

Press release: Bogus Immigration Lawyer Jailed For Fraud

On Thursday 26 July 2018, at Southwark Crown Court, Ms. Harvinder Kaur Thethi, aged 46 years, of Old Hall Gardens, Solihull, West Midlands, was found guilty of six counts of fraud by false representation. Ms. Thethi was remanded in custody pending a sentencing hearing.

The offences took place between 1 June 2013 and 8 September 2014 in Hounslow, West London. Ms. Thethi, an unqualified person, falsely claimed to be a barrister, solicitor and a Home Office official with the ability to progress immigration applications. She obtained £68,000 from vulnerable people in payment for immigration related services which were promised but not delivered. Ms. Thethi ingratiated herself to the victims and was treated as a daughter or sister.

This prosecution was the result of an OISC led investigation in partnership with Immigration Enforcement and the Metropolitan Police Service.

On Thursday 6 September 2018 Ms. Thethi appeared before His Honour Judge Loraine-Smith at Southwark Crown Court for sentencing.

Ms. Thethi was sentenced to 5 years imprisonment on each count to run concurrently. In sentencing HHJ Loraine-Smith stated:

“You decided to embark on a fantasy life, when you claimed to be a successful lawyer earning a large income. You were nothing of the sort. The large amounts of money you obtained came entirely from money you had stolen from people you had befriended and cheated. People whose immigration status is precarious are very, very vulnerable. It is not surprising that if they found somebody they thought was a family friend, they could be convinced to part with large sums of money they could ill afford. You preyed on their vulnerability again and again...the investigation was thorough, fair, and – it is clear from the Victim Personal Statements – kind. I commend both officers in this case.”

Speaking about the decision, Deputy Immigration Services Commissioner, Dr Ian Leigh, stated:

“Securing the conviction of Ms Thethi is an excellent example of collaborative working by agencies operating within the immigration environment. The OISC is here to ensure that people seeking immigration advice are treated fairly by qualified people they can trust. Ms Thethi was operating outside of the law, preying upon vulnerable victims without regard for their protection or the consequences of her criminal behaviour. I am delighted with the outcome of this case, and I hope it sends a clear deterrent message to anyone considering acting similarly.”