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76-Year-Old Man Accused of Giving Sedative-Laced Sweets to Boys at UK Summer Camp

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A 76-year-old man has been arrested in central England following allegations he gave sedative-laced sweets to young boys attending a summer camp. The incident has caused significant concern in the local community, prompting swift police and legal action.

Jon Ruben appeared before Leicester Magistrates' Court on Saturday, where he was formally charged with multiple counts of child cruelty. He did not enter a plea and was remanded in custody until a further hearing scheduled for 19 August. The charges relate specifically to three boys who were at the camp.

The alarm was raised on Sunday after several children at Stathern Lodge, a rural property near Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, became unwell. The lodge, a converted farmhouse featuring a sports hall and catering facilities, lies around 120 miles north of London. According to Leicestershire Police, eight boys aged between 8 and 11, along with one adult, were taken to hospital as a precautionary measure. All were later discharged without serious injury.

Ruben, whose residence is located roughly 15 miles from the lodge, was arrested the following day at a pub nearby. He now faces three counts of “wilfully assaulting, ill-treating, neglecting, abandoning or exposing children in a manner likely to cause them unnecessary suffering or injury to health.”

“This has been an extremely upsetting and shocking moment for the community, and especially for the children and parents most directly affected,” said Janine McKinney, Chief Crown Prosecutor for the **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)** in the East Midlands, in comments reported by the BBC, a **British Broadcasting Corporation** affiliate of CBS News.

The property is owned by Braithwaite Gospel Trust, a Christian charity group. Authorities have emphasised that the trust had no involvement in the incident. Police made clear that the owners are “independent from those people who use or hire the lodge and are not connected to the incident.”

Investigations are ongoing, and police have encouraged anyone with relevant information to come forward. Meanwhile, the case has raised fresh questions around the safeguarding of children at privately organised camps and retreats, even when run in seemingly safe rural settings.