Surrey Police help end abuse victim's ordeal

A woman who was married to a domestic abuser for 10 years said after he was sent to prison: "To the outside word they appear rational, they hide their abusive behaviour from everyone around them".

After countless assaults, in 2017 she began documenting her injuries, which she recalls was "so that if he killed me, there would be a timeline of the assaults becoming more severe before my eventual death."

Over the years, Joseph Alcock of Dorking, had left her with black eyes, facial injuries requiring a total of 30 stitches and even stab wounds. The final assault happened at the Prince of Wales Pub Alcock managed in Dorking on 6 September 2020, when he knocked her unconscious. She was later found alone by a member of the public.

The shock of this brutal attack led to her coming forward and working with Surrey Police officers from the domestic abuse team to secure evidence of six different assaults between 2017 and 2020.



After eventually pleading guilty to three counts of actual bodily harm and three counts of grievous bodily harm, **Joseph Alcock**, 43, was sentenced to five years and ten months' imprisonment at **Guildford Crown Court** on Monday (9 January). He was also given an indefinite restraining order against her.

Passing the sentence, the Judge called Alcock a 'violent bully' and paid tribute to the victim's bravery in attending court.

In a statement following the sentencing, she said: "I have waited two and a half years from my initial report to police to see a conclusion in court. However, I am glad I came forward and I would encourage other victims of domestic abuse to seek help too. You aren't alone. I'd like to thank the police and prosecution for all their support and for securing a successful outcome. Even with every obstacle presented to them, they have always put my welfare first. I want to start rebuilding my life, after this period has consumed me for so long, I am hoping this is now the start of some form of closure for me."

Detective Sergeant **Tracey Muir**, who investigated the case, said: "The fact that Alcock is behind bars is down to the bravery and tenacity of the victim, who has used her experience to encourage those in a similar situation to try to seek help and support. Domestic abuse is sadly prevalent in our society, and we must continue to work together as communities to stop abusers in their tracks and safeguard victims. If you suspect that someone you know is a victim of domestic abuse, or if you're experiencing domestic abuse yourself, please reach out to us.

"We have specialist support in place for victims, including dedicated support workers in place throughout the investigation and court process. If you aren't ready to speak to us, reach out to one of our brilliant Surrey-based charities who can offer sanctuary and practical, as well as emotional, support."

There is a range of information on the Surrey Police website, including:

The signs of domestic abuse How to report domestic abuse and what will happen after your report Where to find details of support organisations

Love trappers caught and jailed

Guildford Crown Court's Presiding Judge sends online love fraudsters to prison.

Two people have been sentenced to a combined total of 11 years and nine months' imprisonment at Guildford Crown Court today (23 December) for orchestrating a complex romance fraud scheme which conned five people out of over £200,000.

Using a variety of fake personas they would target victims through online dating sites, gaining their trust over a period of time by making them believe they were in a relationship, before asking for large sums of money under false pretences which they never intended to pay back.

Key to the scams were a series of elaborate and emotive excuses for needing money from the victims, ranging from the persona being held by Dutch customs when trying to return to the UK, all the way to being kidnapped, with money needed to 'secure their release'.

In order to make their lies more believable, they would forge documents including death certificates and airline tickets. The victims were always falsely reassured that the money would be paid back, often with the promise that the persona was due to inherit hundreds of thousands of pounds and just needed a stop-gap loan until they had the funds.

In one case, a victim was defrauded over a period of 14 years before they were told by officers that the person they thought were speaking to wasn't real and was in fact a scammer.

The investigation began after a Surrey victim came forward in 2020 and officers were able to trace bank transfers made by the victim straight to the pair's door. Numerous devices were seized from their home address, leading to the discovery of a gold mine of evidence which showed the pair plotting, sharing account logins and fabricating stories together to manipulate victims with.

Working with City of London Police's National Fraud Intelligence Bureau, a further 179 victims of fraud were identified throughout the course of the investigation, with 80 linked to romance fraud, 22 to investment fraud and 77 who had had their identities or bank details stolen or shared. They are being supported by the City of London Police's victim care unit. Officers also uncovered evidence of money laundering by painstakingly tracing bank transfers between multiple accounts, which fraudsters often do to make money as hard as possible to trace. In total, over £400,000 was found to have been laundered through their bank accounts.





Fredrick Diji, 37, of Flaxman Road in Lambeth, was sentenced to eight years' imprisonment after pleading guilty to conspiracy to defraud, concealing criminal property and possession of an identity document for improper means.

Racquel Johnson, 43, also of Flaxman Road in Lambeth, was sentenced to three years and nine months' imprisonment after pleading guilty to one count of money laundering.

On sentencing, Judge Fraser commented that both Diji and Johnson carried out a 'truly callous conspiracy of significant scale', adding 'the harm you have caused has been devastating to so many'. Judge Fraser also praised Detective Constable Becky Mason's 'tireless' work in investigating the case, labelling her diligence as 'quite remarkable and most impressive'.

Detective Constable Becky Mason, who investigated the case, said: "Romance fraud is heartless and cowardly and has a devastating impact on victims, not only financially but emotionally as they find their trust has been exploited in the cruellest of ways.

"Diji had his routine down to a tee, and assisted by Johnson, they would work together using a number of fake personas to target victims online, love-bomb them with promises of meeting in person and declarations of love, before fabricating reasons for desperately needing money, telling the victims that if they really loved them they would help them out. It was the ultimate manipulation which preyed on people's emotions and good nature.

I am incredibly grateful to each of the victims for supporting our investigation and I hope that today's result gives them some sense of justice."

Officers worked closely with online dating site Match where Diji and Johnson met several of the victims.

A Match spokesperson commented:

"At Match, the safety of our members is our highest priority. We are very sorry to hear about this case. We have a dedicated team monitoring security 24/7, deploying industry-leading technology and human checks to ensure user safety. We are constantly reviewing our safety methods and proactively communicate safe dating advice to our members and within our platform.

"We encourage everyone to take the same precautions when meeting people online, as they would if they were meeting through friends or in a pub, bar or public space. It is always best to keep conversations on the Match site, messaging service or app, so that there is an accurate record and any concerns can be quickly reported. We also have a 'report this profile' function prominently positioned.

"We strive to create a safe and friendly environment for all users. Match has a zero-tolerance policy for reports of serious offences and encourage anyone who has felt exposed to unsafe behaviour whether through our services or anywhere else, to speak to the police, so that the matter can be investigated and documented. We have co-operated with the police on this case, as part of our commitment to work with the wider industry to define standards and share information."

To read more about the signs of romance fraud click here.

If you, or someone you know is vulnerable to Romance Fraud please report it online or call 101.

If you think you have been the victim of romance fraud, contact your bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud on 0300 123 2040 or via www.actionfraud.police.uk

Are you emoji aware?

Over the past two weeks, Surrey Police has been raising awareness about the alternative meanings of emojis, which some young people may use to reference drugs and sexual behaviour.

Have you ever wondered how children use emojis in their day-to-day life? Does that snowflake really mean snow is on the way? Are fruit emojis always only used to reference fruit?

These are some of the questions we have been addressing in our most recent campaign, which is focused on being 'emoji aware'.

Throughout the campaign, we have aimed to educate parents, carers, teachers and those working with children on this secret world of emojis and their more concerning meanings. While this campaign might sound worrying, and we want to highlight the serious meaning these emojis can take on, we are keen to stress that the use of these emojis on their own does not necessarily mean a child is involved in drugs. Instead, this may be seen as part of a bigger picture of a change in their behaviour. Other changes may include (but aren't limited to):

- Changes in their mood
- A change in their performance at school

Them becoming increasingly secretive

Detective Chief Inspector **Kate Hyder** said: "We really want parents and guardians to feel confident to have a conversation with their children about this, if and when they need to. We have shared a lot of information around emojis over the past couple of weeks, both on social media and with our local partners to help raise awareness and start the discussion around this.

"Our focus on this doesn't stop with the end of this initial campaign. We will be continuing to work with local partners to extend the conversation around emojis. We're also aware that emojis and their alternative meanings are something that will constantly change, and so our work and research into this will continue."

For guidance on starting these conversations and support if parents or guardians are concerned, there are a number of resources

and services that can help, some of which are specifically for children:

- Catch 22 Surrey's Young People Substance Misuse Service
- Talk to FRANK has helpful advice about drugs for children and parents
- NSPCC has advice about keeping your child safe, including how to have difficult conversations
- Childline information for young people about drugs and sexual relationships
- YMCA WiSE (What is Sexual Exploitation) supports young people around staying safe in relationships, online and in the community
- Surrey Police website about county lines drug dealing

This isn't a campaign that starts and finishes within this two-week window. Instead, this is about encouraging parents and guardians to have conversations with their children at a time that works for everyone involved. What is vital in these discussions is trust. We're very aware that checking phones could break down this trust between a parent and their child, and therefore we are not suggesting parents do this. Instead, we want people to be aware of what these emojis mean, in case they do happen to see them.

Surrey woman's coercion experience shared

The powerful testimony of a woman who was subjected to years of coercive controlling behaviour has resulted in a man being handed an eight-year restraining order against her at Guildford Crown Court on 19 December.

Image - is purely for illustration. Neither the defendant or victim are represented.

The court heard how **Douglas Ma**rtin, 42, of Winkfield Lane in Windsor, would intimidate and bully her so often as their relationship progressed that she has been left with acute anxiety and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

Over a period of around three years, Martin would control where she could go, who she could be friends with and what belongings she was allowed to have, throwing away items he believed were not acceptable in their shared home.

Chores had to be done to a standard he would accept and he would become verbally abusive when things weren't done his way. The jury saw evidence of the extent of Martin's controlling behaviour after they were shown a photo of a Christmas tree she was made to decorate in the garden because he wouldn't allow her to have decorations inside the home. In addition, the court was played recordings of Martin's relentless berating and aggressive verbal abuse, used to belittle, exert control and a sense of superiority.

Martin was given an 18-month custodial sentence, suspended for 18 months, after the jury found him guilty of coercive controlling behaviour. He was also ordered to attend rehabilitation programmes, including a course on how to build healthy relationships.

In an impact statement, she relayed how constantly living in fear made her feel physically ill with heart palpations and nausea. Speaking after the trial, she said: "Coercive controlling behaviour is happening to so many people who don't realise they are experiencing domestic abuse. I want those people to read what I have been through, recognise similarities in their own relationships and understand that it is not a situation they simply have to endure. They can find the strength to say enough is enough and trust in the fact that there is help, support and justice out there."

Investigating Officer **Natalie Ridley** said: "Today's result is testament to the courage of the victim in coming forward, disclosing the abuse and giving evidence in court, which is ultimately what secured Martin's conviction.

If someone is continually behaving in an abusive way towards you which controls how you live any aspect of your life, that is coercive control. You do not have to suffer alone or in silence. We have specialist support in place to help you and will do everything possible to pursue offenders and hold them to account for their appalling actions."

Some of the signs of coercive controlling behaviour include:

- · controlling your finances, such as taking your wages or benefits or only allowing you a small allowance
- · preventing you from working or studying or controlling your ability to go to work
- · controlling what you wear
- \cdot controlling when you can sleep and eat
- · repeatedly putting you down such as telling you that you are worthless

· isolating you from friends or family

You can find more information on how to report domestic abuse, including coercive controlling behaviour, and details of support organisations here.

Dogs against knife crime

Officers have visited 14 schools and colleges across Surrey over the past week to raise awareness and tackle the grass-root causes of knife crime as part of national police campaign, **Operation Sceptre**. The visits provided officers with a chance to speak to students about misconceptions around the law when it comes to carrying a knife and scenario-based learning to highlight the dangers it can bring.

One of the colleges to take part in the campaign welcomed officers and trainee police dogs, Toby and puppy Yaris, to their campus to learn about the role police dogs play in tackling knife crime.

As part of the campaign, officers also carried out a number of area sweeps, searches and warrants, which in conjunction with the Force's knife amnesty bins, resulted in the recovery of 76 knives.

Detective Chief Inspector **Amy Buffoni**, who leads on tackling knife crime for Surrey Police, said: "We work hard all year round to tackle knife crime and we are encouraged to see that the number of knife crimes in Surrey has reduced year-on-year since 2019. This doesn't mean that we can rest though. Op Sceptre provides us with the opportunity to focus our efforts and reignite conversation around the devastating impact of knife crime on communities, families and young people. Vital to this work is building relationships with local communities so that the message carries down to the next generation. One life lost to knife crime is one too many and it simply should not happen."

Do you have information about someone who carries a knife? You can help save a life by reporting what you know to police. Even tiny details can stop knife crime and keep your community safe. You can call on 101 or if you'd prefer to remain anonymous, you can call the independent charity Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111, or alternatively visit their website here.

Worried about a young person? For help and support as well as advice on how you could help them, visit #knifefree here.

If you are in danger or need immediate help, always call 999.

Save a life and surrender your knife. No questions, no arrest. **Surrey Police** have knife banks located at the following locations in Surrey:

- Staines Police Station (22 Kingston Rd, Staines, TW18 4LQ) open every day, 8am to 10pm
- Woking Civic Centre (Civic Offices, Gloucester Square, Woking, GU21 6YL) open every day, 8am to 10pm
- Guildford Police Station (Margaret Rd, Guildford, GU1 4QS open every day, 8am to 10pm
- Elmbridge Council Offices (Civic Centre, High St, Esher, KT10 9SD) open Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 5pm
- Reigate Police Station (79 Reigate Rd, Reigate, RH2 0RY) open every day, 8am to 10pm

The dreadful price of dangerous speeding

A Woodmansterne man is facing 2 years and 8 months behind bars after making a reckless decision to show off his car in front of his friends by driving at excessive speed which resulted in the tragic death of a 17-year-old girl.

Leanne Taylor, who was the back seat passenger at the time, was sadly killed in the collision which took place in Tupwood Scrubbs Road in Caterham on the evening of Saturday, 1 February 2020.



Leanne Taylor

Describing Leanne as "definitely one of a kind with a massive individual personality", her family said today that Leanne's "lasting legacy is giving a gift of life to four people".

Her mother, **Mary Allison**, said: "Over the last two years and nine months, we as a family have waited for justice for our Leanne. How I wish my Leanne was alive and had the chance to live life to the full, it's heartbreaking. We would like to thank all the emergency services who were there on the night, to the staff at St George's treating our Leanne with dignity and respect. A massive thank you to the team from the Surrey and Sussex Police Serious Collision Investigation Unit for all the work they have done to build this case, for justice for our Leanne. A big thank you to our family liaison officer and all involved."

The driver of the car involved in the collision, **Callum Hone**, 24, of Manor Way, Woodmansterne, was sentenced to 2 years and 8 months' imprisonment when he appeared at Guildford Crown Court yesterday (17 November). He has also been disqualified from driving for 5 years, which will start when released from prison and if he was ever to reapply for his driving licence there would be the requirement to complete an extended re-test.



Callum Hone

Hone had pleaded guilty to causing death by dangerous driving on the first day of his trial at the same court on 10 October.

On the evening of the collision, Hone had picked Leanne and another friend up in his BMW 320 where they joined another group of friends at Caterham Viewpoint. They were sitting in their cars talking and listening to music when Hone made the fatal decision to do a drive-by. Hone set off, with Leanne and her friend still in the car, and was driving at speed when he failed to negotiate a left hand bend, resulting in the car colliding with a tree and overturning a number of times before landing on its roof.

Leanne's body was recovered from under the BMW and she was taken to hospital, where she sadly died five days later as a result of the catastrophic injuries she had suffered in the crash.

On sentencing, **Judge Black** said: "I have no doubt you were showing off to your friend. You were fully aware of the risk driving the way that you did with at least one passenger unrestrained within the car"

Investigating Officer, **Lauren Upton**, from the Serious Collision Investigation Unit, said: "Our thoughts are with Leanne's family and friends following her tragic and senseless death. I would like to thank Leanne's family for their patience and dignity throughout this investigation. Hone was estimated to have been driving at a speed of between 55 and 60mph at the time of the crash, a speed that was unsuitable for the road conditions. Leanne's death is a stark reminder of why all young drivers should think twice before they risk the lives of themselves and others by putting their foot down on the accelerator to show off and try to impress their friends. Sadly, this case is an example of the devastating consequences Hone's reckless and irresponsible actions can have. Speed kills – it is simply not worth the risk. We will continue to investigate serious collisions and bring to justice those who compromise the safety of themselves and others on our roads in Surrey."

Surrey social media sex fiend gets 18 years

A man who used multiple personas to target children online has been sentenced to 18 years behind bars in a case the Guildford Judge called 'the worst I've seen for some while'. **Jonathan Woodward**, 22, of no fixed address, pleaded guilty to 39 child sex offences on 22 August and was sentenced 28th September, at Guildford Crown Court.

Surrey Police image of the offender

The extensive investigation into Woodward first began when he was reported to police after a suspected indecent image of a child was seen on his mobile phone. Woodward, who was living in Ashford at the time, was arrested and multiple digital devices seized from him.

During the course of the investigation, examination of his devices revealed contact with children from across the world on multiple social media platforms. He used fake profiles pretending to be a woman to lure children into sexual activity online, which he then recorded.

Woodward also used software to identify the areas where his victims lived and then used this information and the recordings, to threaten the young victims and obtain more graphic material.

Woodward pleaded guilty to:

- Two charges of rape of a child under 13
- 20 charges of causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity
- 14 charges of causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity
- One charge of making indecent images of a child Category A
- One charge of making indecent images of a child Category B
- One charge of making indecent images of a child Category C

The offences took place between 2015 and 2021.

Woodward must serve two thirds of his 18-year custodial sentence with a further eight years extended license. He has a life-time Sexual Harm Prevention Order.

Detective Inspector Antony Preston, from the Paedophile Online Investigation Team, said:

"Woodward's behaviour has impacted countless lives, and I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the bravery and courage of these young victims who have helped put this man behind bars for a long time.

"I would urge those using social media to speak out should they feel threatened or intimidated online, using online reporting functions or contacting Police to report such behaviour.

"This investigation and sentencing shows that there is no place for such vile behaviour. We will work tirelessly to ensure child sex abusers face the consequences of their actions.

"If there is anyone reading this who has been a victim of child sex abuse, I would encourage you to speak to us. We will do everything we can to support you."

If you have concerns that someone you know may have a sexual interest in children, please contact Stop It Now, a UK-wide charity focused on stopping child sexual abuse.

For more information about online sexual abuse and how to spot it, please visit CEOP (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command).