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NEWS

Jehovah's Witness abused girls after luring them with video games, court told

Married Paul Shields denies assaulting the youngsters as they played the games



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BY AGENCY STAFF
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Paul Shields

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A Jehovah's Witness sexually abused three young girls after luring them with video games, a court was told.



The prosecution alleges that Shields, a married father and former plumber, repeatedly abused the girls when he was in his 30s.

Mr Espley said it was not until 2014 that two of the women, who were under-age at the time of the alleged offences, reported the matters to police.

Shields, now of Gordon Street, York, was arrested and charged with three counts of indecent assault. He denied the allegations and appeared for trial this week dressed in a smart navy-blue blazer and tie.

Mr Espley said that heavily-built Shields, who also previously lived in Darlington, sexually assaulted the girls over their clothes. The females said he did not touch them in any intimate areas, "but was very close to them".

The barrister said that when the elders of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Guisborough congregation heard about the allegations, Shields asked them to "disfellowship" him from the church. The act of "disfellowshipping" is a disciplinary measure against members who have wronged.

Shields allegedly wrote a letter of apology to each of the girls saying he was "very sorry for what I did", but that "I did not feel I was doing anything wrong".

The second alleged victim said she had decided to come forward after years of secrecy because the memory of the alleged attacks started to prey on her mind and "made her feel sick".

The third female, who reported the matters to police in 2015, said she could vividly recall at least three occasions when Shields sexually assaulted her, although each of the women claimed the abuse happened a number of times.

She claimed Shields sent her some "fairly odd" emails after the alleged abuse, including one in which he apologised for "upsetting" her and another where he signed off with 'Love from you know who'.



The female, who was a teenager at the time of the alleged incidents, also said she had received a written letter of apology from Shields in which he allegedly wrote that what he had done was "inexcusable", added the barrister.

In police interview, Shields said he "didn't believe" he had sexually assaulted the girls, said Mr Espley.

The trial continues.

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