# Manchester man jailed for feigning terminal cancer to swindle £27,000 from friends



Matthew Howarth, a 32-year-old man from Atherton, Greater Manchester, has been sentenced to one year in prison for defrauding his former classmate, Thomas Lee, by fabricating a terminal illness. Howarth claimed to be suffering from a brain tumour and used this deception to extract significant financial assistance from Lee, resulting in a total of approximately £27,000 being borrowed from multiple friends.

The case was heard at Wigan Magistrates Court, where the extent of Howarth's deceit was revealed. Prosecutor Ms Shazia Aslam detailed how Howarth reached out to Lee after 16 years of no contact, asserting that he had only weeks to live and needed funds to cover a £10,000 excess on a private health insurance policy. In a troubling twist, Lee also took out a loan to help Howarth, transferring £2,700 to him on October 17, 2023.

Lee, feeling distressed and vulnerable, later discovered that two other acquaintances had lent Howarth substantial amounts, including £7,300 from a neighbour. Underlining the emotional toll of Howarth's actions, Lee reportedly suffered sleepless nights, worrying about his supposed friend's imminent demise, which Howarth leveraged to solicit more money.

Despite Howarth's claims of being a television producer with private medical insurance, investigations revealed he had no such illness and had not sought the medical treatments he described. Instead, Howarth's actions were described by magistrates as a targeted manipulation of a vulnerable individual, leading to a significant detrimental impact on Lee.

During the court proceedings, Howarth expressed remorse, stating, "I am sincerely sorry and I am heartbroken to lose my friend," and mentioned that he had been experiencing headaches that warranted a referral to a neurologist. The court, however, highlighted the calculated nature of his actions, which included prior Facebook posts mocking individuals who falsely claimed to have serious illnesses for financial gain.

As part of the sentencing, Howarth has also been ordered to pay £1,200 in compensation to Lee. In a bid to recover some of the funds lost to the victims, police have seized three iPhones and a new MacBook, which will be sold. Additionally, a restraining order has been placed on Howarth, banning him from contacting Lee for two years.

The case reveals not only the financial exploitation involved but also the emotional manipulation that can occur in such fraud cases, leaving victims in devastating circumstances.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

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6. <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/killers-brought-justice-greater-manchester-28304257> - This article discusses various criminals brought to justice in Greater Manchester, including cases of fraud and manipulation, highlighting the emotional toll on victims.
7. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2051374/man-jailed-vile-cancer-con> - Please view link - unable to able to access data