

## Southport Woman to Be Released After Prison Sentence

August 21, 2025

— Categories: General News



Download IPFS

Lucy Connolly, who was imprisoned for inciting racial hatred following the Southport attack, is reportedly due to be released from prison this week.

Connolly, whose husband Raymond Connolly serves as a Conservative councillor, was sentenced to 31 months in prison last year after posting inflammatory messages online following the Southport attack.

The offending post, published on social media platform X, included statements widely condemned for inciting racial hatred. Connolly later deleted the post and pleaded guilty to the offence of distributing material deemed threatening or abusive.

Connolly was sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court in October last year for distributing material considered threatening or abusive, an offence under UK law. The prison term has drawn attention from legal commentators and free speech campaigners, with some arguing the punishment was severe given the post was deleted shortly after being published.

The post reportedly received widespread attention shortly after being published, prompting a swift public and legal response.

Lord Young of Acton, founder and director of the Free Speech Union, criticised the sentence, stating that the prison term appeared severe given that the post was deleted quickly and apologies were issued.

Connolly's release is expected later this week, marking the completion of her sentence. Legal experts note that the case highlights ongoing debates around the boundaries of free speech in the United Kingdom and the enforcement of laws relating to racial hatred.

Under UK law, incitement to racial hatred is a criminal offence, punishable by imprisonment. Authorities have emphasised that protecting the public from threats of violence remains a key priority, even in cases where freedom of expression is involved.

The case has reignited discussions about the balance between freedom of speech and public safety, particularly online. Social media platforms, which allow rapid dissemination of content, have increasingly become areas of legal scrutiny when posts are deemed to threaten or incite violence against groups of people.

While some argue that sentences for online statements should consider intent, prompt removal, and public response, courts have maintained that even brief online messages can cause harm and contribute to public disorder. Connolly's case demonstrates the courts' willingness to impose custodial sentences where speech is judged to pose a significant risk.

Legal commentators also note that appeals against such sentences are rarely successful if the original court finds the message likely to incite violence or hatred. Connolly sought to

appeal her prison term, but the Court of Appeal dismissed the application, affirming the original sentence.

The case remains a reference point for discussions on the boundaries of lawful expression, particularly in high-profile criminal incidents. It also illustrates the ongoing tension between protecting individual rights and maintaining public safety within the UK's legal framework.

Lucy Connolly's impending release will conclude a period of significant legal and media attention surrounding her case, while debates continue about how society addresses online behaviour that crosses into criminal conduct.