

Nottingham blackmailer jailed for longer

A Nottingham blackmailer has had his sentence increased following an intervention by the Solicitor General, Rt Hon Lucy Frazer QC MP.

Declan Ryan, 31, was found guilty of blackmail after acting on behalf of his associate, Francis Wellington, in Wellington's plan to extort money from an old schoolfriend.

Ryan sought to extract £5,000 from the victim, visiting the victim's house whilst his mother and children were present. Ryan falsely claimed that the victim owed money to Wellington and threatened violence unless he paid the supposed debt. The victim took the threat seriously as he was aware that Wellington had access to guns.

Ryan later called Wellington on the telephone and promised to keep pressuring the victim for the money.

Ryan has 76 previous convictions from 24 prior court appearances, including for assault and possessing knives.

On 6 April 2021, Ryan was convicted of blackmail and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment at Nottingham Crown Court. Wellington was previously sentenced for the same offence.

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

On 26 May, the Court found the sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 29 months' imprisonment.

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

Ryan was a willing accomplice who voluntarily played his part in the persecution of an innocent victim. Blackmail is a vicious offence, and I am glad that the Court of Appeal saw fit to increase his sentence today.