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Suspended Sentence for 78-Year-Old Caught in Online Vigilante Trap

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— Categories: Crime



A 78-year-old man with a history of child sex offences has recently received a suspended prison sentence after being caught attempting to meet a 13-year-old girl.

George Gleed, who has 19 previous convictions, including one for indecent assault of a minor, was apprehended by a vigilante group following online interactions with a decoy posing as a child.

He pleaded guilty to attempting to meet a child under 16 following grooming, inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, and sexual communication with a child. Gleed's defence, presented by Martha Smith-Higgins, cited asbestosis and a recent separation as mitigating factors.

However, Judge Jeremy Jenkins criticised the "inordinate delay" in the case before handing down a 21-month suspended sentence. Additional penalties included a 30-day rehabilitation requirement, £1,000 in costs, a 10-year registration as a sex offender, and a five-year Sexual Harm Prevention Order (SHPO).

The SHPO is a court order designed to protect children from further harm.

The incident unfolded on June 8, 2022, in Merthyr Tydfil, near Cardiff. Gleed, having engaged in sexually explicit online conversations with the decoy, travelled to meet the supposed 13-year-old at a shopping centre. He was instead confronted by members of the paedophile hunter group, Dank Dragon, who livestreamed the encounter.

Prosecutor James Evans detailed Gleed's actions in Cardiff Crown Court. "He knew she was 13 but kept grooming her," Evans stated.

Gleed's messages included compliments, offers of drives, promises of a car, and increasingly explicit requests for sexual acts. Evans highlighted that Gleed sent a picture of his private parts, demanded a picture of the decoy's private parts as well, and instructed her to masturbate. He planned to take her to McDonald's before engaging in sexual activity during a car journey.