

## **Press release: Sentence increased in sexual assault case**

The sentence of a man who sexually assaulted a woman while she slept in her own home has been increased after intervention by the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP.

Prashant Sawney, 32, had been drinking with friends at his home on the evening of his offences. After helping an intoxicated friend back to his home that the friend shared with the victim, Sawney went into the victim's bedroom, climbed into bed with her and sexually assaulted her.

Sawney was originally sentenced to 1 year in prison at Manchester Minshull Street Crown Court. The case was referred to the Solicitor General under the Unduly Lenient Sentence scheme, and as a result the Court of Appeal has today increased his sentence to 3 years.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

"Sawney took advantage of an individual while she slept in her own home – a place where she has a right to feel safe and unfortunately, no longer does. I hope that the Court of Appeal's decision today brings her some comfort."

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## **News story: Civil news: escape cases and civil finance handbook updates and new guidance on expert witnesses**

We have updated the electronic handbooks for civil finance and escape cases and guidance on expert witnesses.

### **What has changed in the handbooks?**

Interpreters – for work undertaken from 1 April 2019, attendance and waiting at a court hearing can be claimed at the codified rate for interpreters.

Subject Access Requests (copies of records) – as of 25 May 2018 anyone can make a request to a company or organisation to gain access to the personal information it holds on them and this right can be exercised at any time for free. This is in line with the changes made to charging for copies of records under a subject access request by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

On that basis we would not expect to see any claims for these costs from that date onwards. This will particularly impact charges for medical records and police disclosure fees but it is not limited to those.

Where an organisation considers that the request is 'manifestly unreasonable or excessive' there is provision for a charge to be made. Where the police have indicated that there will be a charge, for example where they are providing information on a different basis or the information is exempt from the GDPR provisions, we will fund these costs provided there is a justification on the file. This could be correspondence from the police force, or in the absence of that a note from the provider.

Evidence for advocates meeting – confirmation that we only require evidence where more than two meetings are held.

### **What has changed in the guidance?**

Remuneration of expert witnesses – paragraph 6.29 of this guidance has been updated to clarify payments for legally aided interpreters at court.

### **How to use the handbooks**

The electronic handbooks for both civil finance and escape cases contain our operational requirements and guidance.

They should be used together with the cost assessment guidance and also the relevant contracts.

### **Further information**

[Make an escape fee case claim](#) – to download the 'electronic handbook'

[Funding and costs assessment for civil and crime matters](#) – to download the 'electronic handbook'

[Expert witnesses guidance](#)

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## **[Press release: Alun Cairns reassures Holyhead Port staff that leaving the EU with a deal remains the UK Government's top priority](#)**

The visit comes as the European Union granted a flexible extension of Article 50 last week

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## **Press release: Alun Cairns reassures Holyhead Port staff that leaving the EU with a deal remains the UK Government's top priority**

On a visit to Holyhead Port, Welsh Secretary Alun Cairns reiterated the UK Government's commitment to honouring the result of the referendum and delivering a smooth and orderly Brexit following the extension of Article 50, granted by the European Union last week.

Holyhead Port is the second busiest roll-on-roll-off ferry port in the UK, providing a key link in the supply chain for businesses across Wales, the UK and Ireland. Recognising the Welsh ports' importance to the economy of Wales and the UK, during his visit Alun Cairns reassured Port Manager, Captain Wyn Parry that the UK Government remains committed to working with the Welsh Government and port operators to ensure a smooth exit from the European Union.

### **Secretary of State for Wales Alun Cairns said:**

The ports in Wales make a vital contribution to the Welsh economy and therefore remain a key consideration in the UK Government's Brexit planning.

Leaving the European Union with a deal will ensure that the Welsh Ports can continue to operate seamlessly which is why we are more determined than ever to reach a deal that commands the support of Parliament so that the UK can leave the EU in an orderly, timely manner.

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## **Press release: Scottish Secretary visits Falkirk to discuss economic development for the area**

The Secretary of State for Scotland, David Mundell, met representatives from Falkirk Council's Economic Partnership earlier today.