

Sex abuser has sentence increased following referral by the Solicitor General

News story

Sam Crouch has had his sentence increased after it was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP.



A King's Lynn man guilty of sexual offending against children has had his sentence increased after it was referred to the Court of Appeal by the Solicitor General, Alex Chalk QC MP.

Sam Crouch, also known as Stuart Edwards, 34, committed a total of thirteen sexual offences over a six-year period, which included the creation of an indecent video and photographs of a child.

Additionally, Crouch was found to be in possession of indecent images of children and a computer tablet which breached conditions of an existing sexual harm prevention order (SHPO).

On 29 October 2021, Crouch was sentenced to three years' imprisonment at Chelmsford Crown Court.

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

On 18 January the Court of Appeal found his original sentence to be unduly lenient and increased it to 5 years' imprisonment.

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

Crouch's appalling behaviour spanned six years, and targeted young victims. I welcome this decision to increase the sentence to reflect the severity of his offending. I hope that the Court's ruling can bring some comfort to the victims of his predatory

offending.

Published 18 January 2022

[Get help to explore different careers and understand what employers in your area are looking for.](#)

News story

Join the National Careers Service career workshops for expert advice about what's happening in your local area



Knowing what steps to take to get where you want to be can sometimes be a daunting prospect. That's why we are here to help make it easier with our online National Careers Service career workshops, guiding you through the process of finding a job or helping you to secure a better one.

Sometimes all you need is a little bit of inspiration and someone who knows what opportunities are available in your area. Our expert careers advisers will give you exactly that.

The second in our series of workshops will show you where you can go to look at potential careers that could be right for you, whether you have something in mind or are looking for inspiration.

We'll also show you how to use information about careers, such as typical working hours or expected salary, to help you find one that suits your needs.

Our expert advisers will also demonstrate how to use intel from your local area to help you spot trends and find careers that are in demand. They will also show you how to develop the skills that employers are looking for.

We'll show you:

- How to explore careers using online tools
- What Labour Market Information (LMI) is and why it is important
- How you can use LMI to help you make informed decisions
- And more...

To take the next step on the journey to unlocking your potential, follow the links below to sign up to the events in your region:

We understand the journey is not always a straight line, and you might not need help with every topic, so you can join in and jump out at any point. If you would like to know more about these events, or need any careers advice on learning, training and work outside of these events you can always contact the National Careers Service on 0800 100 900 or via [webchat](#) (8am-8pm weekdays and 10am-5pm Saturdays) or visit <https://nationalcareers.service.gov.uk/>.

Published 18 January 2022

[Appointment of Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the UK Mission to Afghanistan: Hugo Shorter](#)

Press release

Hugo Shorter has been appointed Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the UK Mission to Afghanistan in Doha.



Hugo Shorter has been appointed Chargé d'Affaires ad interim of the UK Mission to Afghanistan in succession to Dr Martin Longden, who is moving to another diplomatic appointment.

Mr Shorter will take up his appointment during January 2022.

Date	Role
2019 to 2022	FCDO Director, Americas & Small Island Developing States
2018	Interim FCO Director of Communication
2015 to 2018	Ambassador to Lebanon
2012 to 2015	FCO, Head, Europe Directorate External
2007 to 2012	Paris, Minister Counsellor Europe & Global Issues
2004 to 2007	Brasilia, Deputy Head of Mission
2001 to 2004	FCO, Deputy Head North East Asia & Pacific Department
2000 to 2001	Private Secretary to Minister of State
1998 to 2000	FCO, Head, Trade Policy Section, EU Department-External
1994 to 1998	UKDel NATO, Second, later First Secretary
1992 to 1993	Attachment to École Nationale d'Administration, Paris
1990 to 1992	FCO, Desk Officer Spain & Portugal, Southern European Department
1990	Joined FCO

Published 18 January 2022

[Universities pledge to end use of non-disclosure agreements](#)

Victims of sexual harassment in universities should no longer be silenced by Non-Disclosure Agreements (NDAs), under a new pledge backed by the government, universities and campaigners.

Today six university vice-chancellors invited to attend the launch have signed up to a pledge promising not to use NDAs in dealing with complaints of sexual misconduct, bullying, and other forms of harassment – as Higher Education Minister Michelle Donelan calls on all universities to sign up.

The pledge, backed by MPs and campaign groups, commits universities to not use legally-binding NDAs against students and staff who come forward to report abuse, amidst fears victims are being pressured into signing agreements which stop them from speaking out and protect the reputations of perpetrators.

In 2020, a BBC News investigation found nearly one third of universities had used NDAs to resolve student complaints, involving over 300 individual NDAs – though the true figure is expected to be higher.

Minister for Higher and Further Education Michelle Donelan said:

Sexual harassment is horrendous and complainants should never be

bought or bullied into silence simply to protect the reputation of their university. Such agreements make it harder for other victims to come forward and help hide perpetrators behind a cloak of anonymity.

The use of Non-Disclosure Agreements to buy victims' silence is a far cry from their proper purpose, for example to protect trade secrets. I am determined to see this shabby practice stamped out on our campuses, which is why last year I wrote to vice-chancellors making my position clear.

Several university leaders have signed a new moral contract to end the use of Non-Disclosure Agreements against students and staff, and I call on other vice chancellors to do the right thing and follow their lead.

The pledge was welcomed by #Can'tBuyMySilence, a global campaign set up by former Harvey Weinstein aide Zelda Perkins and Canadian law professor Julie Macfarlane, which aims to end the harmful use of NDAs, and who attended the virtual launch of the pledge on Tuesday alongside Ministers and university leaders.

Zelda Perkins and Julie Macfarlane, the co-founders of Can't Buy My Silence, said:

We have seen up-close the damage caused by NDAs used by some institutions of further and higher education; damage to individual complainants who feel betrayed by their university, and damage to trust among institutions when a wrongdoer is "passed on" protected by an NDA.

We are delighted that Minister Donelan is asking universities to condemn this practice and pledge not to use NDAs in the future. This will dramatically change the accountability and transparency of universities and improve the lives of students, staff and faculty by helping to break the cycle abusive behaviour perpetuated by these agreements.

In July 2021, Minister Donelan wrote to vice chancellors urging them to tackle sexual harassment and abuse on campus, making clear all institutions must have robust procedures in place to deal with complaints and setting out her stance on the use of NDAs.

The Government has already announced plans to bring in new legislation to crack down on the use of NDAs in employment, following a consultation by the Department for Business, Energy, Industry and Skills. Efforts to tackle the practice have been championed by former Equalities Minister Maria Miller MP, who welcomed the new pledge at its launch.

Hillary Gyebi-Ababio, National Union of Students Vice-President for Higher

Education said:

After years of campaigning to end sexual violence on campus NUS welcomes this timely announcement by the Universities Minister. Non-Disclosure Agreements have long been used to intimidate survivors, protect perpetrators and enable cycles of abuse to continue.

We urge all institutions to sign this pledge, bring much needed transparency to how they deal with complaints about sexual violence and commit to creating truly safe and supportive campuses for students and staff.

Minister Donelan will be urging all vice-chancellors to sign the pledge, with universities who sign up to be listed on #Can'tBuyMySilence's website.

A number of universities had already signalled plans to end the use of NDAs in sexual harassment cases, with UCL confirming in 2019 it would end the practice in any settlement agreements with individuals who complained of sexual misconduct, harassment or bullying.

Dr Michael Spence, President & Provost of UCL, said:

We are all too aware that sexual harassment, bullying and misconduct takes place in universities. When this occurs, it is crucial that victims feel supported and able to speak out about their experiences.

Confidentiality clauses are a barrier to this and that is why we took the decision in 2019 that we will no longer use NDAs in settlement agreements with individuals who have complained of sexual misconduct, harassment or bullying.

Alistair Jarvis CBE, Chief Executive of Universities UK, said:

Universities have a duty of care towards their students and staff and take very seriously their responsibility to ensuring that life on campus is a fulfilling, safe and enjoyable experience for all.

The overwhelming majority do have this positive experience, but in the small number of cases where episodes of harassment or violence sadly do occur, it is critical that victims feel supported and confident to speak out.

Universities should not use NDAs or confidentiality clauses in settlement agreements in harassment cases, or allow any agreements which prevent open conversations about harassment. Such clauses can be barriers to the reporting of concerns and are both unethical and

unacceptable.

£1.3 million available for cutting-edge telexistence innovations

The [Defence and Security Accelerator](#) (DASA) is pleased to launch [Telexistence Phase 2](#), on behalf of the [Defence Science and Technology Laboratory](#) (Dstl) and the [Nuclear Decommissioning Authority](#) (NDA).

Telexistence technology has the potential to give those working in hazardous environments the capability to undertake tasks without physically being present, which can decrease risk and reduce the logistical burden associated with dangerous operations.

This is achieved using a remotely-operated system, and relies on integrating:

- telepresence, which enables the operator to see and hear as though in the remote environment
- robotics / wearable assistive technologies, which enable the operator to interact with the remote environment
- haptic feedback / sensors which enable the operator to touch / feel the remote environment

Key dates and funding

The total funding available for this competition is £1.3 million. We expect to fund several proposals with a maximum value of £400k per proposal.

Submission deadline: Midday on Wednesday 6 April 2022 (BST).

[Do you have an innovative idea? Read the Competition Document now and submit your idea.](#)

What telexistence innovations are we looking for?

We are looking for innovators to develop a complete telexistence system. This will involve the integration of telepresence, robotic and haptic technologies on to a single platform. Solutions must enable the user to experience and interact with the remote environment as if they were physically there.

We will invite successful suppliers to our laboratories to evaluate the capabilities of their systems against a series of tasks that are representative of a use case. Suppliers will choose one use case from the following:

- Specialist Nuclear Decommissioning Tasks
- Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD)
- Defence and Security Medical applications

Upcoming events

Telexistence Phase 2: Open Q & A

Date: 27 January 2022

Join this webinar which provides further detail on the Telexistence Phase 2 competition, and a chance to ask questions in an open forum. [Register here](#).

Telexistence Phase Two: 1-to-1 Sessions

Date: 1 February 2022

A series of 15 minute one-to-one teleconference sessions, giving you the opportunity to ask specific questions about Telexistence Phase 2. Booking is on a first come first served basis. [Register here](#).

Telexistence Phase Two: 1-to-1 Sessions

Date: 9 February 2022

A series of 15 minute one-to-one teleconference sessions, giving you the opportunity to ask specific questions about Telexistence Phase 2. Booking is on a first come first served basis. [Register here](#).

Submit a proposal

Do you have an in-depth understanding of emerging capabilities, technologies, initiatives and novel approaches that may help better our understanding of telexistence technologies? Submit an idea and help inform [Dstl](#) and the [NDA](#) on developing a telexistence system that operates from a single platform.

[Read the full competition document and submit your innovation](#)