

Ben John's sentence increased following personal intervention by the Solicitor General

Ben John, 22, has been sentenced to an immediate prison term after the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP personally presented the case at the Court of Appeal.

On 7 January 2020, Lincolnshire Police searched John's home and seized several electronic devices including a phone and hard drives. Police found tens of thousands of politically extreme and far-right documents and files. This included white nationalist and anti-Semitic materials.

Amongst the materials, Lincolnshire Police found a copy of the 'Anarchy Cookbook', a book containing instructions for the manufacture of explosives and rudimentary weapons. John was found guilty of one count of possessing information likely to be useful to a person committing or preparing an act of terrorism.

On 31 August 2021, John was sentenced to 2 years' imprisonment, suspended for 2 years, at Leicester Crown Court.

Following the sentence, the Solicitor General referred John's sentence to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme.

On 19 January, the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 2 years' imprisonment with a 1 year licence period.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP said:

The Government is committed to confronting terrorism in all its forms, including from the Extreme Right Wing. We remain focussed on disrupting the activities of the most dangerous extremists, supporting those who stand up to their hateful rhetoric, and protecting vulnerable people being drawn into terrorism.

I referred Ben John's sentence to the Court of Appeal, and chose to personally present it, because I believed it to be unduly lenient. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal agreed and chose to increase his sentence today.