

Neutral Citation No: [2025] NICC 18

*Judgment: approved by the Court for handing down
(subject to editorial corrections)**

Ref: [2025] NICC 18

ICOS No: 25/020300

Delivered: 24 June 2025

IN THE CROWN COURT IN NORTHERN IRELAND

THE KING

v

ALAN TREVOR CAMPBELL

HIS HONOUR JUDGE MILLER KC

Sentencing remarks

[1] The defendant was arraigned on 8 May 2025 and entered guilty pleas to all 11 counts on the Bill of Indictment. He falls to be sentenced for:

- Counts 1, 3, 8, 10 and 11: Possessing indecent image of children (maximum sentence 5 years).
- Counts 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9: Making indecent images Category A, B and C (maximum sentence 5 years).

Facts

[2] On 12 January 2022 police from the Child Internet Protection Team attended the home address of the defendant to conduct a search by virtue of a warrant under Article 4 Protection of Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1978. Police spoke with the defendant and informed him of their enquiries, and he was arrested on suspicion of making and possessing indecent images of children.

[3] The defendant was taken to Musgrave Custody Suite for questioning and several devices belonging to him and found at his home were seized by police.

[4] During the initial interview the defendant gave “no comment” responses to all questions and was released on police bail pending the forensic examination of the devices seized from his home. Following examination, the following devices were found to contain the following illegal material:

JD1 Mobile Phone

Category A: 2 images and 39 videos

Category B: 10 images and 28 videos

Category C: 34 images and 17 videos

JD2 Samsung Mobile Phone

Category A: 3 images and 5 videos

Category B: 6 images and 11 videos

Category C: 18 images and 6 videos

JG1 HP Laptop

Category A: 1 image

Category C: 1 image

MB1 Toshiba Hard Drive

Category C: 14 images

MB8 HP Laptop

Category C: 1 image

MC2 External Hard Drive

Category B: 1 image

Category C: 14 images

[5] A total of 211 indecent images of children (“IIOC”) were found over the six devices as follows:

- Category A: 6 images and 44 videos
- Category B: 17 images and 39 videos
- Category C: 82 images and 23 videos

[6] The following is a description of the various categories:

- Category A (previously levels 4 or 5) denotes images involving penetrative sexual activity or sexual activity with an animal or sadism.
- Category B denotes images involving non-penetrative sexual activity.

- Category C denotes other indecent images not falling within A or B.

[7] The defendant was further interviewed on 20 August 2024 during which he was informed by police as to the images found and on what devices. He admitted that he was responsible for the images.

JD1

[8] He admitted getting these images from an online forum possibly KIK and that he would also have used this forum to talk to people. He was asked by police how these “chats” led to IIOC, and he explained that he was having problems in his marriage and struggling with fertility and that to try and help he began looking at porn and “pushed past what was decent”. He told police he did not know why he did it.

JD2

[9] The defendant was asked about this device and made similar replies as to the device JD1. The search history for this device was also put to him by police which included searching for PTHC (pre-teen hard core). He said that he was probably aware of what that search term meant and that the searches in June 2018 were made by him and that these would have returned IIOC.

[10] In relation to JG1, MB8, MC2 and MB1 the defendant admitted those were his devices and he would similarly have been responsible for the indecent images of children in terms of both searching and saved on each of the devices.

[11] The totality of the images and videos was put to the defendant by police during this interview on 20 August 2024 and he accepted responsibility for them but denied he had a sexual interest in children. The search terms as highlighted by the prosecution witness, Samule Goligher, would show that in terms of sexual interest in children these terms would be very relevant.

[12] Mrs Gilmore highlights the following aggravating features, which the court accepts:

- Offending over a long period of time between 2014 and 2022.
- Images found in each category across all the defendant’s devices.
- Impact on victims.
- Defendant in a position of trust as a GP.

[13] Against this the following mitigating features apply:

- No previous convictions.

- Early guilty plea.

The defendant in his life setting

[14] Trevor Campbell is 40 years of age, a doctor who was practising as a General Practitioner. He has no previous convictions.

[15] The court has received the pre-sentence report ("PSR"), dated 18 June 2025 and prepared by Siobhan Sheils (PBNI). This together with Mr Faulkner's written submissions have assisted in determining the approach to sentence set within the context of the defendant's personal circumstances.

[16] Campbell describes a happy and secure early life as the only child to loving parents. He progressed through primary and grammar school without incident but was later diagnosed with dyslexia. Whether this impacted on his initially being turned down for medicine at university is not clear, but he did eventually succeed in qualifying as a doctor in 2014, via a degree in Biomedical Science followed by subsequent PhD research. He then joined a GP practice in Donaghadee where he remained until the detection of the index offences in January 2022 after which he was suspended though permitted to provide telephone advice to adult patients. This ceased in September 2024 when he first appeared before the Magistrates' Court. He fully anticipates losing his employment completely because of this conviction.

[17] The defendant has lost his career, his marriage and likely direct access to his child because of his offending. In his discussion with Ms Sheils, he elaborates on what he told police during interview in August 2024, to the effect that at the time he commenced accessing the IIOC he and his wife were experiencing fertility difficulties. He was also under pressure as he sought to complete his professional studies, and he felt isolated and out of control. Why this should have led him down the path culminating in the index offending, is, however, hard to fathom.

[18] The fact that the defendant continued searching for and obtaining access to these images for a period of upwards of seven years, during which time he worked as a GP and undoubtedly in circumstances where he would have had access to young patients, is a cause for real concern. Although, in common with many who appear before the courts charged with these types of offences, he continues to deny having any sexual interest in children, his admission to being excited by what he saw and that he masturbated whilst watching the images, tells a very different story.

[19] Ms Shiels assesses Campbell as presenting a medium likelihood of general re-offending over the next two years and as not currently crossing the threshold of posing a significant risk of serious harm. I accept this conclusion based in part on the defendant's lack of any criminal antecedents and partly because it is acknowledged that he recognises the harm he has caused to the children in the images; his family including his ex-wife and child; as well as the repercussions for himself and his career. He advised Ms. Shiels that he is disgusted with himself and he displays an insight into the impact of his offending. Given these conclusions I am satisfied that

he does not fall to be sentenced as a dangerous offender pursuant to Article 15 of the Criminal Justice (Northern Ireland) Order 2008.

Sentencing guidelines

[20] In considering sentence in cases of this nature one must have due regard to the serious harm these offences cause. As the Lord Justice Clerk (Gill) said in *HM Advocate v Graham*:

“Viewing, downloading, and distributing indecent images of children is part of the process of child sexual abuse. Each photograph represents the serious abuse of the child depicted. Those who access this material through the internet bear responsibility for the abuse by creating a demand for the material ... Such offences can properly be said to contribute to the pain, discomfort and fear suffered by children who are physically abused and to the psychological harm that the children concerned would suffer from knowing that others would get perverted pleasure from looking at the material ...”

[21] More recently our own Court of Appeal put matters this way in *The King v Andrew Maxwell* [2023] NICA 21:

“... For every photograph it is trite to say there is an abused child, for many of the persons who appear before the court they seem to self-excuse on the basis that the abuse has already taken place. The photograph has been taken and, therefore, it is an event passed. This, of course, is distorted thinking. By virtue of involvement in this trade it ensures that abuse will continue, and such materials exist because there is a market for it. That is why severe and deterrent sentences are required in this area for these offences ...”

[22] The sentencing guidelines for these offences are well known and do not need to be repeated in extenso. The primary authority in this jurisdiction remains that of *Attorney General's Reference (No 8) of (2009) Christopher McCartney* [2009] NICA 52:

“The abuse of young and vulnerable children is abhorrent and the material that forms the basis of charges of possessing, making, or distributing indecent images of children involves real children, in some cases, babies, being subjected to vile acts of degradation. Those who access such material for their own perverse sexual gratification, perpetuate the market for such abuse and are guilty by association with those who originally

carried out those despicable physical acts and created those images.

The custody threshold is passed where a person is in possession of large amounts of material in Class A or has distributed a small amount of such material. A community-based penalty is generally considered appropriate where the amount of material is small, and the defendant has no previous convictions.”

[23] In the present case whilst the number of images is small, a significant number of the videos are in the most serious category A, which involves penetrative acts of sexual abuse involving children including acts of bestiality.

[24] Mr Faulkner argues that there has been considerable delay in bringing this case to court. Whilst I accept that more than three years elapsed between the date of arrest and the defendant appearing before this court this was in large measure due to the need to triage his devices given his failure to cooperate during his first interview in January 2022. It is therefore wrong to suggest that the defendant did not cause or contribute to the delay. Further Mr Faulkner is wrong when he asserts that the defendant was only interviewed once when plainly he was interviewed for a second time in August 2024, during which he was confronted with the content of his devices and for the first time made admissions. He appeared in court a month later.

[25] I take account of the aggravating factors highlighted above, balanced by the defendant’s previously clear record and his admission of guilt at arraignment, for which the maximum reduction of one third in the sentence that would have applied had he been convicted of these offences after a contested trial applies. Considering this I shall impose a Combination order, which I must emphasise is a direct alternative to a term of immediate custody.

[26] Should the defendant fail to comply with the requirements of the order leading to it being revoked the sentence he can expect to be imposed in its place is one of nine months. I trust, however that this will not prove necessary and that he takes the opportunity to address the issues, which brought him before this court and that he can begin to rebuild his life from this point on.

[27] Finally, I grant a destruction order in respect of the seized devices containing indecent images and the defendant is warned about inclusion on barring lists for working with children and vulnerable adults.

Sentence

[28] All counts – Combination Order – 75 Hours Community Service together with a two year Probation Order, the terms of which should reflect those set out in the conclusion to the PSR.

Ancillary Orders

- [29] (1) Sexual Offences Prevention Order – as per the draft submitted to the court. This will remain in force for five years from today’s date.
- (2) The defendant is subject to the notification requirements of the Sex Offences Act 2003 for five years.