



JUDICIARY OF
ENGLAND AND WALES

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-v-

Kieran Humphreys, Sharon Humphreys, Karen Smith and Sam Wyatt

In the Crown Court at Luton

28 January 2026

Sentencing remarks of Mr Justice Morris

Kieran Humphreys, you are now aged 33. You have been convicted by the jury of the murder of Archie Woodbridge. You have also been found guilty of an offence of child cruelty and have pleaded guilty to an offence of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice.

Sharon Humphreys, you are now aged 59. Karen Smith, you are now aged 40. Sam Wyatt, you are now aged 34. Each of you has pleaded guilty to an offence of conspiring with each other and with Kieran Humphreys to pervert the course of justice.

It is now for me to pass sentence upon you. I ask that you remain seated whilst I describe the circumstances of your offences.

The facts in outline

This case concerns events at two addresses in Houghton Regis on the afternoon of 9 February 2024 and the tragic death of a seven month old baby boy, Archie Woodbridge. At around 350pm on that day Archie had been left in the sole care of Kieran Humphreys at the home of his friends, Karen Smith and Sam Wyatt, in Dolphin Drive, whilst Archie's mother, Saskia Woodbridge, went out shopping for the afternoon. Kieran Humphreys had met and befriended Saskia Woodbridge and Archie just one week earlier. He had lavished attention on them, leading her to believe that he would care for her child.

When Saskia Woodbridge returned to Dolphin Drive at just after 515pm, she found Archie completely blue, not moving and not breathing. The emergency services were called. In the meantime Archie had been moved to 71 Bromley Gardens, the home of Kieran Humphreys' grandmother; and it was at that address that the paramedics were called to attend. Although Archie was transferred to hospital, it was to no avail. Whilst Saskia Woodbridge had been away that afternoon, and some time between 350pm and 520pm, Kieran Humphreys, in the course of caring for Archie, had lost his temper and had gripped and violently shaken Archie with such force as to cause fatal injuries to the young boy.

Despite it being obvious that Archie was seriously unwell as a result of his actions, Kieran Humphreys delayed seeking medical attention. Moreover together with Sharon Humphreys, Karen Smith and Sam Wyatt, he participated in making up a false account given to the paramedics and the police, in order to cover up what had happened. The purpose of this false

account was in part to lead the authorities to understand that Kieran Humphreys had not been present when Archie had suffered the fatal injuries.

Archie was taken to hospital, but despite the best efforts of the medical team, he was pronounced dead at 940pm on that day. He had sustained multiple injuries to his chest and brain.

This was an extreme loss of temper, leading to severe violence perpetrated on a defenceless baby boy resulting in the tragic death of Archie Woodbridge, and life-changing consequences for his mother and all his family.

The victim's family

No-one who has sat through the trial can have failed to have been moved by the patient and dignified manner in which Saskia Woodbridge and her family conducted themselves during what must have been, for them, a painful process. In particular Saskia Woodbridge endured the ordeal of coming to court and giving oral evidence. She did this with courage and poise. Her statement read to the Court today speaks poignantly of her overwhelming feelings of grief, loss and understandable anger.

We have also heard read the statements of Kelly Moynes, Archie's grandmother, Douglas Woodbridge his grandfather, William Moynes and Jennifer Moyes, his great grandfather and great grandmother. Archie's aunt, Charley Woodbridge has read her statement in Court today with calm dignity. Each speaks eloquently and movingly of their beloved Archie and the profound loss that the whole family has suffered following Archie's death, and of the effect that loss will have for the rest of their lives. Archie was a smiling giggling little boy and a much loved son, grandson, great grandson and nephew.

The background

Archie Woodbridge born on 27 July 2023, prematurely at 31 weeks. Saskia Woodbridge was aged 18 at the time and 19 by February 2024. Saskia Woodbridge and Archie lived with Saskia Woodbridge's father in the Leighton Buzzard area, along with her three siblings. Archie was teething but was a healthy baby.

Kieran Humphreys at the time was living with his mother, Sharon Humphreys, at 115 Bromley Gardens, Houghton Regis. At the time he was on bail in respect of a previous allegation, subject to an express condition not to have unsupervised contact with a child under 16. His grandmother Jean Whelan lived around the corner from them at 71 Bromley Gardens. It was to this address that the paramedics were called to attend to Archie; and it was where the emergency services were subsequently wrongly led to believe that Archie had been taken ill.

Karen Smith and Sam Wyatt are friends of Kieran Humphreys and lived relatively close by at 39 Dolphin Drive. They had children, but at that time those children had been removed from their home whilst allegations of neglect were being investigated. At the time of their offence, they were both under investigation for child neglect and had recently been subject to a condition not to have unsupervised contact with a child under 16. Jacqueline Kelly is a neighbour of Karen Smith and Sam Wyatt who lives at 42 Dolphin Drive which backs on the rear of 39 Dolphin Drive; on her garage was a CCTV camera overlooking number 39.

Events between 2 and 8 February 2024

Saskia Woodbridge met Kieran Humphreys for the first time in the afternoon of Saturday 2 February 2024. They met in the Nisa convenience store in Houghton Regis. Saskia Woodbridge had been to a nearby supermarket and popped into the store. Kieran Humphreys was in the store. Their paths crossed and he commented on how nice her baby looked. When she went to leave, he asked her to wait for him and they engaged in conversation outside the store. They then walked over to Kieran's grandmother's house together. They swapped telephone numbers and began to exchange messages that evening. In his very first message to Saskia Woodbridge, Kieran Humphreys complimented both her and the baby and expressed how glad he was to have bumped into them, concluding "need you both xxxx".

By that time the strain on Saskia Woodbridge of caring for a young baby had led to some tension at home. When she caught the attention of Kieran Humphreys that afternoon and he seemed so enamoured of her and so taken with Archie, she was charmed by him and the escape and help which he appeared to provide.

On the next morning, 3 February 2024 Saskia Woodbridge and Kieran Humphreys exchanged further messages. He offered to treat her to a manicure. As a result Saskia Woodbridge drove over to Houghton Regis and then on to Dunstable where she and Kieran Humphreys' teenage daughter went for a manicure. Kieran Humphreys took Archie with him to the barbers, sending her a picture of him in his car seat when Saskia Woodbridge sought reassurance as to her child's welfare. That night Saskia Woodbridge and Archie stayed with Kieran Humphreys at his grandmother's house at 71 Bromley Gardens. She returned home in the afternoon of the next day, Sunday 4 February, after which she and Kieran Humphreys continued messaging until late in the evening. Saskia Woodbridge was saying how tired and drained she was. Kieran Humphreys suggested that she should drive over to see him at Sam Wyatt and Karen Smith's house. On Monday 5 February in the late afternoon Saskia Woodbridge met up with Kieran Humphreys at 39 Dolphin Drive. That night she and Archie went back home to Leighton Buzzard.

On Tuesday 6 February Saskia Woodbridge drove over to 39 Dolphin Drive at 11am and ended up staying the night at 39 Dolphin Drive; as she did for the following two nights – Wednesday 7 February and Thursday 8 February. They slept in the downstairs room, with Archie in a travel cot. During the course of the Tuesday, Kieran Humphreys took Archie Woodbridge to the Nisa store on his own. By this time Kieran Humphreys has started calling himself "Daddy" and at one stage suggested that Saskia Woodbridge could put his name on Archie's birth certificate. Kieran Humphreys was spending a lot of time with Archie, feeding him his bottle, changing his nappy and snuggling him. On two occasions – on Wednesday 7 February and Thursday 8 February - Saskia Woodbridge went out shopping with Karen Smith, on each occasion leaving Archie with Kieran Humphreys.

9 February 2024: before 350pm

Kieran Humphreys had been awake throughout the night of Thursday 8 into Friday 9 February, playing on an Xbox and messaging a friend. At 7am Sam Wyatt left 39 Dolphin Drive on his motorbike to go to work. At around 830am Kieran Humphreys ordered a breakfast from McDonald's but then went back to sleep.

In the afternoon, Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith went to Dunstable to go to a nail salon, leaving Archie in the sole care of Kieran Humphreys. As she was leaving, Saskia Woodbridge woke Kieran Humphreys. Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith then left to go to Dunstable just after 350pm.

9 February 2024: 350pm to 520pm Kieran Humphreys alone with Archie

Kieran Humphreys was alone with Archie at 39 Dolphin Drive between 350pm and 520pm. It was in this period that Kieran Humphreys lost his temper and violently gripped and shook Archie causing him fatal injuries. At just before 4pm there is audio from a CCTV camera of the sound of a baby screaming in extreme pain and of Kieran Humphreys' voice swearing. Two neighbours walking outside could see and hear Kieran Humphreys holding Archie in the front garden of 39 Dolphin Drive. Each of them heard Kieran Humphreys shouting and Archie crying.

Just after 410pm, Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith arrived at the nail bar in Dunstable. Sam Wyatt was leaving work in Leighton Buzzard and arrived back at 39 Dolphin Drive at just after 445pm. During this period, Kieran Humphreys was not seeking any medical attention for Archie. He was performing some Internet banking transactions and buying clothes online. He called his mother Sharon to come over. At 455pm Sharon Humphreys arrived at 39 Dolphin Drive. Upon arriving back there, Sam Wyatt called Karen Smith in Dunstable and alerted her to Archie's condition. Karen Smith told Saskia Woodbridge that Archie was in a state but sought to minimise what was happening telling Saskia Woodbridge not to worry.

9 February 2024: Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith return to 39 Dolphin Drive and then go to 71 Bromley Gardens

Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith arrived back at 39 Dolphin Drive at just after 515pm. Kieran Humphreys, Sharon Humphreys, and Sam Wyatt were there in the house. Archie was in the arms of Sharon and he was blue, completely lifeless and silent. Kieran Humphreys was shouting, telling his mother to call an ambulance. At that point, one of the group said that they had to go to Kieran's grandmother's house at 71 Bromley Gardens. At just before 520pm all of them except Sam Wyatt left 39 Dolphin Drive and ran over to 71 Bromley Gardens. Karen Smith carried Archie. Saskia Woodbridge broke down and was carried by Kieran Humphreys. In the course of the four minutes it took to go over to 71 Bromley Gardens, a 999 call was made, and Saskia Woodbridge spoke to the operator. Whilst Saskia Woodbridge was on the phone, the group arrived at 71 Bromley Gardens. Events then at 71 Bromley Gardens were recorded on a CCTV installed in the grandmother's living room. The 999 operator instructed them how to perform CPR.

At 71 Bromley Gardens from 530pm: paramedics and then the police arrive

At 530pm the first paramedic arrived at 71 Bromley Gardens, closely followed by another two paramedics. They carried out emergency procedures in an effort to resuscitate Archie Woodbridge, who was in cardiac arrest.

By that stage, it had been agreed between Karen Smith, Sharon Humphreys and Kieran Humphreys and Saskia Woodbridge that a false account of what had happened should be given; namely, that Saskia Woodbridge and Sharon Humphreys had been at 71 Bromley Gardens when Archie became unwell and that Kieran Humphreys had not been present at the time. Whilst the paramedics were attending to Archie at 71 Bromley Gardens, Kieran Humphreys told them that

Archie had been with Saskia Woodbridge at 71 Bromley Gardens. Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith added that Archie's dummy had fallen out, they had tried to put it back in, he had screamed and then gone floppy.

At just before 540pm Sam Wyatt who was still at 39 Dolphin Drive sent a text message to Karen Smith asking her what she had told the paramedics.

When one of the paramedics told Karen Smith that it was necessary to take Archie to hospital, she told Kieran Humphreys to go back to her house. At 545pm Kieran Humphreys went back to 39 Dolphin Drive to collect a nappy bag and Saskia Woodbridge's shoes. He then returned to 71 Bromley Gardens.

The police arrived at 71 Bromley Gardens between 550pm and 610pm. Kieran Humphreys, Sharon Humphreys, Karen Smith and Saskia Woodbridge repeated the false account of what had happened to the attending police officers.

Archie was put in the ambulance and taken to hospital. Saskia Woodbridge and Karen Smith went with them to the hospital. Kieran Humphreys then went back to 39 Dolphin Drive at just after 6pm. By that time, at the latest, Sam Wyatt was aware that a false account had been given to the authorities and of what was to be said to them.

At 845pm Kieran Humphreys returned to 71 Bromley Gardens and spoke to Detective Inspector Ward, telling him again that he had not been present when Archie had become floppy and adding that Saskia Woodbridge had taken Archie with her when she had gone to get her nails done. He told DI Ward that he had been at Karen Smith's, and with her when Archie became ill at Bromley Gardens.

At 9pm Kieran Humphreys returned to 39 Dolphin Drive. At just after 905pm Sam Wyatt, who was still at 39 Dolphin Drive, contacted Karen Smith telling her to come back from the hospital so that Kieran Humphreys could tell her what the police had said. He told her to be quick because the police would be around soon and her story needed to match Kieran's.

9 February 2024: At the hospital

In the meantime, the ambulance with Archie Woodbridge had arrived at the hospital at 610pm. Karen Smith left the hospital by taxi and went back to 39 Dolphin Drive, arriving at just before 7pm. At 730pm Sharon Humphreys arrived at the hospital. Saskia Woodbridge's father also arrived at the hospital. At the hospital, frantic efforts were made to resuscitate Archie Woodbridge. Despite intensive treatment, a decision was made to suspend active support. Archie was given to Saskia Woodbridge to hold in her arms. Archie Woodbridge was declared dead at 940pm.

Around 1030pm at the hospital, DI Ward spoke to Saskia Woodbridge. Initially, whilst in the presence of her father, she maintained the false account of what had happened that afternoon. However, when her father left the room, Saskia Woodbridge told the police officer that she had lied and that Kieran Humphreys, Sharon Humphreys and Karen Smith had made her lie about what and where things had happened. She then gave a true account of events that afternoon.

Subsequent events: 10 February 2024 and after

In the small hours of the 10 February Kieran Humphreys was arrested on suspicion of murder and Sharon Humphreys and Karen Smith were each arrested on suspicion of conspiring to pervert the course of justice.

On 10 February 2024 at just after 1245pm, Sam Wyatt called Jacqueline Kelly by Facebook audio and spoke to her for just under two minutes. At the time Ms Kelly was in Costco in Milton Keynes with her partner. In that call Sam Wyatt told her of Karen Smith's arrest. He then told her that if the police were to knock on her door and ask her about her garage camera, she should tell them that it wasn't working. Ms Kelly replied that she was not going to lie for him and wanted to know what was going on. At 130pm that afternoon, Sam Wyatt provided a statement to the police in which he told them, falsely, that when he returned home he had seen Kieran Humphreys and Karen Smith running out of the address, but made no reference to having seen Archie at that time. He gave a false narrative as to where Archie Woodbridge had been when he became unresponsive.

Sam Wyatt was arrested on 11 February 2024 on suspicion of murder and of attempting to pervert the course of justice. When interviewed later that same day he did not maintain the false account he had given in his statement to the police of the previous day.

The injuries

Post-mortem examination revealed that Archie Woodbridge had sustained bruising to his eyes and head, a number of fractured ribs and haemorrhaging across his brain and spinal cord and to his eyes. The expert medical evidence confirmed that those injuries were consistent with Archie having been gripped tightly around his torso and shaken violently. The evidence of Dr Stalker was that the failure to call immediate medical attention would have affected Archie's chances of survival.

Kieran Humphreys

I address you first, Kieran Humphreys.

Murder

The sentence for murder is fixed by law. It is a life sentence. The Court must impose this life sentence and must also specify the minimum term which must elapse before you can be considered for release on licence.

So that there is no misunderstanding, the minimum term is not the point in time when you will be released. It is the minimum term you must serve before you are considered for release. Whether you are released then, or indeed ever, is a matter for the Parole Board, not for me.

If and when you are released, you will remain on licence for the rest of your life and liable to recall if you commit any further offence or breach the terms of that licence.

In setting the minimum term, I am required to take account of the seriousness of the combination of this offence and any one or more offences associated with it.

Schedule 21 of the Sentencing Act 2020 sets out the approach which I must adopt in deciding what minimum term you must serve. I must first identify the appropriate starting point for that term, before going on to consider, and balance, the aggravating and mitigating factors.

Pursuant to paragraph 5 of Schedule 21, I find that the starting point for the minimum term in your case is 15 years.

However, this starting point falls to be adjusted, first by the aggravating features of the offence itself; secondly to take account of the two other offences which you committed on that day; and finally, by reference to the mitigating features of the offence itself and your personal mitigation.

As regards aggravating features of this offence, first, Archie Woodbridge was aged just 7 months and extremely vulnerable. This is a serious aggravating factor, which warrants a substantial increase to this starting point. Secondly, you abused the position of trust given to you willingly by Saskia Woodbridge. Thirdly, at the time of the offence you were on bail and subject to the express condition not to have unsupervised contact with a child. In the light of what happened, this too is a serious aggravating factor. Whilst you have some previous convictions, in view of their age and content, they do not aggravate the offence.

Moreover, the two further offences of child cruelty and conspiracy to pervert the course of justice warrant a further increase in the minimum term. As I explain in a moment, there will be distinct sentences for these offences, to be served concurrently to the life sentence for this offence of murder. As these are to be served concurrently to the life sentence, it is necessary to reflect the gravity of these offences in the overall minimum term which you will serve for this offence of murder. In assessing the increase in the minimum term, the offence of child cruelty formed part and parcel of the same sequence of events as the offence of murder. On the other hand, the offence of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice would normally warrant a separate consecutive sentence. I will therefore increase your minimum term by the full amount of the period of time in custody you would have served for that offence, had it stood alone.

As regards mitigating factors, I find that, in causing the death of Archie Woodbridge, you intended to cause serious bodily harm rather than to kill. Secondly, there was no premeditation. As regards your personal mitigation, I have taken into account your personal circumstances as referred to in two medical reports and as mentioned too in the Pre-Sentence Report, your character and everything that has been said on your behalf. I also take into account that your history of mental health difficulties makes you susceptible to impulsive and panicked behaviour. That might provide an explanation for your conduct on 9 February 2024 and to some limited extent mitigates your culpability.

Balancing these aggravating and mitigating factors, there will be an increase from the starting point of 15 years.

Child Cruelty

I turn to consider your sentence for the offence of child cruelty. I have considered, and apply, the relevant Sentencing Council's guideline for this offence.

In relation to this offence, your culpability falls within category B. Your failure to call medical help for Archie for over 1 hour showed a deliberate disregard for Archie's welfare. The harm falls within category 1. In the light of Dr Stalker's evidence, the failure to seek medical help potentially caused serious physical harm. This gives a starting point of 6 years custody, with a range of 4 to 8 years custody. The fact that this offence was committed whilst you were on bail is an aggravating factor. The mitigation I have referred to applies here too. There will be a concurrent determinate sentence of imprisonment for this offence.

Conspiracy to pervert the course of justice

Finally in your case, I turn to consider your sentence for the offence of conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. I find that the conspiracy to provide a false account was at least in part, to protect you, Kieran Humphreys by distancing you from Archie Woodbridge at the critical time when Archie became unwell; and in part motivated by Karen Smith and Sam Wyatt's concerns arising from the ongoing investigation into their conduct.

I have considered, and apply, the relevant Sentencing Council's guideline for this offence.

As regard culpability, the underlying offence, murder, was very serious indeed; that is a factor which falls within culpability category A. There were other factors falling within culpability category C. Although to some extent it was planned, nevertheless the offence was limited in scope and in duration and unsophisticated. However the factors in categories A and C do not balance each other out: the underlying offence was so serious as to outweigh the factors falling within category C. I therefore find that your offence falls in culpability category A, albeit at the lower end of that category. As regards harm, the offence falls within category 2; there was some additional distress caused Archie's family, some consequences for an innocent party and some short delay caused to the course of justice. A category A2 case has a starting point of 2 years' custody, with a range of 1 to 4 years' custody. To reflect the presence of some culpability category C factors, in this case I take a starting point of 21 months' custody.

In your case, as regards aggravating factors, the offence was committed whilst you were on bail. The personal mitigation I have referred to applies here too. You pleaded guilty at the start of the trial and you are entitled to a 10% reduction in your sentence. There will be a concurrent determinate sentence of imprisonment for this offence.

Kieran Humphreys

Please stand.

Kieran Humphreys

On Count 2, for the offence of cruelty to a person under 16 years, the sentence is 6 years' imprisonment.

On Count 4, for the offence of conspiracy to do acts tending and intending to pervert the course of justice, the sentence is 21 months' imprisonment.

The sentences on Counts 2 and 4 will be served concurrently with the sentence on Count 1.

On Count 1 for the murder of Archie Woodbridge, the sentence is life imprisonment.

You will serve a minimum of 21 years. From this will be deducted the 337 days which you have already spent on remand in custody so that the minimum term which you will serve is 20 years and 28 days.

Your total sentence is life imprisonment, with a minimum term of 20 years and 28 days.

You may go.

Sharon Humphreys

Sharon Humphreys, you have pleaded guilty to conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. You accept lying to the police who attended at 71 Bromley Gardens and again at the hospital. I apply the relevant sentencing guideline for this offence. For the reasons I have just given in relation to Kieran Humphreys, your offence falls at the lower end of category A2, which has a starting point of 2 years' custody, with a range of 1 to 4 years' custody. I take a starting point of 21 months imprisonment.

In your case, there are no aggravating factors. As regards mitigating factors, you are a person of good character and you have no previous convictions. I have taken into account everything that has been said about you and your family background in the Pre-Sentence Report, the extensive character references and your own letter to the Court and everything that has been said on your behalf. I note your long years of marriage and stable family background, your husband's impending medical operation and the recent loss of your brother. Your letter shows genuine remorse for your actions on 9 February. You pleaded guilty at the pre-trial preparation hearing and are entitled to a 25% reduction in your sentence.

I have also considered and apply the sentencing guideline entitled "Imposition of community and custodial sentences" and in particular sections 2 and 3 of that guideline. Section 3 sets out the factors to consider whether it is possible to suspend a sentence of imprisonment. I also refer to *R v Feve* [2024] EWCA Crim 286 and *R v Bostan* [2025] EWCA Crim 177, which establish that in the great majority of cases of perverting the course of justice, the most important factor will be that which provides that appropriate punishment can only be achieved by immediate custody. An offence of perverting the course of justice almost always requires an immediate custodial sentence and very compelling reasons will be needed if immediate custody is to be avoided.

I have considered carefully the points fairly drawn to my attention by your counsel. However these do not amount to sufficiently compelling reasons to suspend the sentence which I will impose. In this case, you and your co-defendants made a conscious decision together to make up a false story about a 7 month old baby who at the time, and to your knowledge was seriously ill, if not dying; and to maintain that story for some time. This was not a case of you acting spontaneously or momentarily on your own in the heat of the moment; rather the offence took some thought. For these reasons, I have concluded that the appropriate sentence in your case is one of immediate custody

Karen Smith

Karen Smith, you have also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. You have accepted lying to the paramedics and police by giving a false account.

I apply the relevant sentencing guideline for this offence. For the reasons I have already given, your offence falls at the lower end of category A2, which has a starting point of 2 years' custody, with a range of 1 to 4 years' custody. I take a starting point of 21 months imprisonment.

As regards aggravating factors, the offence was committed whilst you were under investigation for child neglect and you had only recently been subject to a condition not to have unsupervised contact with a child under 16. As regards mitigating factors, you have no previous convictions. I have taken into account everything that is said in the Pre-Sentence Report and the report of Dr Ali, the character references and everything that has been said on your behalf. I note in particular your extremely troubled early life and your learning difficulties and the good and stable relationship you have with Sam Wyatt. You pleaded guilty after the pre-trial preparation hearing and are entitled to a 20% reduction in your sentence.

As regards the possibility of suspending your sentence, I apply in your case both the relevant sentencing guideline and case law relevant to that question. As I have just said an offence of perverting the course of justice almost always requires an immediate custodial sentence and very compelling reasons will be needed if immediate custody is to be avoided.

In your case too, I have considered carefully the points properly drawn to my attention by your counsel. However in your case there are no sufficiently compelling reasons to suspend the sentence which I impose. For the reasons I have just given in respect of Sharon Humphreys, appropriate punishment can only be achieved by immediate custodial sentence.

Sam Wyatt

Sam Wyatt, you have also pleaded guilty to conspiracy to pervert the course of justice. You were aware of the false account that was given and was to be given to the police and gave a false statement to the police on 10 February. You then sought to persuade your neighbour, Jacqueline Kelly to conceal evidence by asking her to tell the police that her CCTV camera was not working.

I apply the relevant sentencing guideline for this offence. For the reasons I have already given, your offence falls at the lower end of category A2, which has a starting point of 2 years' custody, with a range of 1 to 4 years' custody. I take a starting point of 21 months imprisonment.

As regards aggravating factors, by contacting Jacqueline Kelly you both sought to conceal or destroy relevant evidence and to involve others in the conduct. Secondly the offence was committed whilst you were under investigation for child neglect and you had only recently been subject to a condition not to have unsupervised contact with a child under 16. As regards mitigating factors, you have no relevant previous convictions. I have taken into account everything that is said in the Pre-Sentence Report and everything that has been said on your behalf by your counsel. I note in particular your previous history of employment and your current vulnerability. Whilst you pleaded guilty after the pre-trial preparation hearing, you did so on a basis of plea which, following a Newton hearing, I found to be untrue. For that reason you are entitled only to a 10% reduction in your sentence.

As regards the possibility of suspending your sentence, I apply in your case both the relevant sentencing guideline and case law relevant to that question. As I have just said an offence of perverting the course of justice almost always requires an immediate custodial sentence and very compelling reasons will be needed if immediate custody is to be avoided.

I have considered carefully all the points which your counsel has made. However, in your case too, there are no sufficiently compelling reasons to suspend the sentence which I impose. For the reasons I have just given in respect of Sharon Humphreys, appropriate punishment can only be achieved by immediate custodial sentence.

Please all stand

Sharon Humphreys

On Count 4, for the offence of conspiracy to do acts tending and intending to pervert the course of justice, the sentence is 9 months' imprisonment.

Karen Smith

On Count 4, for the offence of conspiracy to do acts tending and intending to pervert the course of justice, the sentence is 12 months' imprisonment.

Sam Wyatt

On Count 4, for the offence of conspiracy to do acts tending and intending to pervert the course of justice, the sentence is 15 months' imprisonment.

You may all go.