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Duo in court for alleged \$1.84m salary overclaims from Professional Teachers' Union

14 August 2012

Two directors of an optometric company appeared in Eastern Magistracy today (Tuesday) after being charged by the ICAC for allegedly making overclaims of more than \$1.84 million in salary payments from the Hong Kong Professional Teachers' Union (HKPTU).

Law Wai-kin, 46, and Look Chi-wah, 45, both directors of From Fair Development Limited (FFDL), who were charged last Friday (August 10), faced a joint charge of fraud, contrary to Section 16A(1) of the Theft Ordinance.

No pleas were taken. Acting Principal Magistrate Mr David Dufton transferred the case to the District Court for plea on September 4.

The case arose from a corruption complaint, alleging that the defendants might have conspired to use falsified salary claim forms to deceive HKPTU. Subsequent ICAC enquiries revealed the above alleged fraud offence.

At the material times, FFDL was entrusted by HKPTU to operate two optometric centres in Causeway Bay and Mongkok.

Being directors of FFDL, Law was the person-in-charge of the centre in Mongkok, while Look was the person-in-charge of another centre in Causeway Bay.

The charge alleged that between December 2004 and May 2011, the defendants falsely represented to HKPTU that FFDL had engaged a part-time optometrist and three part-time optometry students to work at the centre in Mongkok or Causeway Bay. In fact, these four part-time workers were never employed at either of the centres.

The defendants were also alleged to have inflated the actual working hours of six part-time optometrists and 16 part-time optometry students; the hourly rates of the 16 part-time optometry students; and the monthly salaries of seven full-time optometrists engaged by FFDL to work at the centre in Mongkok or Causeway Bay.

It was alleged that with intent to defraud, the defendants induced HKPTU to pay FFDL sums amounting to over \$1.84 million in excess of the actual salaries expenses incurred by FFDL.

The defendants were each granted cash bail of \$50,000. They were also ordered not to interfere with prosecution witnesses.

HKPTU had rendered full assistance to the ICAC during the investigation.

The prosecution was today represented by ICAC officer Jennie Sum.

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