

# Over 30 years of the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme

For over 30 years the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme has helped victims of crime get justice.

The scheme was launched in 1989 following public outcry over a series of controversial sentencing decisions, including the 1986 'Ealing vicarage rape' case where 21-year-old Jill Saward was raped by burglars at her father's vicarage.

The first ULS hearing took place in July 1989. In this case, a man who committed incest on his daughter had his sentence doubled from 3 to 6 years in prison. The scheme has since helped thousands of victims and their families get justice, and in an important hearing last year two of the UK's most prolific rapists – Joseph McCann and Reynhard Sinaga – had their sentences increased by 10 years, meaning that both offenders should now serve at least 40 years in prison before they can be released.

In 2019 alone, 63 offenders had their sentences increased under the scheme – 16 of those were given custodial sentences after avoiding prison time at their original sentencing.

Since it launched, the scheme has been expanded 6 times and now includes a range of terror-related offences, all serious sexual offences, threats to kill, child cruelty, people trafficking and modern slavery, and many racially and religiously aggravated offences. Most recently, sexual offences involving an abuse of trust, indecent images offences and domestic abuse offences were added to the scheme.

Commenting on the anniversary, Attorney General, the Rt. Hon. Suella Braverman QC MP said:

For over 30 years, the ULS scheme has helped victims of crime and their loved ones get justice. The scheme includes many more offences now than it did when it was first launched, allowing us to look at more sentences which don't appear to fit the crime.

In the vast majority of cases, judges get it right, but the scheme is important to ensure that certain cases can be reviewed where there may have been a gross error in the sentencing decision.

The ULS scheme allows prosecutors, victims of crime and members of the public to ask for certain Crown Court sentences to be reviewed by the Law Officers if they think the sentence is far too low. Some cases referred to the Court of Appeal can also offer guidance for future sentencing decisions.

Anyone can ask for a sentence to be reviewed if they think it is too low, and only one person needs to ask for it to be considered. Further requests do not lend any extra weight as the decision to refer a sentence as too low can only be based on the legal threshold. The Law Officers have 28 days from the date of sentencing to refer a case to the Court of Appeal, so it's important for them to receive a referral as early as possible in order to properly consider a case.

### Notes to editors

1. Information on the scheme can be found [here](#).
2. The ULS scheme came into force on 1 February 1989 and was legislated for within the Criminal Justice Act 1988.
3. Under the ULS scheme a case must be referred to the Court of Appeal within 28 days of the date of sentencing. This deadline cannot be extended and in order to ensure we have time to properly consider a case we ask that referrals are made early in the process. It is very difficult to consider a case which is submitted late and it is not possible to do so outside of working hours.
4. The Law Officers act independently of Government when deciding on Unduly Lenient Sentences, also known as acting as 'Guardian of the public interest'.
5. The 2019 annual statistics can be found [here](#).
6. The 2020 annual statistics will be published later this year when the outcome of all cases referred to the Law Officers in 2020 is known.

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## [Solicitors and CPS join professional users' access scheme](#)

From today (1 February), solicitors will be able to register for the [professional users' access scheme](#), which permits enhanced access through security in courts and tribunals for registered holders with the appropriate scheme ID.

The London Criminal Courts Solicitors' Association (LCCSA) and Criminal Law Solicitors Association (CLSA) have become the latest legal professional organisations to sign up, following the Bar Council which has been part of the scheme since it launched in May 2019. Alongside this, HMCTS is also delighted to welcome the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) as a member organisation, demonstrating the continued broadening of the scheme to a wider cohort of professional court users.

Significantly, access to the LCCSA and CLSA registration portal is not restricted to their membership only, and all solicitors with a practising certificate are able to sign up via this route from today, a move that has been advanced by investment and support from the Law Society.

Today's news means that barristers, solicitors and CPS staff can now benefit from entering HMCTS buildings without needing a [routine security search](#) on each visit, by verifying credentials which satisfy our robust, risk-based safety and security policy.

This benefits scheme members and assists the smooth running of courts and tribunals by helping to minimise delays on entry. Separate fast-access lanes for members are available during the busiest times of the day, where possible. A QR code on members' ID cards is scanned to enable entry without further security checks, other than random screenings.

The professional users' access scheme is currently rolled out at over [300 HMCTS sites](#).

Welcoming today's news, President of the LCCSA, Mark Troman, said:

Solicitors play a crucial role in the day-to-day administration of justice in court and tribunals across England and Wales. From today their trusted status will be recognised and this will enable faster, less restrictive access to court buildings and allow them to get on with their work.

I'm delighted we're now in a position to roll out registration for the access scheme, not just to LCCSA members, but all practising solicitors in England and Wales, whom I strongly encourage to apply via our website.

Daniel Bonich, Chair of the CLSA, gave his reflections:

We are delighted to be able to deliver on one of the most frequent requests from our members. This scheme is recognition of the crucial role our members and fellow solicitors play in the proper administration of justice. We are pleased that their status as officers of the court has been so recognised and awarded 'trusted status' which will enable much improved and quicker access to court buildings.

We are also thrilled to be able to make these cards available not just to our members, but all practicing solicitors in England and Wales, thanks to the assistance of the Law Society, and we look forward to issuing these cards via our website.

President of the Law Society of England and Wales, David Greene, added:

The work solicitors do underpins justice. We're therefore very pleased that we've been able to come to an arrangement with partner organisations so our members can obtain ID which helps them fast-track into court premises in a way that helps court security for

everyone using the courts or working there.

Mark Gray, Director of Operations, Digital and Commercial at the Crown Prosecution Service, said:

All our staff have passed security checks before joining us, so to enable fast track access for our regular attendance at court buildings is very welcome. As well as benefiting CPS professionals entering court for work by being quicker, the inclusion of more professionals into the scheme will free up capacity through security for others going to court. I would like to thank everyone involved both at the CPS and HMCTS who have worked to make it easier for us to enter our place of work without compromising safety for everyone using court.

The professional users' access scheme was jointly introduced by HMCTS and the Bar Council in response to concerns raised by legal practitioners in particular about queues to get into HMCTS buildings, and the frustration when personal items are confiscated for security reasons. This needed to be balanced against the requirement for tightened security processes to prevent dangerous weapons and other prohibited items from being brought into court.

Many participating HMCTS buildings have been able to maintain the scheme, which now has over 5,000 members, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, with nearly all those that did need to temporarily pause operation to ensure social distancing, having resumed. As part of HMCTS' response to COVID, rollout to 26 new sites was brought forward and those locations went live during the summer. The number of legal professionals participating in the scheme is increasing each week and there are typically over 1,100 successful entry scans every day.

HMCTS is continuing to work with other organisations to onboard more groups onto the scheme and further improve entry to buildings for a wider cohort of professional users.

- solicitors can register for the professional users' access scheme via the [LCCSA](#) and [CLSA](#) websites
- CPS members can apply via the CPS intranet.
- members of the Bar Council can register for the scheme using [the Bar Council's secure My Bar portal](#).

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## [Manufacturer banned after abusing loan](#)

## agreements

Daniel Jon Knowles (36), from Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, was a director of HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd. Incorporated in November 2016, the company provided metal products for the construction trade.

When HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd provided products to customers, they would also submit the invoices to an external financing company to secure funds in advance.

The finance company would then recoup the invoice amount they had loaned to HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd from the manufacturer's customers in a process known as 'factoring'.

HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd entered into a Corporate voluntary arrangement in April 2019 before going into administration in January 2020, owing the finance company £510,000 and other creditors a further £1.3 million.

The manufacturer's administration triggered an investigation by the Insolvency Service and enquiries uncovered that from January 2018 to December 2019, Daniel Knowles claimed £510,000 from the finance company.

But instead of providing customers with banking details for the finance company, Daniel Knowles sent invoices to customers with HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd's bank details.

When the finance company tried to collect the outstanding funds from the manufacturer's clients, customers said they had already paid HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd directly.

On 5 January 2021, the Secretary of State accepted an undertaking from Daniel Knowles, disqualifying him from being a company director for 8 years after he did not dispute that he had misused factoring facilities by diverting customer funds away from its invoice finance provider.

The director's ban started on 26 January 2021.

Martin Gitner, Deputy Head of Insolvent Investigations at the Insolvency Service, said:

Daniel Knowles knew the terms of the agreement with the finance providers and that any customer invoices should contain the payment details of the finance company. Instead, he deliberately inserted his own company's bank details, knowing it would result in HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd receiving payments that should have been paid to the factoring company.

This lengthy ban shows we take these matters very seriously and will seek to disqualify those who choose to act unscrupulously.

Daniel Jon Knowles is of Bromsgrove and his date of birth is April 1984

HE Knowles (Manufacturing) Ltd (Company Reg no. 10473767)

Disqualification undertakings are the administrative equivalent of a disqualification order but do not involve court proceedings.

Persons subject to a disqualification order are bound by a [range of restrictions](#).

[Further information about the work of the Insolvency Service, and how to complain about financial misconduct.](#)

You can also follow the Insolvency Service on:

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## [UK government statement – state of emergency in Myanmar](#)

News story

The UK government has issued a statement condemning the state of emergency imposed by the Myanmar military on 1 February.



A spokesperson for the UK government said:

The UK condemns the state of emergency imposed by the Myanmar military on 1 February, and the detention of members of the civilian Government and civil society, including State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President Win Myint. The UK calls on the military to respect the rule of law and human rights, and release those unlawfully detained.

We need to see the peaceful reconvening of the National Assembly, respecting the results of the November 2020 general election and

the expressed wishes of the people of Myanmar.

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## [New Chief Executive of Cefas Neil Hornby takes up position](#)

Press release

Marine science agency's new Chief Executive takes the helm.



Neil Hornby, Cefas Chief Executive

Neil Hornby has today (1st February 2021) taken up his new position as Chief Executive of Cefas (Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science).

Neil joins Cefas with over 20 years of experience across Defra, and the wider civil service. Immediately prior to joining Cefas, Neil was the Marine and Fisheries Director at Defra, a position he held since 2016.

Neil's immediate focus will be on ensuring Cefas continues to provide Defra and UK government with the world class science and evidence needed to support delivery of the government's marine environment, fisheries and animal health objectives.

Internationally, 2021 marks a "super year" for ocean science and global action to protect the ocean. Cefas has a huge opportunity to contribute to the government's efforts to secure greater international ambition for protecting our ocean, including through the UK's G7 presidency and at the Convention on Biological Diversity in China and COP26 in Glasgow.

Speaking on taking up the post, Neil Hornby said:

I know the quality of the work that Cefas does and believe passionately in the power of science for good, to drive real change based on evidence and expertise.

Cefas science and analysis is highly valued in the UK government and around the world. As the UK takes on responsibility for managing our own fisheries and seeks to lead the world in protecting and enhancing the marine environment, I want Cefas to be at the centre of this, providing advice and evidence to meet the challenges our seas and aquatic environments face.

Prior to Neil's appointment Tom Karsten was CEO from September 2015 to June 2020, and Tim Green held the Interim Chief Executive position between July 2020 and January 2021.

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