

13 July 2023**OPERATION MILLIE - Prosecution Against
Sunderland Based EHIC Card Scammers.**

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Purpose of the report

To update the Committee on the outcome of an investigation which Sunderland City Council's trading standards team was involved in.

Overview

1. A family who made over £2 million using deliberately misleading websites to trick people into paying for European Health Insurance Cards (EHICs), which were freely available from the official NHS website, were sentenced on the 16th May 2023 at Leeds Crown Court, following an investigation led by the National Trading Standards eCrime Team, which is hosted by North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council. The team made test purchases and uncovered a range of misleading features on the site that undermined the NHS service and added no value for consumers. Nor did it provide the 'check and send' service for consumers that was claimed.
2. This case started as an Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) referral as part of NTS' role as their backstop when traders fail to comply with the ASA's requests. The family were repeatedly warned by the ASA and Sunderland City Council's trading standards officers to stop the offending and failed to make amendments to their website as requested.
3. Siblings Damien Sartip Zadeh (aged 32) and Dale Sartip Zadeh (aged 35) were directors of the companies behind the misleading websites, www.europeanhealthcard.org.uk and www.ehic-cards.org.uk. They were jailed for nine and a half years and eight years respectively after being found guilty of fraudulent trading and laundering the proceeds, between February 2013 and October 2019.
4. Damien was also convicted of engaging in aggressive commercial practices after threatening consumers who complained to prevent them pursuing refunds. Damien and Dale have both been disqualified from being directors for 10 years.
5. Their parents, Diane Sartip Zadeh (aged 60) and Mahmud Sartip Zadeh (aged 62) both of Angram Drive, Sunderland, were found guilty of money laundering and were sentenced to two years, suspended for two years. Both are also required to attend 10 activity rehabilitation days. Mahmud Sartip

Zadeh was also ordered to carry out 200 hours of unpaid work and disqualified from being a director for five years.

Recommendation

The Committee is asked to note the information.

Further information can be found at: https://www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/brazen-sunderland-scammers-made-2m-26919661?utm_source=linkCopy&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=sharebar

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