# Essex man jailed for longer following personal intervention by the Attorney General

A man who remorselessly attacked his former partner in her home has had his sentence increased following intervention by the Attorney General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, who personally presented the case at the Court of Appeal.

John Berry, 32, had been in a relationship with the victim and following his release from prison on a separate charge, Berry started visiting his former partner at her home in Essex.

On 24 July 2017, Berry broke into his partner's home and proceeded to attack her, strangling her, and repeatedly striking her body and head. During the attack she sustained seven separate facial fractures, resulting in a fractured cheek and jawbone. Her spleen was also ruptured. The victim's injuries were such that were usually found to be as a result of a high-speed car collision.

Berry has 13 previous convictions for a total of 40 offences, including 5 offences against the victim in this case. Following a police investigation and manhunt, Berry was arrested in Cambridge in March 2018.

On 2 November 2020, Berry was convicted of causing grievous bodily harm with intent and sentenced to 9 years' imprisonment at Chelmsford Crown Court. Berry claimed that the victim had attacked him with a knife.

Following a referral to the Court of Appeal under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme, on 7 May the Court found Berry to be a Dangerous Offender and ruled that the sentence was unduly lenient. The Court imposed an extended determinate sentence of 15 years' imprisonment followed by 5 years on licence.

The Attorney General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, personally presented the case to the Court, underscoring the seriousness with which he views domestic abuse offences. In referring and presenting this case, the Attorney General acted independently of government and in the public interest.

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

> Berry entered into his victim's home and viciously attacked her, inflicting life-changing injuries. He then sought to escape justice both before and after being arrested. His actions have caused significant harm to the victim, who I hope will feel some comfort from today's decision.

# JCVI advises on COVID-19 vaccine for people aged under 40

The committee has reviewed the latest available evidence, including the current COVID-19 infection rate, the scale and pace of the vaccine programme and modelling of the timing and size of any third pandemic wave.

This has been considered alongside the latest advice from the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on extremely rare cases of concurrent thrombosis (blood clots) and thrombocytopenia (low platelet count) following the first dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine.

The chances of a younger person becoming seriously ill with COVID-19 get smaller as infection rates increasingly come under control in the UK.

Considering this alongside the portfolio of vaccines available in the UK in the coming months and taking a precautionary approach in relation to the extremely small risk of thrombosis and thrombocytopenia following the first dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, the JCVI has advised a preference for adults aged 30 to 39 without underlying health conditions to receive an alternative to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine – where available and only if this does not cause substantial delays in being vaccinated.

This follows the decision on 7 April to offer a preference for adults aged under 30.

The COVID-19 vaccines are highly effective and have been shown to substantially reduce the risk of death, severe disease and transmission of infection.

Over 34 million people have received a first dose so far. The vaccine programme is estimated to have prevented over 10,000 deaths by the end of March.

Adverse events following the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine are extremely rare and, for the vast majority of people, the benefits of preventing serious illness and death far outweigh any risks.

Up to 28 April 2021, the MHRA had received 242 reports of blood clotting cases in people who also had low levels of platelets in the UK, following the use of Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine. These numbers are very small compared to the millions of people who have received the vaccine. The overall incidence of case reports of thromboembolic events with low platelets after first or unknown doses was 10.5 per million doses.

The majority of these extremely rare events occurred after the first dose.

Everybody who has already had a first dose of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine should receive a second dose of the same jab, irrespective of age, except for the very small number of people who experienced blood clots with low platelet counts from their first vaccination.

Getting the second vaccine dose is very important because it further increases the level of protection against COVID-19.

Professor Wei Shen Lim, COVID-19 Chair for JCVI, said:

> Safety remains our number one priority. We have continued to assess the benefit-risk balance of COVID-19 vaccines in light of UK infection rates and the latest information from the MHRA on the extremely rare event of blood clots and low platelet counts following vaccination.
>
> As COVID-19 rates continue to come under control, we are advising that adults aged 18 to 39 years with no underlying health conditions are offered an alternative to the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, if available and if it does not cause delays in having the vaccine. The advice is specific to circumstances in the UK at this time and maximises use of the wide portfolio of vaccines available.
>
> The COVID-19 vaccines have already saved thousands of lives and the benefit for the majority of the population is clear – if you are offered the vaccine, you should take it.

As a precautionary measure, anyone who has the following symptoms from around 4 days to 4 weeks after vaccination is advised to seek prompt medical advice:

- a severe headache that is not relieved with painkillers or is getting worse
- a headache that feels worse when you lie down or bend over
- a headache that is unusual for you and occurs with blurred vision, feeling or being sick, problems speaking, weakness, drowsiness or seizures
- a rash that looks like small bruises or bleeding under the skin
- shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling or persistent abdominal pain

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# MHRA response to JCVI advice on COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca for

# people aged under 40

Government response

Statement from Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive, following the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation's new advice

**Dr June Raine, MHRA Chief Executive said:**

> Public safety is always at the forefront of our minds and we take every report seriously.
>
> Our position remains that the benefits of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca against COVID-19, with its associated risk of hospitalisation and death, continue to outweigh the risks for the vast majority of people. The balance of benefits and risks is very favourable for older people but is more finely balanced for younger people and we advise that this evolving evidence should be taken into account when considering the use of the vaccine, as JVCI has done.
>
> We rigorously monitor the safety of COVID-19 vaccines and all reports of these extremely rare blood clots occurring together with thrombocytopenia have been scientifically scrutinised as soon as we have received them. We continue to publish the latest breakdown of all cases of these extremely rare side effects in our weekly summary of coronavirus Yellow Card reporting. We have also issued clear guidance for healthcare professionals on how to minimise risks, as well as further advice on symptoms for vaccine recipients to look out for 4 or more days after vaccination.
>
> This continuous and rigorous safety monitoring has allowed us to provide scientifically based information, analysis and advice – such as that provided to the JCVI – to enable continued judgements on the most effective use of the COVID-19 Vaccine AstraZeneca based on the data and the current UK context in terms of COVID-19 incidence and vaccine supply. What this shows is that, with support

from the public and healthcare professionals, our safety monitoring systems are working effectively.

The public should be reassured of our continuing high standards when monitoring these vaccines for safety, quality and effectiveness.

It is still vitally important that people come forward for their vaccination when invited to do so.

We ask anyone who suspects they have experienced a side effect linked with their COVID-19 vaccine to report it to the Coronavirus Yellow Card website.

**Background:**

- These reports have also been analysed by the Government's independent advisory body, the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM) and its COVID-19 Vaccines Benefit Risk Expert Working Group, which includes lay representatives and advice from leading haematologists.

- As a precautionary measure, anyone who has symptoms four days or more after vaccination is advised to seek prompt medical advice, such as:
    - a new onset of severe or persistent headache, blurred vision, confusion or seizures
    - develop shortness of breath, chest pain, leg swelling or persistent abdominal pain
    - unusual skin bruising or pinpoint round spots beyond the injection site

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# New YJB Chief Executive

News story

The Youth Justice Board (YJB) has appointed a new Chief Executive.

Youth Justice Board
Bwrdd Cyfiawnder Ieuenctid

Claudia Sturt will take up the role in May 2021 replacing Colin Allars, who recently announced his retirement.

Chair of the Youth Justice Board (YJB) Keith Fraser said:

> The Board and I are pleased to announce that Claudia Sturt has been appointed as the new CEO for the Youth Justice Board.
>
> Claudia brings to the YJB a significant amount of experience and insight, having worked in prisons and offender management for over 28 years. She was appointed as the first Director of Security, Order and Counter Terrorism at the National Offender Management Service, and before that was Governor in a number of prisons.
>
> Our work at the YJB aims to achieve better outcomes for children. We have recently set out our strategic plan and our vision for a youth justice system that sees children as children, and enables them to reach their potential. Claudia joins us at an important moment, and we very much look forward to working with her to deliver this work.

**Further information**

Read a biography for Claudia

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# Animal medicine seizure notice: Mr Hinds, Cinderford, Gloucestershire

News story

Details of seizure notice served to Mr Hinds of Gloucestershire during an investigation case undertaken by Defra Investigation Services (DIS).

The following products were seized by a VMD inspector as part of an investigation case and under the execution of a search warrant:

- 1 x opened bottle labelled Panacur (UK authorised – POM-V)
- 6 x Noroclav tablets in blister packs (UK authorised – POM-V)
- 1 x bottle labelled “Poison” (unknown content)

The medicines were seized under Regulation 7 (Classification, supply and possession of the product) of the Veterinary Medicines Regulations 2013.

The products were seized as there was no evidence that they had been correctly supplied in accordance with Schedule 3 of the VMR.

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