

Sentences increased for 63 offenders

New statistics for 2019 [2019 ULS statistics](#) (MS Excel Spreadsheet, 21.3KB) show 63 offenders had their sentences increased, after the Attorney General and Solicitor General (the Law Officers) considered that their original sentences were too low.

Under the Unduly Lenient Sentence (ULS) scheme, victims of crime, members of the public, and prosecutors can ask for certain Crown Court sentences to be reviewed if they believe they are too low. Only one referral is required in order for it to be considered by the Attorney General's Office.

The Law Officers carefully consider each case personally, and if they think the sentence is too low, they will ask the Court of Appeal to review the sentence. They can only ask the Court of Appeal to review a sentence with a view to increasing it if that sentence is not just lenient but unduly so, such that the sentencing judge made a gross error or imposed a sentence outside the range of sentences available.

The 2019 Unduly Lenient Sentence Scheme statistics published by the Attorney General's Office revealed that in the vast majority of cases, judges get it right. There has also been a fall in the number of applications for sentences to be reviewed.

The Law Officers received 577 applications for sentences to be reviewed which met the necessary criteria to be considered under the Scheme. Of these, 93 were referred to the Court of Appeal. The Court of Appeal agreed that 64 sentences were too low, and as a result 63 offenders had their sentences increased. 16 people were imprisoned after avoiding prison time at their original sentencing.

Of the 93 offenders who were referred to the Court of Appeal, these related to crimes in the following categories:

- Rape and serious sexual offences
- Homicide
- Serious assault offences
- Drug-related
- Death by dangerous driving

The Solicitor General, Rt Hon Michael Ellis QC MP, said:

The ULS scheme allows anyone, including victims of crime, to ask for a review of certain sentences they believe are too low.

A sentencing exercise is not an exact science. In the vast majority of cases, judges get it right. While we are seeing fewer complaints about sentences, the scheme is still important to ensure that certain cases can be reviewed where there may have been a gross error in the sentencing decision. This brings comfort to many

victims and their families.

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.

The ULS scheme came into force on 1st February 1989. It was introduced after public outcry over the lenient sentencing of the offenders involved in the 1986 rape of 21 year old Jill Saward. The victim was brutally raped by a gang of robbers at her father's vicarage.

The scheme was extended in 2017 to include an additional 19 terror-related offences, and again last year to cover sexual abuse of children or vulnerable adult offences, and stalking and harassment involving violence.

Notes

- The first ever ULS hearing took place in July 1989 for a man who committed incest on his daughter and had his sentence doubled from 3 to 6 years.
- The ULS scheme was legislated for within the Criminal Justice Act 1988.
- Anyone is able to ask a Crown Court sentence to be reviewed by the Attorney General's Office and the progress of referrals can be followed on the website. The ULS scheme only applies to certain Crown Court offences.
- Details of some of the offences covered by the scheme can be found [here](#)
- 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.

[Stena Superfast VII and Royal Navy submarine report published](#)

News story

Near miss between a ro-ro ferry and a submerged submarine in the North Channel between Belfast, Northern Ireland and Cairnryan, Scotland.



Submarine periscope as seen from ferry (photo: Stena Line)

Our accident investigation report into the near miss between the ferry Stena Superfast VII and a submerged Royal Navy submarine on 6 November 2018, is now published.

The report contains details of what happened, actions taken and recommendations made: [read more](#).

Statement from the Chief Inspector of Marine Accidents

On 6 November 2018, the lookout on board the ferry Stena Superfast VII spotted a submarine's periscope close ahead. The officer of the watch then took immediate and effective action, turning the ferry to avoid a genuine risk of collision with a submerged submarine. The incident happened because the submarine's control room team had underestimated the ferry's speed and overestimated its range, resulting in safety-critical decisions being made based on inaccurate information.

Although there was no collision, this was the third accident or incident between a dived Royal Navy submarine and a surface vessel in 4 years, which is a matter of significant concern. The Royal Navy co-operated with the MAIB's investigation into this near miss and has taken a series of actions, intended to prevent recurrence, in response to this, and the other similar incidents. However, I have today recommended that the Royal Navy undertakes an independent review of the actions that have been taken, in order to ensure that the risk of similar collisions has been reduced to as low as possible.

Published 16 July 2020

[Update on Randox test kits](#)

News story

Notification of issue relating to test kits produced by Randox laboratories



NHS Test and Trace has been notified that some test kits produced by Randox laboratories may not meet our required safety standards for coronavirus testing. Alongside the Lighthouse Laboratories, NHS Test and Trace has a separate contractual arrangement with Randox laboratories. As a precautionary measure and while we investigate further, NHS Test and Trace are requesting that all settings pause the use of Randox test kits with immediate effect and until further notice.

The risk to safety is low and test results from Randox kits are not affected.

We will be supporting all testing settings to receive replacement kits as soon as possible.

This request only applies to unused Randox test kits, which are clearly marked with that name. Used Randox test kits can still be collected for processing as normal.

All other kits from NHS Test and Trace can continue to be used for testing.

Published 15 July 2020

[Government acts to protect jobs in every part of the UK](#)

- New plans ensure trade between each part of the UK will prosper
- Holyrood, Cardiff and Stormont will receive new powers in at least 70

policy areas including parts of employment law, land use and air quality, among many others

The UK government has today [16 July] laid out plans to deliver on its manifesto commitment to ensure businesses across the whole of the United Kingdom will continue to enjoy seamless internal trade, as they have done for centuries, when we leave the transition period at the end of the year.

From 1 January 2021, powers in at least 70 policy areas previously exercised at an EU level will flow directly to the devolved administrations in Edinburgh, Cardiff, and Belfast for the first time. This will give the devolved administrations power over more issues than they have ever had before, without removing any of their current powers.

Powers are set to return across a raft of areas, including regulations for energy efficiency of buildings, air quality and animal welfare. To ensure businesses can continue to trade seamlessly across the UK as they do now, new legislation will be brought forward to preserve access to all parts of the UK for goods and services.

Under plans now open for consultation, we will strengthen and maintain the coherence of the UK's internal market, guaranteeing the continued ability of all UK companies to trade unhindered in every part of the United Kingdom, while ensuring the continued prosperity and wellbeing of people and businesses across all 4 nations. All powers that have been devolved will remain devolved. The proposals announced today are designed to support the economy of the entire United Kingdom, avoiding unnecessary burdens and costs being placed on businesses or consumers, providing continued certainty for people and businesses to work and trade freely across the whole of the UK, and giving additional confidence to trading partners and overseas investors as we leave the transition period. Without this action to preserve the status quo of seamless domestic trade, businesses across the UK could face serious problems: a Welsh lamb producer could end up unable to sell their lamb in Scotland, or Scotch whisky producers could lose access to supply from English barley farmers. These proposals create certainty for businesses that might otherwise face a complex and increasingly fragmented regulatory environment.

Many businesses depend on trade with the home nations more than any other partner. In Scotland, for example, sales of produce to the rest of the UK are worth £52.1 billion per year, accounting for over 60% of all exports, more than all other nations which Scotland trades with combined. Similarly, about 50% of Northern Ireland's sales are to Great Britain and 75% of exports of Welsh goods are consumed in other parts of the UK.

The proposals in the White Paper include:

- the principle of mutual recognition – regulations from one part of the UK will be recognised across the country to ensure the devolved administrations can set their own rules and standards, but still welcome the trade of businesses based anywhere in the UK
- the principle of non-discrimination – so there is a level playing field

for companies trading in the UK, regardless of where in the UK the business is based

Business Secretary Alok Sharma said:

The UK's internal market has functioned seamlessly for centuries. When we exit the transition period at the end of the year, we want to ensure the most successful political and economic union of nations in the world continues to grow and thrive.

This plan protects jobs and livelihoods. Without these necessary reforms, the way we trade goods and services between the home nations could be seriously impacted, harming the way we do business within our own borders.

Ensuring businesses will be able to continue trading freely across all 4 corners of the UK without the burden of inconsistent regulation or additional costs will be essential as we fire up our economic engines as we recover from coronavirus.

Working closely with all 3 devolved administrations to protect the integrity of the UK's internal market to safeguard people, jobs and trade, the UK government will be able to continue to put the interests of people and businesses right across the UK first.

Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove said:

This plan is a power surge to the devolved administrations – giving them powers in dozens more areas. As powers flow back from Brussels to the devolved administrations in Edinburgh, Belfast and Cardiff – as well as to the UK government – we want to build on the good progress we have already made. We will develop new ways of working together and learning from each other to help create more opportunities for jobs and investment for businesses and citizens across the United Kingdom.

So we will work over the coming weeks with the devolved administrations in Cardiff, Belfast and Edinburgh on a new structure for how we can cooperate better and share ideas, and we will be bringing proposals to the table to agree a way forward. We should be learning from one another, combining the expertise of each nation to share ideas, innovation and, where appropriate, put in place processes for voluntary cooperation.

People right across the UK want their governments and institutions to work together at every level to improve their lives, and the UK government is committed to working to do this.

A 4 week consultation has also opened today, sourcing views from businesses,

experts, civil society, and consumer groups across all 4 nations of the UK. The proposals aim to balance the principles and successes of devolution, with the need to provide regulatory clarity to businesses, ensuring that rules and standards across the UK are mutually recognised, so that trade is as easy for business as possible.

Responding to the launch of the White Paper, Carolyn Fairbairn, CBI Director-General, said:

Preserving the integrity the internal single market – the economic glue binding our 4 nations – is essential to guard against any additional costs or barriers to doing business between different parts of the UK.

Increasing prosperity, creating opportunities for all and raising living standards will be the hallmarks of success. Delivery will be the real test, requiring closer collaboration between business, Westminster and devolved administrations.

- the 4 week consultation on the UK internal market white paper launches today (16 July)
- as well as launching the consultation, UK government officials are hosting several sector-specific roundtables. Roundtables are being held with academic experts and representatives of businesses from across the UK, focusing on key UK sectors, such as advanced manufacturing, agriculture, professional and business services, technology, energy, life sciences and tourism, as well as with representatives of the devolved administrations
- in total, Northern Ireland will be receiving 157 powers, Scotland 111 powers and 70 to Wales

[Preventing catastrophic risks from SAFER oil tanker leak](#)

On 15 July, the Executive Director of the UN Environmental Programme Inger Andersen and Under-Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs Mark Lowcock briefed the Security Council about the increasing environmental and humanitarian risks posed by the decaying Safer oil tanker, whose dire condition is evidenced by the leak of seawater into the tanker's engine room on 27 May. The members of the Security Council expressed deep alarm at the growing risk that the Safer oil tanker could rupture or explode, causing an environmental, economic, and humanitarian catastrophe for Yemen and its neighbours.

The members of the Security Council acknowledged the announcement of the Houthis to grant access to the Safer tanker, and called on them to convert this commitment into concrete action as soon as possible, including by agreeing to entry permits, a safe travel route to the tanker, and all other logistical arrangements, in order to facilitate unconditional access for United Nations technical experts to assess the tanker's condition, conduct any possible urgent repairs, and make recommendations for the safe extraction of the oil, ensuring close cooperation with the United Nations. They looked forward to seeing concrete action implemented without delay.