

Disgraced Jehovah's Witness elder jailed for sexually abusing a girl

By [Leicester Mercury](#) | Posted: July 19, 2016

By by Suzy Gibson



A disgraced Jehovah's Witness elder has been jailed for eight years for sexually abusing a girl.

Martyn Barron (55) pleaded guilty to four counts of sexually assaulting a child under 13, more than 10 years ago.

The victim, now an adult, said the abuse had devastated her life.

[Leicester Crown Court](#) was told Barron, of Walton Street, [Belgrave](#), Leicester, sought to blame the child for his wrongdoing in a pre-sentence report.

He has been disfellowed by his Jehovah's Witness community – where he formerly held a senior position as an elder figure, similar to that of a pastor.

Sentencing, Recorder Adrian Reynolds said: "How can a man who professes to have a belief in God have acted in the way you did?"

"The effect upon her has been devastating.

"For a moments fleeting sexual pleasure, for you, there's a lifetime of sexual trauma for a victim who can't understand why someone should behave in such a way.

"It was abuse by someone who was thoroughly respected within your religious community.

"Although you pleaded guilty, the admissions you made were loaded with self-justification – and despite what your advocate has said, it's very telling in the pre-sentence report that you believe this was all her fault.

"You're mired in the kind of self-justification that is the hallmark for dyed-in-the-wool paedophiles."

Steven Taylor, prosecuting, said the victim was 10 or 11 when the defendant touched her intimately.

The victim confided in someone years later and her parents then learnt about what had happened.

When confronted about the abuse, the defendant admitted wrongdoing but claimed he thought she was nearer 15.

Mr Taylor said: "He was interviewed by the police in August last year and acknowledged there had been a number of sexual incidents, then saying he thought the victim was about 13."

The defendant tried suggesting to the police the youngster encouraged him which was not accepted by the complainant.

Michael Garvey, mitigating, said Barron had no previous convictions.

He said: "He'd been an elder for some time, helping people with their problems, trying to assist and listening – it was something that played upon him.

"It was one of the factors that led him to behave in this way at other times."

He said the defendant no longer stood by criticism of the victim in his pre-sentence report and accepted harm caused to her was inevitable.

Mr Taylor said: "He's no longer entitled to play a full part within the church.

"He gave up his engineering job as it would occasionally involve him going into schools and thought it would be impractical to explain his whereabouts to the police and explain the situation to his boss.

"There are fewer people available for him to contact now or have any sort of relationship with in the future.

"His wife has a disability and he was her carer; life will be much harder for her while he's incarcerated.

"He's willing to cooperate with any rehabilitation."

Barron was made the subject of an indefinite sexual harm prevention order banning unsupervised contact with under 16s and will remain on a sex offender register for life.