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SYDENHAM: Woman, 29, fined £2,000 after falsely claiming social housing

9:56am Wednesday 15th December 2010

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A 29-YEAR-OLD woman has been fined £2,000 after falsely claiming to be in need of social housing.

Margaret Okena of Kent House Road, Sydenham, failed to appear at Greenwich Magistrates' Court and was found guilty in her absence by the court of one offence under the Housing Act 1996.

She was fined £2,000 and ordered to pay costs of £1,500.

Okena applied to Lewisham Council for housing in December last year.

On her application she stated she did not own any property.

But routine checks conducted as part of the housing investigation process revealed Okena owned two properties in Essex.

She was interviewed on two occasions about her housing situation and on both occasions denied she owned any property.

Cabinet member for customer services, Councillor Susan Wise, said: "Mrs Okena was attempting to defraud Lewisham Council by falsely claiming social housing.

"I'm delighted this woman has been stopped in her tracks.

"This prosecution is a lesson to anyone who thinks they can cheat their way into housing in Lewisham and get away with it.

"Lewisham Council will not tolerate people abusing a system which is designed to help people in need."

SOUTH LONDON PRESS 17/12/10

Woman fined for home need scam

SYDENHAM: A woman has been fined after falsely claiming to be in need of social housing.

Margaret Okena, of Kent House Road, was found guilty in her absence at Greenwich Magistrates' Court on November 17.

She was ordered to pay a £2,000 fine and nearly £1,500 in costs.

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NEWS SHOPPER 23/12/10

Woman fined £2,000 for false housing claim

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She was interviewed twice about her housing situation and on both occasions denied owning any property.

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New Cross benefit cheat jailed after falsely claiming £30,000

12:26pm Tuesday 25th January 2011

By Kelly Smale

A 32-YEAR-OLD benefit cheat has been jailed after falsely claiming more than £30,000.

Arthur Sowah, of New Cross Road, New Cross, falsely claimed income support and housing benefit totalling £30,435 between February 2008 and June last year.

The corporate trade analyst began his job in September 2007 but later claimed the benefits using the name Ishmael Thomas, the name he had changed to by deed poll in 1994.

Sowah was caught after a data-matching exercise by the Department for Works and Pensions showed two different people were using the same national insurance number at the same address, and one was claiming benefits.

Sowah pleaded guilty to two offences under the Social Security Administration Act at Greenwich Magistrates Court.

He was jailed for 11 weeks and given an 11 week community service order.

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Deptford woman Lakeisha Fears jailed for benefit fraud

9:48am Tuesday 22nd February 2011

By Kelly Smale

A BENEFIT cheat had been jailed for two years after falsely claiming £55,748.

Lakeisha Fears, of Millard Road, Deptford, was investigated by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) for a having a fraudulent Indefinite Leave to Remain stamp on her passport.

The 34-year-old also had a counterfeit letter from the Home Office which she submitted to the DWP to obtain a national insurance number so she could claim income support.

Lewisham Council was contacted when further investigations revealed she had used them to claim housing benefit and council tax benefits.

Fears was found guilty at Woolwich Crown Court on January 26 of falsely claiming income support of £3,594 from the DWP and £51,106 in housing benefit and £1,048 in council tax benefits.

The judge recommended she be deported once her sentence had been served.

Cabinet member for customer services, Councillor Susan Wise, said: "The benefit system is there for people who genuinely need to claim.

"The council has a team of dedicated investigators who work closely with colleagues in the DWP - they will painstakingly follow all leads and secure evidence to enable a successful prosecution.

"We will not tolerate benefit cheats in our borough and will always prosecute."

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