

106 increased sentences under the Unduly Lenient Scheme in 2021

News story

The Attorney General's Office has published the annual Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) statistics for 2021



[New statistics for 2021](#) show that 106 offenders had their sentences increased after HM Law Officers challenged their sentences because they thought they were too low.

Under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme, victims of crime, members of the public, and the Crown Prosecution Service can ask for certain Crown Court sentences to be reviewed if they believe they are too low.

In 2021, the Law Officers received applications for 678 sentences to be reviewed which met the necessary criteria to be considered under the Scheme. Of these, 151 were referred to the Court of Appeal. The Court agreed that 106 of these sentences were too low and increased the sentences as a result.

Other offenders who received increased sentences referred under the ULS scheme in 2021 include Frankie Smith for her role in the death of one-year-old Star Hobson, Ben John for domestic terrorism offences and Thomas Hughes for taking part in the abuse that led to the death of his son, six-year-old Arthur Labinjo-Hughes.

Commenting on the Scheme's performance, Rt Hon Attorney General Victoria Prentis MP said:

The ULS scheme allows anyone, including victims of crime, to ask for a review of certain sentences they believe are too low. In 2021, this meant that over 100 criminals had their sentences increased and many more victims and their families had a second chance at justice, demonstrating the vital role of the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme in the criminal justice system.

It must be remembered that in the vast majority of cases the correct sentence is imposed, but the scheme remains an important tool to ensure that cases can be reviewed where there may have been a gross error in the sentencing decision. It's not just about increasing sentences, the scheme also provides an important avenue for the Attorney General's Office to ask the Court of Appeal for guidance, to help shape the sentencing framework and ensure more consistent sentencing for complex cases.

Notes and further information on the ULS scheme

- The ULS scheme came into force on 1st February 1989. It was introduced after public outcry over the lenient sentencing of the offenders involved in the 1986 rape of a 21-year-old. The victim was brutally raped by a gang of burglars at her father's vicarage.
- The first ever ULS hearing took place in July 1989 for a man who committed incest on his daughter and had his sentence doubled from 3 to 6 years.
- The scheme was extended in 2017 to include an additional 19 terror-related offences, and again in 2019 to cover more sexual offences as well as coercive control and stalking and harassment involving violence.
- Only one referral is required in order for it to be considered by the Attorney General's Office.
- More information on the ULS scheme, including how to refer a sentence and the types of offences covered can be found on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk). ULS statistics can be found [here](#). Under the ULS scheme a case must be referred to the Court of Appeal within 28 days of the date of sentencing. The referral must be lodged with the Court no later than 5pm on the last business day of the 28 days. This deadline cannot be extended and in order to ensure we have time to properly consider a case we ask that referrals are made early in the process. It is very difficult to consider a case which is submitted late and it is not possible to do so outside of working hours.
- Of the 151 offenders who were referred to the Court of Appeal in 2021, these related to crimes in the following categories:
 - Child sex offences
 - Aggravated Burglary
 - Causing death by dangerous driving
 - Causing grievous bodily harm with intent
 - Distributing indecent images of children
 - Possession with intent to supply Class A drugs
 - Manslaughter
 - Murder
 - Rape
 - Robbery
 - Stalking
 - Wounding with intent