

OPERATOR GUILTY OF FRAUD

An East Yorkshire firm owner conned the taxman out of thousands of pounds while working as a council caretaker. Terence Platts, who used to be employed by Hull City Council, failed to tell HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) about money he made from operating his limosine and wedding car business and a bouncy castle hire company.

The 41-year-old, of Woodmansey, near Beverley, also under-declared his income when claiming tax credits – reflecting only what he earned from the council on his claim. In all, the fraud amounted to £25,000.

Platts, who pleaded guilty to the offences, has been given a six-month suspended sentence and ordered to carry out 200 hours of community service.

A court heard Platts, who is married with four children, had given interviews and posed for photographs advertising his business. This alerted HMRC officers, who began to investigate his business dealings.

Sentencing Platts, Recorder Jeremy Hill-Baker, said: "You obtained tax credits over a long period of time and this is viewed as a serious matter.

"The under-declaration of income and non-payment of income tax, along with the tax credit overpayments, results in honest taxpayers being overburdened."

Stephen Taylor, senior investigation officer for HMRC, said: "This was a combination of serious frauds against honest taxpayers over a number of years.

"The minority of people who think they can cheat the system and gain unfair advantages over everyone else without consideration or second thought should be worried.

"HMRC will seek them out with determination and persistence and bring them to justice."

The charges – being knowingly concerned in the fraudulent evasion of income tax and knowingly concerned in a fraudulent payment of tax credits – related to a period between 2000 and 2005.

Hull City Council confirmed Platts had stopped working as a caretaker in October 2003.

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