

Former defence worker jailed for longer after breaching Officials Secrets Act

A former defence worker who disclosed highly sensitive information about a UK missile system has had his sentence increased following intervention by the then Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, who presented the case at the Court of Appeal.

Simon Finch, 50, was formerly employed by two major defence companies who provide contracted services to the Ministry of Defence.

Finch's personal circumstances began to deteriorate after he was arrested for carrying a hammer and a large kitchen knife in public. He was sentenced to 16 weeks' imprisonment, suspended for 12 months in 2016. He did not tell his employer of the conviction.

Finch subsequently made a series of complaints about the way he was treated by the police. In February 2018 he left his job and began to plan the unlawful disclosure, recording from memory highly sensitive details of a UK missile system. In October 2018, he deliberately sent the information to several recipients.

He was arrested at his home address in Swansea in March 2019. During the investigation, he refused to disclose the passwords to his personal computers.

On 10 November 2020, Finch was sentenced to 4 years and 6 months' imprisonment at the Old Bailey. He was also made the subject of a five-year serious crime and prevention order.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme, on 2 March the sentence was found to be unduly lenient and has been increased to a sentence of 8 years' imprisonment.

After the hearing at the Court of Appeal, the now Attorney General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

Finch deliberately disclosed highly sensitive information which could have put our national security at risk. His actions could have caused significant harm to British citizens and I welcome the Court of Appeal increasing his sentence today.