

Leicester woman sentenced after stealing pensioner's life savings

Marston, 54, from Leicester, took in excess of £55,000 in 2006 and 2007, assuring the victim, now 83, that she would be repaid as Marston was set to become beneficiary of a trust fund when she turned 40 in 2007.

The money was loaned on the promise that the funds would be returned when the trust fund was received. Marston added to the deception by also promising to pay interest and compensation, saying she would pay the victim back £500,000 in total.

Marston then told her victim, who does not wish to be named, that she was struggling to access the trust fund so the victim was advised to petition for Marston's bankruptcy, believing it would help her access the money.

The bankruptcy petition sparked an Insolvency Service investigation and Marston was subsequently charged and pleaded guilty to 3 counts of obtaining property by deception and 3 counts of fraud by false representation.

Marston was sentenced to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years at Leicester Crown Court today. She was also ordered to pay a further £18,173 in compensation after paying £50,000 earlier this month and to undertake 100 hours of unpaid work.

The victim said:

When the application to the court for a Trustee in Bankruptcy Order was made on my behalf, I was hoping either to have the debt repaid or for my friend, who had borrowed the money, to have assistance in securing access to her Trust Fund which she explained to the court was 'locked' by the banks.

It was a body blow to learn later from the Official Receiver that Maria Marston's assets were nil. At that point I expected no further help, so I am extremely grateful to the Insolvency Service for their persistent and diligent work in bringing matters fully into the open.

By ensuring the unpaid debt was brought before the court, they have resolved for me a situation which had previously subjected both myself and my family to 15 years of stress, suffering and extensive financial hardship.

Glenn Wicks, chief investigator at the Insolvency Service, said:

Maria Marston used deception and fraudulent representations to take

tens of thousands of pounds from her close friend. She knew that no trust fund existed but continued her fraud regardless, telling her elderly victim that the money would be paid on numerous occasions.

Marston's victim has been left with no savings for many years as a result of her actions and this case shows we will pursue bankrupts through the criminal courts where appropriate.

Maria Marston is from Leicester and her date of birth is February 1967.

Maria Marston pleaded guilty to three counts of obtaining property by deception and three counts of fraud at Leicester Crown Court on 17 May 2021 before HHJ Raynor.

Following this, Maria Marston signed a Bankruptcy Restriction Undertaking. The restrictions mean she cannot borrow more than £500 without disclosing her bankrupt status and cannot act as a company director without the court's permission.

She was sentenced before Recorder Upward QC on 28 June 2021.

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