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***News Release***

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|  | For the attention of **News Desks** | | No of pages: 3 | |  |
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**Jail for family of Facebook cigarette sellers**

Three members of the same Black Country household have been sentenced for selling illegal cigarettes through Facebook.

Hazell Lumbley, her ex-partner Steven Henderson, and Hazell’s daughter, Hayley Eaton, were caught by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) investigators, who were monitoring the adverts before raiding the family home in April 2017.

The trio, all unemployed, sold cigarettes from the then family home, in Darlaston Road, Wednesdbury, and kept a meticulous 365-page diary of illegal sales, which helped officers estimate they had evaded £352,428.67 in duty over four years. During mitigation the trio argued the figure was much lower.

At Wolverhampton Crown Court today Lumbley was jailed for two years and three months, Henderson was jailed for two years and Eaton was handed a two-year community order.

The family members used at least six different profiles on the social media site to advertise single packs and boxes of 200 non-duty paid cigarettes in a four-year fraud.

Lumbley, 37, even offered a ‘try before you buy’ option and a ‘free delivery service’ depending on the order size and distance. The delivery car was seized on the day of the raid and only returned when Lumbley handed over £448 for its return.

Henderson, 34, admitted his part in the scam when officers arrived to arrest his partner. Lumbley’s 21-year-old daughter was arrested after officers found a book of seller usernames in her bedroom, linking her to sales.

HMRC investigators found £2,200 in cash, which was forfeited after an earlier court hearing at which the family could provide no legitimate source for the money.

Nick Stone, Assistant Director, Fraud Investigation Service, HMRC, said:

“The delivery days are over for these three who are paying the price for cheating, stealing and undercutting honest, hard-working retailers who do the right thing.

“People who peddle cut-price, illegal cigarettes on social media sites are depriving public services of vital funding. I would urge anybody with information about individuals or businesses involved in tax fraud to report it to HMRC online or call our Fraud Hotline on 0800 788 887.”

Information about any type of tax fraud can be reported to HMRC online at [www.gov.uk/report-an-unregistered-trader-or-business](https://www.gov.uk/report-an-unregistered-trader-or-business).

**Notes to Editors**

1. Hazell Marie Lumbley, DOB 16/04/80, Darlaston Road, Wednesdbury, WS10, was charged with fraudulent evasion of excise duty between 01 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. She pleaded guilty on 12/10/2018 and received a sentence of two years and three months at Wolverhampton Crown Court today.

Steven Andrew Henderson, DOB 03/11/1984, Dunstall Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV6, was charged with fraudulent evasion of excise duty between 01 January 2013 and 31 December 2016. He pleaded guilty on 03/04/2018 and received a sentence of two years in prison at Wolverhampton Crown Court today.

Hayley Stephanie Eaton, DOB 03/11/1997, Darlaston Road, Wednesbury, WS10, pleaded guilty to fraudulent evasion of excise duty between 01 January, 2016 and 31 December, 2016. She pleaded guilty on 12/10/2018 and received a two-year community order, at Wolverhampton Crown Court today, which included 120 hours of unpaid work.

1. The seized tobacco products were tested by experts. Some of products were found to be counterfeit. Other products were genuine, but not intended to be sold in the UK market.
2. Follow HMRC Press Office on Twitter @HMRCpressoffice.

**Issued by HM Revenue and Customs Press Office**

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