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Former Journalists' Union Leader Sentenced for Child Sexual Offences

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Matthew Myatt, once a prominent figure as the general secretary of the British Association of Journalists (BAJ), has been sentenced to four years in prison for a series of grave sexual offences against three young girls. The case, heard at Winchester Crown Court on 27 June 2025, has sent shockwaves through the journalistic community and beyond, exposing a

dark chapter in the life of a man who held a position of significant influence.

Myatt, who served as BAJ general secretary from October 2016 until his departure in December 2024, concurrently worked as a director of an aviation company based at Popham Airfield in Winchester. It was at this airfield that two of the offences occurred, casting a shadow over his professional persona. The court revealed that Myatt, residing at Cripstead Lane, Winchester, admitted guilt to multiple charges, including sexual activity with a child, inciting child prostitution or pornography, possession of indecent images, sexual communication with a child, and sexual assault. He has been ordered to sign the Sex Offenders' Register indefinitely.

The abuse, spanning from 2016 to 2022, involved Myatt exploiting his position to target vulnerable girls. He coerced one victim into sending indecent images in exchange for money, while engaging in predatory online communication with another. The third victim was also subjected to his depraved actions, with two of the assaults taking place at the airfield where his company operated.

Detective Constable Victoria Cobley, who led the investigation, condemned Myatt's actions, stating in a press release: "Myatt abused his position of trust to commit these offences, which have had a devastating impact on the victims. He persistently pursued three girls over a number of years for his own perverse gratification. Their courage in speaking out about what he did is extraordinary, and it is because of their bravery that Myatt is now in prison."

The BAJ, a trade union primarily representing Daily Mirror staff, was quick to distance itself from Myatt's crimes. In a statement issued on 5 July 2025, the BAJ expressed horror upon learning of the offences through a Hampshire and Isle of Wight Constabulary press release. The union clarified that Myatt's criminal activities were entirely unconnected to his role at the BAJ, occurring solely in his capacity as an aviation company director. "No one at the BAJ or connected with the BAJ had knowledge or could possibly have had any knowledge prior to the discovery of the police press release of the criminal investigation, its outcome, and sentencing," the statement read. The BAJ further voiced support for law enforcement efforts to bring such offenders to justice.

This case raises troubling questions about the oversight of individuals in positions of power and the mechanisms in place to protect vulnerable people. While the BAJ insists it was

unaware of Myatt's actions, the fact that such offences went undetected for years underscores the challenges in identifying predators who hide behind professional facades. The victims' bravery in coming forward has been rightly praised, but their ordeal serves as a stark reminder of the lasting harm caused by such betrayal of trust.

The conviction of Myatt is a sobering moment for the journalism industry, which prides itself on integrity and public service. As the sector grapples with this scandal, the focus remains on ensuring justice for the victims and preventing such atrocities in the future.