

# Immigration advice fraudster sentenced

A man who posed as an Immigration Adviser to con £11,000 from refugees he met in social centres in Nottingham was today sentenced to 8 months imprisonment, suspended for 12 months and 100 hours of unpaid work.

Eugene Byass, 49, of no fixed address, was sentenced at Nottingham Crown Court after pleading guilty to eight counts of providing unqualified immigration advice and services between November 2015 and late December 2017.

He was also ordered to pay compensation to his victims in full, a total cost of £11,507.

Mr. Byass befriended his victims at community and refugee centres in the Nottingham area while pretending to be an immigration adviser and legal expert. He was not qualified as an Immigration Adviser and his business, B & L Legal Consultancy was unregulated.

The offences, against vulnerable refugees and immigrants, initially took place at his offices in Vernon House, Friar Lane, Nottingham and later the Concord Business Centre, Nottingham Road, New Basford, Nottingham. In sentencing HHJ Burgess said: "Over 22 months you acted as an Immigration Adviser. You were not qualified or registered. People who seek immigration advice are vulnerable, they cling on to people who say they can help. These are serious matters, people deserve proper representation".

Speaking about the decision, Deputy Immigration Services Commissioner, Dr Ian Leigh, said, "This is not a technical or victimless crime, Eugene Byass was advising vulnerable people who could not handle their immigration cases on their own. They trusted him and he betrayed that trust. I urge people to check with the appropriate regulatory body, such as the OISC, to confirm their adviser is qualified."

1. The OISC is an independent public body, established under the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, to regulate the provision of immigration advice and services in the UK.
2. For further media information contact Cornelius Alexander, OISC Corporate Communications Officer on 0207 211 1617.