

News Release

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Blue Badge misuse - further warning to relatives

Relatives of Blue Badge holders are being further warned against misusing the badge. This follows three more prosecutions as part of the Council's ongoing campaign to protect the Blue Badge scheme and ensure spaces are available for genuine users when they need them.

The three drivers who were recently prosecuted were handed a total of £2,846 in fines, court costs and surcharges. These latest incidents bring the total number of drivers prosecuted for Blue Badge misuse offences to forty-two since the launch of the campaign in 2016.

The offences linked to these cases took place between 13 September 2018 and 28 January 2019 and involved badges issued by three neighbouring boroughs.

Councillor Peter Craske; Bexley's Cabinet Member for Places, said: "I am dismayed that despite previous warnings, family members continue to be the worst offenders for abuse of the Blue Badge scheme. This casual attitude towards abiding by the scheme rules is not acceptable. When an able bodied motorist misuses a Blue Badge, they are in effect depriving a disabled person of a place to park."

Councillor Craske added: "I urge anyone who has access to a Blue Badge to make

sure they know the rules and use the badge correctly. The badge is for the benefit of the holder only and should only be displayed when they are present. We will not tolerate abuse of any kind and no excuse will prevent an investigation which may lead to a prosecution, a fine and a criminal record. It really isn't worth the risk."

The three drivers who were caught displaying a Blue Badge in the absence of the holder were:

- Miss Mollie Davies of Hawthorne Crescent, Greenwich
- Mr Michael Carroll of Carisbrooke Avenue, Bexley
- Mr Thomas Speer of Murchison Avenue, Bexley

Mr Thomas Speer displayed a Blue Badge that had belonged to a deceased relative. On two separate occasions in January 2019, he used the badge to benefit from concessions that he was not entitled to while parking in Albany Park station car park. The badge had been cancelled over a year before following the death of the holder and during an interview under caution, Mr Speer did not dispute that the badge had belonged to his grandmother.

Blue Badge misuse is a criminal offence which can lead to a prosecution resulting in a fine of up to £1,000, plus an order to pay towards the costs of the Council prosecution and a criminal record. It can also lead to confiscation of the badge.

Anyone who suspects that a Blue Badge is being used for the benefit of a person who is not the badge holder can report their concerns at:

www.bexley.gov.uk/reportbluebadge

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Notes to editors

Notes

1) Miss Mollie Davies of Hawthorne Crescent, Greenwich, pleaded guilty by post for her hearing at Bexley Magistrates Court on 13/05/19. She was fined £100 plus costs of £100 and a £30 surcharge – total £230.

2) Mr Michael Carroll of Carisbrooke Avenue, Bexley, pleaded guilty in person at his hearing at Bexley Magistrates Court on 20/05/19. He was fined £400 plus costs of £400 and a surcharge of £30 – total £830.

3) Mr Thomas Speer of Murchison Avenue, Bexley, pleaded guilty by post to both charges ahead of his hearing at Bexley Magistrates Court. He was fined £1,320 (£660 for each offence) plus costs of £400 and a surcharge of £66 – total £1,786.

4) The National Fraud Initiative estimates Blue Badge misuse costs Local Authorities in England around £46 million every year.