



[JAILED: Emad El-Haddad]

Sep 03, 2021 10:56 BST

Man jailed for human trafficking offence following victimless county lines prosecution

A London county line holder who trafficked a 15-year-old boy to Weston-Super-Mare to exploit him as a drugs runner has been jailed following a victimless prosecution.

Emad El-Haddad, 23 (10.06.99) of Gloucester Terrace, Westminster was sentenced on Thursday, 2 September at Taunton Crown Court to seven years and two months' imprisonment.

He is also subject to a confiscation order under the Proceeds of Crime Act and a ten-year Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order (STPO). The terms of the order include strict conditions on his access to a mobile phone, prevent him from arranging travel or accommodation for any person under the age of 18 except for immediate family members and bar him from travelling to the Avon and Somerset policing area.

He pleaded guilty on Wednesday, 1 September at the same court on the first day of his trial to possession with intent to supply crack cocaine and heroin as well as arranging or facilitating the travel of another person with a view to exploit.

The investigation was jointly carried out by officers from Operation Orochi, the Met's specialist crime team dedicated to tackling high harm offenders involved in county lines drugs supply, and Avon and Somerset's equivalent Operation Remedy.

The investigation began on Friday, 8 January after a 15-year-old boy from London was reported missing. Joint enquiries between the Met and Avon and Somerset Police located the missing child on Thursday, 14 January in Weston-Super-Mare. When he was located he was found to be in possession of a phone, coach tickets and two 'g-packs' (street ready packages) containing crack cocaine and heroin which were hidden in his underpants.

Subsequent forensic analysis found El-Haddad's DNA present on the wrappings for the drugs recovered from the child.

El-Haddad was arrested at his home address later on the same day. Detectives searched the address and recovered various mobile phones. One of the mobile phones recovered was a Samsung burner phone which housed the 'Reece' County Line and was involved in sending messages advertising the sale of Class A drugs to users based in Weston-Super-Mare. Analysis of other recovered devices showed that El-Haddad was in frequent contact with the boy. This contact included El-Haddad arranging the accommodation for the missing child and directing his activities as a drugs runner. Further messages showed that he refused to allow the boy to make contact with his family for fear it would alert the police.

Subsequent enquiries identified CCTV showing El-Haddad in the company of the child victim at Victoria Coach Station on the 23 and 28 December 2020 and 9 January 2021. It was established the child had been exploited on several previous occasions as a drugs runner. This also included him acting as

a drugs runner for the Reece line over the Christmas and New Year periods. On each of the three occasions the CCTV showed that El-Haddad had entered with the missing child, purchased him a coach ticket for travel to Weston-Super-Mare.

Detective Constable Ben Baker, the investigating officer from the Met's Operation Orochi, said: "El-Haddad has exploited this young and vulnerable boy to facilitate his drug supply. This sentence highlights our ability to pursue those involved with exploiting children for drug supply, irrespective of whether a victim assists the police or not. We hope this case will discourage future gangs from using children as drugs runners by showing it isn't any barrier to their prosecution.

"Offenders like him hope that by using vulnerable children as drugs runners they will shield themselves from identification and prosecution by law enforcement. This is because frequently, these exploited persons are too scared to assist police."

Joshua Weldon, Avon and Somerset Police's designated investigating officer in the case, said: "Exploiting children to sell drugs is despicable. It puts children at risk and causes heartache for families and carers who fear the worst when their child goes missing.

"We welcome the court's decision to impose a ten-year Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order in this case. El-Haddad must not be allowed to put any other child at risk for his dirty profit.

"The court has also accepted an application under the Proceeds of Crime Act which means that El-Haddad must forfeit any assets he can't account for up to £2,400, based on the value of the drugs seized.

"El-Haddad had to admit his guilt today due to the weight of evidence against him thanks to the close collaboration between our two police services."