

Press release: Sex offender jailed by Court of Appeal

A man who engaged in sexual activity with an underage girl has been sent to prison after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred his suspended sentence for being too lenient.

Ian Chesworth, 36, was a family friend of the victim. The offending started after the victim, who was under 16 at the time, went to Chesworth's home asking for advice on a personal matter. Following this, Chesworth arranged several other meetings with the victim, including 2 where he had sex with her and 2 when he masturbated in her presence.

Chesworth was originally sentenced in December 2018 to 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years at Lewes Crown Court. Today, the Court of Appeal jailed him for 3 years.

Commenting on the increase, the Solicitor General said:

"Chesworth abused a position of trust for his own gratification. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has today decided that his offences warrant a custodial sentence, and hope this brings the victim and her family some comfort."

News story: Charity art auction for Mind West Cumbria

Sellafield Ltd employees have chosen Mind West Cumbria as the company's charity of the year for 2019.

Workers at the nuclear site voted for the mental health charity in a recent poll, which would decide where their fundraising efforts will be directed for this year.

Fundraising activities will start with the auction of artwork produced for the Art of Reprocessing exhibition at the Beacon Museum, Whitehaven on Friday 15 March.

Local, regional, national and international artists were commissioned to produce artwork inspired by the life of Sellafield's Thermal Oxide Reprocessing Plant (Thorp). The plant sheared its last batch of used nuclear fuel in November last year and the artwork has been on display in the museum ever since.

Head of Community Relations, Gary McKeating, said:

Mind West Cumbria provides a life changing service to people in our area who need practical help and someone to listen.

Our employees at Sellafield raised over £22,000 for the Great North Air Ambulance in 2018 so I am excited to see how much we can raise for Mind.

Almost 6,000 people have been to see the Art of Reprocessing exhibition so we know that there is a real interest in the artwork. There are so many different pieces in different styles that there really is something for everyone, and what better way to mark the end of the exhibition than by raising money for such a great charity.

Dr Brian Campbell from Mind West Cumbria said:

We are delighted to have been chosen, especially because it is the people who work on the site who voted for us.

Every year we help hundreds of people here in West Cumbria, from Silloth and Wigton right down to Seascale and Gosforth, and everywhere in between.

We provide counselling and work with families and for many people suffering mental illness we are the first port of call.

They're all different, and they all have their own stories. Mental illness does not discriminate and can affect anyone at any time. We rely completely on fundraising and volunteers and the money raised by Sellafield Ltd employees will make a huge difference to us.

The Art of Reprocessing exhibition is still open to the public – it closes the day of the sale on March 15th – so there is still time to go along and see the artwork before it is auctioned.

The evening will start at 1800 and will see 18 pieces auctioned. Tickets for the auction are free and available via Eventbrite. For more information and to view the artwork, visit the [Beacon Museum website](#)

[Press release: Local authorities with](#)

major ports to receive funding boost to help with Brexit preparations

Nineteen local authorities facing impacts from a local air, land or sea port will receive a share of £3.14 million to help them prepare for Brexit, the Communities Secretary confirmed today (20 February 2019).

Nineteen district and unitary councils across England will receive £136,362 to the end of April for each major port of entry into the UK in their area.

This will allow them to increase their resources to work through the immediate impacts from Brexit in their local areas such as ensuring their port's resilience and potential impacts of greater traffic to surrounding communities.

The allocations have been based on a number of factors including the amount of EU goods each port area receives into the country and its wider importance to the UK's global trade network.

The funding is part of the [£56.5 million announced](#) by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government last month to help councils adapt to the changes caused by Brexit, ensuring their local authority is prepared ahead of 29 March, whilst also protecting vital local services.

An additional £1.64 million has been added from departmental underspends to bring the total funding available to local authorities with a port of entry to £3.14 million.

The Communities Secretary, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP, said:

Local authorities have a critical role to play in making a success of Brexit.

I am acutely aware a greater burden could be placed on the areas surrounding our ports. I have announced how we are allocating £3.14 million to those areas considered to be under the greatest pressure from Brexit.

I will continue to take the situation under review, working closely with local leaders to ensure they are prepared to respond to Brexit.

The local authorities which will receive funding are:

Dover, Folkestone and Hythe, Thanet, East Riding of Yorkshire, Hull, North East Lincolnshire, Portsmouth, Southampton, Ashford, Gravesham, Dartford, Camden, Manchester City Council, North West Leicestershire, Uttlesford, Hillingdon, Crawley, Tendring and Suffolk Coastal.

Ports of entry within these local authorities are:

Port of Dover, Eurotunnel, Ramsgate, Goole, Hull, Grimsby, Immingham (DBP, DfDS and C. Ro), Portsmouth, Southampton General, Southampton Container, Ashford, Ebbsfleet, St Pancras, Manchester Airport, East Midlands Airport, Stansted Airport, Heathrow Airport, Gatwick Airport, Harwich, Felixstowe.

The Treasury announced in December that MHCLG would receive £35 million to prepare for Brexit. MHCLG has added the extra £21.5 million funding using finance from its 2018 to 2019 budget.

Councils will receive £20 million this financial year (2018 to 2019) and next (2019 to 2020) to spend on planning and strengthening resources.

As a share of this £40 million, all unitary councils will receive £210,000 and combined authorities will receive £182,000. County councils will receive £175,000 each and all district councils will receive £35,000.

A further £5 million will be split by teams in the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, local authorities, and Local Resilience Forums for specific purposes such as strengthening preparations and building community cohesion.

A further £10 million will be available in the next financial year (2019 to 2020). This funding is intended to help local authorities with specific costs which may arise following Brexit.

The EU Exit Local Government Delivery Board, chaired by the Communities Secretary, has been set-up so council leaders can talk to Ministers about domestic Brexit preparations. The Board has met 4 times including on 24 January 2019 and is now meeting monthly.

The government is in regular contact with councils about Brexit preparedness and is working closely with organisations like the Local Government Association to share information.

This funding will not be the only resource councils receive from central government to fund Brexit costs. The government has been clear that departments will assess and, if appropriate, fund any potential new requirements of councils as part of EU Exit work they are undertaking.

[**News story: SSAC email addresses are changing**](#)

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[Press release: Bridge bites the dust for M6 upgrade](#)

Highways England is removing the Burton Bank Footbridge, north of junction 13, that was built in the early 1960s.

Due to the curved shape of the footbridge, there isn't enough headroom for HGVs to travel along the new lane that will be replacing the hard shoulder and allowing for all lane running. The bridge is too low for the required safety clearance when the hard shoulder becomes a new running lane.

The footbridge, near Stafford, is nearly 200ft (60m) in length and weighs around 140 tonnes. In total it contains enough concrete to fill around 20 tipper trucks.

It is the second bridge to be removed as part of work to upgrade the motorway between junction 13 (Stafford) and junction 15 (Stoke-on-Trent) after Creswell Home Farm bridge, just north of junction 14, was demolished last year.

The motorway closure will start on Saturday 23 March with significant lane restrictions from 5pm, leading into a full closure by 8pm. Drivers are warned to expect delays from 5pm. The motorway will reopen on Sunday, March 24 as soon as work allows.

Highways England smart motorways project sponsor Peter Smith said:

Demolishing an arched bridge is a very complex job and to do it safely we need to use both carriageways of the motorway, which means it will be closed for up to 18 hours.

We'll be doing all we can to minimise disruption in Stafford and the surrounding area and I'd like to thank motorists, businesses and residents in advance for their patience.

I'd also urge anyone wanting to use the M6 in that area on March 23 and 24 to plan an alternative route to avoid congestion in the area. Please also allow extra travel time and fuel for your journey.

While the work takes place, traffic will be diverted off the M6 between junctions 13 and 14 and will use the A449 and A34 as the diversion route. This route has been agreed with local authority partners and will be kept clear of other works during the demolition. Drivers are warned to expect delays and urged to avoid the area if possible, allowing lots of extra time for essential journeys.

To reduce M6 traffic on the day, signs will alert motorists to the closure as far away as Dover and Carlisle. Motorists and hauliers travelling between the North West and the Midlands and South of England will be urged to avoid the area by using the M62 and M1.

Work began last year and the project is due to be completed by March 2022.

More information is available on the M6 junction 13 to 15 smart motorway [scheme web page](#).

General enquiries

Members of the public should contact the Highways England customer contact centre on 0300 123 5000.

Media enquiries

Journalists should contact the Highways England press office on 0844 693 1448 and use the menu to speak to the most appropriate press officer.