

REX

V

AB

SENTENCING REMARKS

1. AB you will be sentenced to a Referral Order for 10 months.
2. AB you are 12 years old (dob 26/7/2012) and had no previous convictions until you appeared before me on 7/1/2025 and pleaded Guilty to the offence of Violent Disorder. That offence arose from events on the 18/7/2024 in the Harehills area of Leeds, which were reported throughout the country, following widespread public disorder.
3. On that day social care workers were attempting to take some children into care from a house in Harehills. They were initially prevented from doing so and required the assistance of the police. This led to a large crowd gathering and the crowd turned hostile and then violent towards the police officers, attacking them and their vehicles. Other property and vehicles were then targeted and attacked, including a First Bus , that was damaged then set alight and burnt out. That bus helped people in the very community where you lived. Your family or friends may well have used such a bus to get to school, or college or work. The overall financial costs of the damage, the cleaning up operation and the wider impact on the community, your community, where you were living with your family, is estimated at over £800,000.
4. It should be noted that you were still only 11 years old on the 18/7/2024, your 12th birthday being 8 days later. As far as your individual behaviour is concerned it was captured on various CCTV and social media footage and can be summarised as follows :-
 - i) The footage shows you as part of the crowd at the beginning of events, forcing officers to retreat along Luxor Street onto Harehills Lane as you and others threw missiles at them;

- ii) As the police drove off you attacked their vehicles, throwing stones, kicking a football at one vehicle and punching out at another as it drove past;
- iii) You then helped damage an abandoned police vehicle, throwing a child's scooter at it and helping others flip it onto its side;
- iv) Later, when the First Bus had been set alight you punched out at one of its windows and then threw a brick at the bus;
- v) Finally, whilst stood by the burning bus you were filmed, openly boasting about what you and others had done – again I repeat in and to your own community and this footage was then posed on Tik Tok.

I pause to observe that it is shocking that an 11 year old should get involved in such behaviour.

- 5 . There is a pre – sentence report, dated 5/2/2025. When you were interviewed by the Youth Justice Service for the pre sentence report you said you were upset because one of those taken into care was a friend of yours. However upset you may have been it did not justify your subsequent behaviour. The author of the report makes the point that you saw older children and adults engaging in the public disorder and so you joined in and copied them. Since this incident you have been subject to a night time curfew and you have kept out of trouble.
- 6 You have in fact been working with the Youth Justice Service on what is called an out of court disposal because you damaged a police cell whilst you were at the police station for this offence. I am told you now understand how serious this offence was, that you have said more than once you are sorry for becoming involved and you have completed a course called the Think First Group Programme.
- 7 In sentencing you I must apply the principles set out in the Definitive Guideline for Sentencing Children and Young People.

- 8 Paragraph 4.1 of that Guideline sets out the 6 matters I must have regard to when considering sentence. They are that the principal aim of the youth justice system is to prevent re-offending / the welfare of the child, in other words what is best for you / your age / the seriousness of the offence / the likelihood of further offences being committed and the extent of harm likely to arise from any further offending.
- 9 Paragraph 4.2 of the Guideline states that the Court should start by looking at the seriousness of the offence when considering sentence. There is no doubt this is a very serious incident of Violent Disorder.
- 10 Paragraph 6.2 of the Guideline makes it clear that the starting point is to consider the sentence likely to have been imposed on the date the offence was committed. I repeat again, you were only 11 years old on 18/7/2024. Given your age and lack of previous convictions then custody could only be imposed if the sentence was fixed by law, and it is not in this case. The grave crime provisions do not apply to an offence of Violent Disorder. More importantly paragraph 6.19 of the Guideline states as follows
- “ A Referral Order is the mandatory sentence in the youth court, for most children and young persons who have committed an offence for the first time and have pleaded guilty to an imprisonable offence”
- In other words that is the sentence I am required to impose, unless any of the exceptions apply in this case and they do not.
- 11 As I explained at the outset of my remarks the sentence is therefore a Referral Order for a period of 10 months.
- 12 Given what I have read about you and your family it is not realistic to impose any compensation order that would have to be paid by your parents. They will however have to pay the costs of £85 and a surcharge of £26, a total of £111, and I will hear representations about how that money can be paid.