and tax evasion.

In relation to Unite the Union, it is suspected that a contracted-out service and several affiliated services were awarded on behalf of Unite to companies controlled by other linked persons, in return for personal financial and other rewards. We understand that the employee under investigation is no longer in a position to make any decisions relating to contracts with external providers on behalf of Unite.

The warrant executed at Unite’s headquarters in April was specifically limited to one office and other areas controlled by the employee concerned. It was carried out discreetly by a small team of plain clothes officers using unmarked cars and they received full co-operation by senior staff present on the day.

Due to the seriousness and level of complexity involved in this type of investigation, a dedicated team of specialist officers from South Wales Police and HMRC has been setup in order to specifically investigate the suspected offences.

Unite are working closely with the investigation and in September 2022 a PACE Production Order was served upon Unite requiring them to produce certain specific material relevant to the investigation. There continues to be a good level of co-operation between Unite and the investigation facilitated by an external/third party legal team appointed by Unite.

The investigation is still in its early stages. Once all of the material is reviewed and the other parts of the investigation completed, if the required threshold is met, a file will be passed to a specialist prosecutor at the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) for consideration of a charging decision.