

Leicestershire sex offender's sentence doubled following undercover police operation

A Leicestershire sex offender, convicted after an undercover police investigation, has had his sentence doubled following an intervention by the Solicitor General, the Rt Hon Lucy Frazer QC MP.

Lewis Watts, 26, engaged in sexual communication with three different 12-year-old girls via social media, including graphic messages inciting one of the girls to engage in sexual activity. However, he was in fact communicating with undercover police officers in all three cases.

Watts was arrested and charged with three counts of attempting to engage in sexual communication with a child. He was also charged with one count of attempting to cause or incite a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity, and of breaching an existing sexual harm prevention order.

As a result of his new offending, Watts had a sexual harm prevention order brought into force. The Order was granted in 2015 following his conviction for three counts of possession of indecent photographs of children, with a view to their being distributed or shown by himself to others.

Watts initially pleaded not guilty to the latest charges but changed his plea on the first day of the trial. On 28 June 2021, he was sentenced to 3 years' imprisonment at Leicester Crown Court.

Following the Court's decision, the Solicitor General referred Watts' case to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme. On 1 September 2021, the Court found his sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 6 years and 3 months' imprisonment.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Lucy Frazer QC MP, said:

Watts' intentions were deeply disturbing and designed to harm young children. The seriousness of his offending had to reflect the gravity of his criminal intentions. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal saw fit to increase his sentence today.

This ruling follows the decision by the Court of Appeal that where a defendant sets out to sexually abuse a child, in circumstances where the child in fact is an adult posing as a child, then the starting point for sentencing should be set by reference to the harm that the defendant intended to cause the fictional child. The fact that there was no real child for the defendant to abuse will then be reflected in a downward movement from that starting point. The extent of that reduction will be a matter for the court

in individual cases to decide, but the seriousness of the offending must nonetheless be reflected in what the offender intended.

[Research: Tuberculosis \(TB\): regional and devolved administration reports](#)

Annual regional reports for the epidemiology of TB from 2012 up to 2018.

[Professor Jonathan Statham appointed AHWBE Chair](#)

Press release

Biosecurity Minister Lord Benyon has appointed Professor Jonathan Statham as the new Chair of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England.



Professor Jonathan Statham

Professor Jonathan Statham has today (1 September) been appointed Chair of the [Animal Health and Welfare Board for England \(AHWBE\)](#). Professor Statham will start the role on 1 November 2021, replacing the current Chair, Michael Seals, who is standing down after ten years in the role.

I am delighted to have been appointed the next Chair of the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England.

As a large animal vet by profession, high animal health and welfare is close to my heart and something I know is very important to industry and wider society.

It is a crucial point in time for the industry and for us as a board, with lots of key policies coming forward which bring along many challenges. It is an enormous privilege for me to take on this role once Michael Seals steps down. I look forward to working together with him and colleagues on the board.

Biosecurity Minister Lord Benyon said:

With extensive veterinary and farming experience, Jonathan will play a key role in improving the health and welfare of kept animals in England over the coming years.

We have bold plans to improve animal health and welfare, as outlined in our recently-published Action Plan for Animal Welfare, and I look forward to working closely with Jonathan and the AHWBE to deliver these ambitions.

I also want to thank Michael Seals for his dedication in leading the organisation over the past decade.

Outgoing AHWBE Chair Michael Seals said:

Jonathan will be an excellent new Chair and I am confident he will continue the great work of the board and bring new experiences to the role.

He has a long-standing passion for improving health and welfare in kept animals and experience in linking this knowledge to the environment and to the issues of the future.

We therefore have an incoming Chair who can take the work of the board and its advice to ministers to a new level, while supporting delivery through the forthcoming Animal Health and Welfare Pathway. I wish Jonathan every success as Chair.

Jonathan Statham biography:

- Jonathan has been a Non-Executive Director on the AHWBE since 2017.
- He is a qualified veterinarian and partner at the Bishopton Veterinary Group in Yorkshire and has years of experience of working with the farming industry.
- He is also Chief Executive Officer at RAFT Solutions Ltd and a Professor of Sustainable Livestock Health & Welfare at Harper and Keele Veterinary School.
- Previously, Jonathan has been President of the British Cattle Veterinary Association and Yorkshire Veterinary Society. He has served on various representative and industry groups, including the GB Cattle Health and Welfare Group and Veterinary Policy Group of the British Veterinary Association.

About the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England:

- Launched in 2011, the Animal Health and Welfare Board for England is the principal source of advice to Defra ministers on all strategic health and welfare matters relating to kept animals in England.
- Its responsibilities include animal health and welfare policy, assessing the threat from animal diseases, and reviewing contingency plans for disease outbreaks.

Background

- Professor Statham's appointment follows fair and open competition in line with the governance code for public appointments.
- Professor Statham will start the role on 1 November. In the meantime, he will be working alongside the current Chair in his role as Chair-designate.
- The AHWBE board comprises four executive members and eight non-executive members, including the Chair.
- The Chair maintains close links to other animal health committees in Defra (such as the Animal Welfare Committee, the TB Partnership Group and the Farm Animal Genetic Resources Committee) to ensure sharing of information and direction of policy for all these groups.

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