

Press release: Sex offender who targeted children online has sentenced increased

Sex offender, Paul Leighton, has had his sentence increased to 20 years in prison

A sex offender who befriended and then blackmailed children online to get them to engage in sexual activity will spend more time in prison after his sentence was referred to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Paul Leighton, 33, befriended a number of children around the world using fake social media accounts before persuading them to send sexual photos and videos of themselves. If they refused, he would threaten to tell their family members.

Other children were forced into performing sexual acts on their siblings and Leighton also persuaded a 14 year old child in America to rape his baby niece.

Leighton was originally sentenced to 16 years in prison with a 6 year extended licence period at Newcastle Crown Court. His sentence was increased to 20 years in prison with a 7 year extended licence period.

The Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP presented the case in Court today and said:

This is a deeply disturbing and serious case. Leighton callously targeted vulnerable children and subjected them to a series of threats, frightening them into complying with his sexual demands.

Such terrible offending deserves a tougher punishment and this increased sentence takes into account the seriousness of this offending.