



Sheffield Assay Office Act 1995

1995 CHAPTER v

An Act to amend section 16 of the Hallmarking Act 1973 in its application to the Sheffield Assay Office; to extend the functions of the Office; and for other purposes incidental thereto. [19th July 1995]

WHEREAS—

- (1) The Sheffield Assay Office (hereinafter called “the Company”), of which the full name is The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate within the Town of Sheffield, was established by the Plate Assay (Sheffield and Birmingham) Act 1772 (hereinafter called “the Act of 1772”) as a corporate body for the assaying and marking of wrought silver plate:
- (2) The Plate Assay (Sheffield) Act 1784 (hereinafter called “the Act of 1784”) altered and amended the Act of 1772 in certain respects:
- (3) By sections 47 and 48 of the Sheffield Corporation Act 1903 (hereinafter called “the Act of 1903”), the assaying of gold plate was brought within the functions of the Company:
- (4) The Sheffield Assay Act 1906 (hereinafter called “the Act of 1906”) made further provision for the execution of the powers and duties of the Company:
- (5) Sections 47 and 48 of the Act of 1903 were subsequently replaced by sections 501 and 502 of the Sheffield Corporation (Consolidation) Act 1918, but the latter provisions were repealed by the Hallmarking Act 1973 (hereinafter called “the Act of 1973”) which (inter alia) made fresh provision as to assay offices including provision that their functions should extend to the assaying of gold, silver and platinum and of any other metal which might be prescribed under the provisions of section 17 of that Act:
- (6) The Act of 1973 also repealed the Act of 1784, and certain provisions of the Act of 1772 and of the Act of 1906, and by section 16 gave the Secretary of State power to make orders (inter alia) for constituting and conferring powers on assay offices:
- (7) In exercise of that power, the Secretary of State made the Sheffield Assay Office Order 1978 (hereinafter called “the Order of 1978”), altering the constitution of the Company, conferring further powers upon it and making other provisions in relation to it:
- (8) The Order of 1978 also repealed certain of the remaining provisions of the Act of 1772 and of the Act of 1906, made amendments to the latter Act and provided that the Act of 1772, the Act of 1906 and the Order itself might be cited together as the Sheffield Assay Office Acts and Order 1772 to 1978:

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- (9) The assaying of precious metals is believed to have been the earliest and, for a long time, the only form of consumer protection in the United Kingdom:
- (10) It would be of public advantage if the Company could extend its activities to the independent and objective testing, examination, investigation and evaluation of materials and articles of any kind, and of firms, corporations, systems, programmes and procedures:
- (11) For those reasons, and in order that it may respond to changed market conditions resulting from the Single European Market, the Company wishes to have power to carry on, in addition to the business of an assay office, the other activities described in this Act, and to have, in relation to those activities, the ancillary powers so described:
- (12) Doubts have arisen as to the extent to which the making of the Order of 1978 was within the powers conferred upon the Secretary of State by section 16 of the Act of 1973, and it is desirable to set those doubts at rest, and to clarify the position for the future, by means of a retrospective amendment of that section in its application to the Company:
- (13) It is expedient that such provisions should be enacted as are contained in this Act:
- (14) The objects of this Act cannot be attained without the authority of Parliament:

May it therefore please Your Majesty that it may be enacted, and be it enacted, by the Queen's most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:—

1 Citation

This Act may be cited as the Sheffield Assay Office Act 1995; and the Sheffield Assay Office Acts and Order 1772 to 1978 and this Act may be cited together as the Sheffield Assay Office Acts and Order 1772 to 1995.

2 Interpretation

In this Act, unless the subject or context otherwise requires—

“the Act of 1973” means the Hallmarking Act 1973;

“the Company” means the Sheffield Assay Office, of which the full name is The Guardians of the Standard of Wrought Plate within the Town of Sheffield;

“materials” includes liquids, gases, dusts, wastes and tangible and intangible substances of any kind; and

“the Order of 1978” means the Sheffield Assay Office Order 1978.

3 Section 16 of Hallmarking Act 1973

In its application to the Company, the Act of 1973 shall have effect, and be deemed always to have had effect, as if in section 16 (1) (c)—

- (a) “confer” were omitted;
- (b) for “under” there were substituted “by”; and
- (c) there were added at the end thereof—

“; or, on such an application, impose new duties or confer new powers on, or make alterations or additions to or omissions from the constitution of, the assay office.”.

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4 Additional activities of Company

- (1) In addition to the functions which it has from time to time as an assay office, the Company shall have power, in any part of the world—
- (a) to undertake the provision of analytical services in relation to materials or articles of any kind, by means of chemical analysis or physical examination or testing or by any other method which is appropriate in the circumstances;
 - (b) to undertake investigation of the properties of materials or articles of any kind, their behaviour or likely behaviour under particular conditions, and their suitability for particular purposes;
 - (c) to undertake the examination of articles of any kind for the purpose of discovering whether and to what extent they comply with standards or other criteria which are published or have been made known to the Company;
 - (d) to undertake the investigation of firms, corporate bodies or other persons, or of systems, programmes or procedures, for the purpose of discovering whether and to what extent they comply with standards or other criteria which are published or have been made known to the Company;
 - (e) to undertake the valuation, on any basis and for any purpose, of materials or articles of any kind;
 - (f) to undertake any other activities of a kind which the Company may consider similar to, or suitable to be carried on with, the foregoing;
 - (g) to undertake or instigate, or join in undertaking or instigating, and to meet or contribute towards the cost of, research into, and the provision (including manufacture) and development of, plant, equipment, technology, methodology (including systems, procedures and computer and other programmes) and materials for use in, or in connection with, any of the foregoing activities; and
 - (h) to undertake, or join in undertaking, the marketing of, and the provision of maintenance, advisory, technical or other services in relation to, any plant, equipment, technology, methodology (including systems, procedures and computer and other programmes) and materials or articles of any kind used or capable of use in, or in connection with—
 - (i) any of the activities mentioned in paragraphs (a) to (f) above, or
 - (ii) any of the activities carried on in the course of the business of an assay office.
- (2) The Company may do anything which is calculated to facilitate or is incidental or conducive to the activities mentioned in subsection (1) above and (without prejudice to that generality) shall in particular have power—
- (a) to issue certificates as to the results of any analysis, examination, test or investigation carried out under subsection (1) above;
 - (b) to provide advisory and supervisory services and to provide expert evidence for the purpose of legal or other proceedings;
 - (c) to make members of its staff available to advise on, or participate in, the formulation of standards or criteria of the kind referred to in paragraphs (c) and (d) of subsection (1) above;
 - (d) to register, maintain, protect and enforce in any part of the world intellectual property rights, including patents, trade marks and other marks, and to authorise the use of such intellectual property on such lawful terms and conditions as it sees fit;

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- (e) to promote or establish, or join in promoting or establishing, or to acquire interests in and take part in the management of, bodies corporate or unincorporate in any part of the world, having as their object, or as a main object, the carrying on of any or all of the activities mentioned in subsection (1) above;
- (f) out of the income or other monies derived from such activities, to remunerate—
 - (i) any or all of the guardians (as defined in the Order of 1978) for work done or time spent in that capacity, and
 - (ii) any or all of the members of the Executive Committee (as so defined) for work done or time spent in that capacity,
 in connection with such activities; and
- (g) to receive grants and to accept gifts of money or other property to be used in meeting its expenses in connection with, or in furthering, any or all of such activities.

5 Application of existing enactments

- (1) In this section references to the Company's other activities are references to the additional activities authorised by section 4 (Additional activities of Company) above or other the activities which the Company is for the time being authorised to undertake in addition to its business of an assay office.
- (2) Subject to the provisions of subsection (3) below, all the provisions of the Sheffield Assay Office Acts and Order 1772 to 1978 which relate to the Company and to its business of an assay office shall apply equally (so far as they are capable of doing so) to and in relation to its other activities, and to and in relation to the Company in so far as its undertaking includes them (but, save as respects the reference in article 7(2) of the Order of 1978, specific references to articles brought to be assayed shall not extend to articles received by the Company in the course of its other activities).
- (3) The Company shall keep accounts in respect of its other activities separate from the accounts kept in respect of its business of an assay office and—
 - (a) paragraph (5) of article 10 of the Order of 1978 shall not apply to the accounts kept in respect of its other activities, and
 - (b) the other provisions of that article shall apply separately to or in relation to each set of accounts,
 but references in this subsection to accounts do not include balance sheets and nothing in this subsection shall prevent the Company from preparing a single balance sheet in respect of the whole of its undertaking.
- (4) Notwithstanding section 22(2) of the Act of 1973, an order under section 16(1)(c) of that Act in relation to the Company shall, except so far as it provides otherwise or the contrary otherwise appears, apply in relation to its other activities as well as to its business of an assay office; and such an order may consist of or include provisions which apply only to the Company's other activities.