



**BOROUGH OF
BROXBOURNE**
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PRESS RELEASE

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Person pleads guilty to defrauding Broxbourne and Harlow councils

A lady has pleaded guilty to two counts of fraud in a case that involved "sophistication and planning" against two separate councils.

In September 2018 Charlotte Gunn of Croyland Road, Enfield made an application to Broxbourne Council for financial assistance for a rental deposit through the Simple Lets scheme. The Council made a loan payment to a landlord enabling Gunn to move out of temporary housing accommodation and into a privately rented home.

Suspicious were raised after the deposit had been paid and the matter was referred to the Shared Anti-Fraud Service (SAFS) to conduct a fraud investigation.

SAFS found that Gunn had used a property advertised for rent locally and fabricated a landlord with false contact details in order to obtain the deposit (amounting to £1,600) which was paid into her own bank account. She then used the money to purchase a holiday, high street spending and withdrew a large amount in cash. The investigation also brought to light that Gunn had committed an almost identical fraud against Harlow Council.

On 2 March 2020 Ms Gunn plead guilty to two counts of Fraud by False Representation. On 30 September 2020 Ms Gunn was sentenced and ordered to pay a fine of £450 (£250 for the fraud committed against Broxbourne Borough Council and £200 for the fraud committed against Harlow Council), plus £500 in costs. She is also subject to a compensation order to fully repay Broxbourne and Harlow councils.



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Broxbourne Councillor, Mike Iszatt, Chairman of the Audit and Standards Committee said: “Defrauding the Council is serious offence, a cost to the local tax payer, and it may prevent people in genuine need of support from accessing it.

“For this reason, we take fraud of any nature very seriously and will continue to work closely with partner organisations to investigate, identify and pursue perpetrators through the courts. Processes have been tighten up as a result of the fraud”

Members of the public with information about fraud against the Council, including housing, council tax or blue badge fraud can report it in confidence by visiting www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/reportfraud or by calling the Shared Anti-Fraud Service hotline on 0300 123 4033.

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