# Man sentenced for bizarre prank involving sex toy at store



A 41-year-old man, Ricki Hughes, was recently sentenced to 12 weeks in prison following a bizarre incident at a Go Outdoors store in Warrington, Cheshire. The event, which took place on January 4 this year, stemmed from what Hughes claimed was a prank related to a stag do. He entered the store around 2.30pm, requesting a refund for a pair of shoes while presenting staff member Louise Riley with a shoe box that contained a sex toy alongside the footwear.

During the encounter, Hughes reportedly told Riley, "It’s just banter," as he took the sex toy out of the box and sniffed it in front of her, while a second man recorded the incident on a mobile phone. This prank left Riley feeling "humiliated" and "incredibly distressed," prompting her to burst into tears and require assistance from colleagues. The incident escalated to the point where Riley asked Hughes to leave the store due to the discomfort he was causing to staff and patrons.

Following the incident, Hughes faced legal consequences that culminated in his conviction for using threatening, abusive, or insulting behaviour, which resulted in an immediate prison sentence. The case was heard at Warrington Magistrates’ Court on March 19, where his previous criminal record, which includes a total of 30 convictions for 69 offences, was taken into account. His past offences range from drug-related matters to breaches of community orders and failures to appear in court.

During the subsequent proceedings, his defence counsel, Julian Nutter, acknowledged the impact of Hughes's actions, suggesting that they represented an outdated sense of humour. Nutter commented, "We still have a sense of humour in this country," contrasting traditional comedic styles with modern sensitivities and suggesting that Hughes's actions stemmed from an innocent prank gone wrong.

After serving six weeks of his initial 18-week sentence, Hughes sought to appeal the duration of his imprisonment. The appeal was reviewed by Recorder Carwyn Cox, who expressed that Hughes's behaviour had been "clearly distasteful and ill thought through." In relaying the court's decision, Cox noted that while the nature of the incident was inappropriate, he acknowledged flaws in the original sentencing, resulting in a reduced sentence of 12 weeks.

Hughes, identified as a carer for his son with Tourette's syndrome, had been on licence for prior offences at the time of this incident and is expected to remain incarcerated until mid-2026. Despite the reduction in his sentence, he was reminded by the court of the serious nature of his behaviour and its impact on the victim and her colleagues, as well as the need for appropriate conduct in public settings.

The case highlights ongoing discussions around social norms, public behaviour, and the balance between humour and respect within contemporary societal contexts.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-manchester-39545661> - Provides context on legal proceedings and sentencing in UK courts related to public behavior.
* <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-justice-act-1988> - Outlines legal frameworks applicable to public order offenses in the UK.
* <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/social-connections/202201/change-in-social-norms> - Discusses shifts in social norms and their impact on public behavior.
* <https://www.judiciary.uk/topics/judicial-sentencing-guidelines/> - Explains sentencing guidelines for magistrates' courts in England and Wales.
* <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/law-and-courts/court-system/taking-a-case-to-court/> - Presents general information on how cases are heard in UK courts.