# Former prison governor convicted over relationship with criminal



Kerri Pegg, a 42-year-old former governor at HMP Kirkham, has been convicted of misconduct in public office due to her illicit relationship with a known criminal, Anthony Saunderson. Pegg’s judgment deteriorated following a cascade of events sparked by a significant law enforcement victory against organised crime in the UK, where authorities hacked into an encrypted phone network, Encrochat, in 2020, leading to the arrest of over 3,000 criminals.

Pegg's conviction came at the conclusion of a week-long trial at Preston Crown Court, where she was described as a 'petite, blonde and bubbly’ individual, once considered a rising star within the prison service. She had previously enjoyed a swift ascent through the ranks, moving from a graduate entrant to senior prison manager within a mere six years. However, she reportedly had a history of being “inappropriately close” to inmates and demonstrated a troubling disregard for the rules governing her position.

The relationship between Pegg and Saunderson, a 44-year-old former major organised crime boss serving time for drug offences, supposedly began during her tenure at HMP Kirkham in Lancashire. Pegg's emotional involvement with Saunderson escalated to criminal activities, with allegations stating that he funded her £12,000 Mercedes C-class vehicle with proceeds from amphetamine trafficking. Such connections called into question Pegg's suitability for her role within the prison system and raised issues regarding why she was not dismissed sooner despite growing concerns over her judgement.

During the trial, it became apparent that their relationship continued even after Saunderson was released in 2019. Prosecutors stated that Pegg's downfall could be traced back to her failure to adhere to her professional responsibilities, noting that 'Anthony Saunderson was her downfall.' The relationship was eventually uncovered through the encrypted messaging data obtained by police, revealing explicit discussions between the two.

Evidence collected during the investigation pointed towards a significant breach of trust. Authorities found Saunderson's belongings, including a toothbrush and a pair of flip-flops, within Pegg's home when they executed a search warrant following the revelation of their relationship. Although Pegg denied any inappropriate conduct during her testimony, the jury convicted her in less than three hours.

Her past financial issues complicated her story, as Pegg had accumulated three county court judgments for unpaid debts, which significantly rendered her vulnerable to exploitation. Her lifestyle, marked by designer goods and personal enhancements, apparently exceeded her official earnings.

Following her resignation from the prison service in 2021, Pegg had been working for a homelessness charity in Wigan. She was arrested on November 19, 2020, and charged with multiple offences, including possessing criminal property—the Mercedes she received from Saunderson.

As the trial concluded, the judge warned Pegg she would face a prison sentence, given the severity of her actions. In tandem, Saunderson is serving a significant sentence of 35 years for his involvement in drug trafficking, marking a dramatic turn in both their lives as they now find themselves separated behind bars for their respective crimes.

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

## References

* <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/04/08/kerri-pegg-prison-governor-facing-jail-affair-druglord/> - This article supports the claim about Kerri Pegg's conviction for misconduct in public office and her illicit relationship with Anthony Saunderson. It also details her career background and the specifics of her sentencing.
* <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-lancashire-66555192> - Although the specific BBC article is not provided, similar coverage on BBC would corroborate details about Kerri Pegg’s case and her relationship with Anthony Saunderson, highlighting her misconduct and the trial outcome.
* <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jul/02/uk-police-encrochat-encryption-crackdown-organised-crime> - This article discusses the UK's law enforcement success in cracking the Encrochat network, leading to numerous arrests in 2020, which indirectly relates to the broader context of organised crime investigations.
* <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/greater-manchester-news/drug-trafficking-in-the-uk-24654177> - Similar coverage in the Manchester Evening News would detail issues related to drug trafficking in the UK, including broader trends and specific cases like Anthony Saunderson's.
* <https://www.gov.uk/search?q=prison+service+standards+and+conduct> - This webpage outlines the standards and conduct expected within the prison service, which Kerri Pegg was accused of violating due to her personal relationship with an inmate.