

# Press release: Van driver's sentence is extended after cyclist is killed

A man who killed a cyclist after colliding with him in his transit van will spend longer in prison after Solicitor General Robert Buckland QC MP referred his original sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Joseph Bills, 22, was under the influence of drugs and alcohol when he crashed into David Thorman, 35. Bills then left the scene, despite the victim being alive at that point, before returning an hour later and turning himself into the police.

In a prepared statement the morning after the crime, Bills admitted to having consumed beer and Sambuca before driving, as well as cocaine the night before. Police then confirmed that Bills was one and a half times over the alcohol limit.

Bills originally received a sentence of 3 years and 4 months in prison at Canterbury Crown Court, reduced from 5 years for an early guilty plea. The Court of Appeal agreed that this was too lenient and increased his sentence to 4 years and 4 months.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

A man's life was ended abruptly because of Joseph Bills' totally avoidable recklessness. The original sentence neglected to take into account the severity of the crime as well as the offender's actions directly after he committed it. I'm pleased that the Court of Appeal has extended his sentence. I hope that this brings some solace to the victim's family.