

IN THE COUNTY COURT AT BOURNEMOUTH

Bournemouth Combined Court
Courts of Justice
Deansleigh Road
Bournemouth
Dorset
BH7 7DS

BEFORE:

DISTRICT JUDGE VEAL

BETWEEN:

**BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE
COUNCIL**

CLAIMANT

- and -

REUBEN CHARLES

DEFENDANT

Legal Representation

Mr Capildeo (Counsel) on behalf of the Claimant Local Authority
Defendant not in attendance nor represented

Other Parties Present and their status

None known

Judgment

Judgment date: 27 October 2025
(start and end times cannot be noted due to audio format)

Reporting Restrictions Applied: No

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District Judge Veal:

1. The court is concerned with Reuben Charles, the Defendant. He was born on 14 May 1967, and he is going to be eighty years old. The Claimant in these proceedings is BCP Council.
2. The application before the Court is a contempt application dated 21 October 2024, brought by the Claimant against the Defendant. The Claimant has alleged and has subsequently proved that the Defendant has breached the terms of an injunction dated 24 August 2022 (as subsequently varied). On 21 October 2025, the Defendant was found at trial to have committed 22 breaches of the injunction, as set out in the schedule of breaches. They range in date from 10 June 2024 to 28 August 2025, the Court having given permission to amend the date of the last of the allegations against him.
3. I gave a judgment on 21 October 2025 at the end of the trial which set out the procedural history. The Defendant had been advised of his rights to silence and representation and privilege against incrimination. He was aware of the hearing but did not attend. He was certified as fit to attend, and the reasons recorded by the prison given by him for his non attendance at trial were these:

"Fuck BCP. Fuck the Judge. Kiss my black ass."

4. I determined that the trial should proceed in the Defendant's absence and, having in mind his rights under Article 6 of the European Convention on Human Rights, I adjourned at the end of trial so that the Defendant could again decide whether or not he wished to make any representations today.
5. The matter is listed today for sentencing. The Defendant has refused to get onto the prison transport today and to appear. I infer from that, firstly, that he knew that he was to attend today, and secondly, that he chose not to.
6. I have considered again the nature of this hearing, the principles that arise from case law, including the case of *Sanchez v Oboz* [2015] EWHC 235 (Fam). I am satisfied that the Defendant has been served with the application, that he knows that he was found to have committed the breaches set out in the schedule and that he had the evidence relied upon by the Claimant. In the judgment that I gave at the trial, I recorded the various dates of service of those documents. The order that I made at the conclusion of the trial, has been served through the prison authority on the Defendant.
7. I have set out the Defendant's reasons for not attending the trial. Until that point, he had been actively seeking representation and had appeared, and therefore had been aware of the need to prepare for the trial and any sentencing hearing, but he was not able to secure new representation. He has, in not coming to the trial and not attending today, appeared to be unwilling to engage with the process, and I believe he has taken a view which is at least one of indifference towards it.
8. I am not satisfied in the light of the history since September 2025 that an adjournment would be likely to secure the Defendant's attendance. The Defendant is of course disadvantaged by his non attendance, in that he is unable today to make representations in relation to any sentence which may be imposed upon him, and he was prejudiced at trial by not being present to challenge the Claimant's evidence. However, as I said at

the trial, that appears to have been his own choice, and so any prejudice caused to him is not undue, in the sense that he has brought it upon himself.

9. I suppose one might say the Claimant is not prejudiced by delaying these proceedings, in that we are here today without the need for the Claimant to have called additional witnesses or anything of that nature, but clearly, the Claimant would be prejudiced to the extent that, if I were to adjourn today, it would incur further costs in it coming back again for another hearing. I have taken into account all of the circumstances, together with the principles in the overriding objective in rule 1 of the Civil Procedure Rules, and I have reached the clear conclusion on balance that the Court should proceed in the Defendant's absence.
10. Turning then to the 22 breaches that the Court has found, breach 1 was on 10 June 2024. It was a breach of paragraphs 2, 3, 5 and 7 of the injunction. It involved the Defendant's use of threatening language, including what might have been perceived by the resident affected as a threat to kill:

“They’ll never find your body”

were his words, and there were actual attempts by the Defendant to damage property.

11. Breach 2 was on 30 July 2024. It was a breach of paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the injunction, and that involved the Defendant being verbally abusive and then pouring a noxious substance believed to be bleach into the flat below his, causing damage. The resident affected confirmed that he was fearful as a result, not only because some of the substance splashed onto his arm while he was in bed, but also because of what the Defendant, he thought, might be capable of in future.
12. Breach 3 was on 22 August 2024. That was a breach of paragraphs 1 and 3 of the injunction, and that involved the Defendant intentionally flooding the flat below, causing the resident concerned to have to move out for a week whilst repairs were being carried out, and destroying some of that resident's possessions. The Defendant was unremorseful at the time. The resident sent an email to the Claimant on the following morning, setting out how they worked hard to overcome their own adverse experiences in life. They had been caused as a result of the Defendant's behaviour to come close to relapse after not having drunk alcohol for some 20 years and that that resident was having suicidal thoughts.
13. Breach 4 was on 29 August 2024. It was a breach of paragraphs 1 to 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant being verbally abusive to residents, throwing a rock at one and swinging a piece of wood at them. He then threatened to stab that resident and damage his car.
14. Breach 5, on 16 September 2024, was a breach of paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of the injunction. That involved the defendant being verbally abusive and threatening towards another resident in the presence of the housing officer.
15. I will take breaches 6 and 7 together. They were both on 17 October 2024, and they relate to breaches of paragraphs 5, 6 and 7. The Defendant was drunk and disorderly in public, shouting, swearing and behaving in an intimidating way towards members of the public, threatening to slit their throats. When apprehended, the Defendant went

on to threaten police officers, spitting at them and saying that he would elbow them or would “**bite [their] cock off.**”

16. I will takes breaches 8 and 9 together. That was on the 15 November 2024. Again, breaches of paragraphs 1 to 7 of the injunction. These breaches involved the Defendant being intoxicated and then directing verbal abuse at the same resident as had been the subject of breach 5. He was physically aggressive by punching the resident’s front door and then hit it with a brick, before returning with a hammer, threatening the resident through the window with it and then causing actual damage to the resident’s door. The Defendant’s behaviour only ended when the police intervened. The resident explained that the whole incident lasted some 45 minutes, and that as a result he constantly felt afraid in his own home, despite having previously tried to be nice to the Defendant.
17. Breach 10 was on 16 November 2024. That was a breach of paragraphs 1, 2 and 4 of the injunction and involved the Defendant being verbally abusive in a racially aggravated way of the resident to whom the Defendant’s behaviour in breach 2 had been directed. He said things like:

“You’re going to get it”

And then roamed about outside the resident’s flat in a way that alarmed that resident.

18. Those were the breaches before the Possession Order made in January 2025, and the Defendant then moved to a different property.
19. Breach 11 refers to a number of occasions between February of this year and 18 July 2025. Those were breaches of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction, when the Defendant distressed a female neighbour and threatened her and her husband. The Defendant told the neighbour that he was always watching her, and he said to other people that women should be raped.
20. Breach 12 related to the 10 May 2025 and was a breach of paragraph 5 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant directing racially aggravated verbal abuse at a neighbour. The Defendant called her an illegal immigrant and made similar comments, which made that neighbour concerned feel harassed and alarmed.
21. Breach 13 was on 20 May 2025. That was a breach of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant behaving in an intimidating way towards members of the public by threatening and swearing at them as he walked down the road.
22. Breach 14 was on 22 May 2025. Again, a breach of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant having threatened to stab a neighbour after he had seen him talking to the police.
23. Breach 15 was the first of three breaches which took place on the 19 July 2025. This was a breach of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction, as were indeed the other two. Breach 15 involved the victims in the context of breach 11. Those residents asked the Defendant to turn his music down, which then caused the Defendant to be verbally abusive towards them and to say that he had a gun and was going to kill all of them. The residents say that they believed that the Defendant would carry out those threats.

24. Breach 16 involved the same resident whom the Defendant had threatened to stab in the circumstances of breach 14. The Defendant told that resident to “**fuck off**” and similar, and threatened to wrap an orange bottle around his head if he did not. The resident stated that he felt frightened that the Defendant was going to attack him.
25. Breach 17 then involved the police attendance on the same night. The Defendant started to behave in an antisocial way towards officers, removing his shorts and being racially abusive towards a police officer.
26. Breach 18 was on 1 August 2025. Again, a breach of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant saying to the female neighbour involved in the context of allegations 11 and 15 things which I expect would have been received by her as threat of violence of a sexual nature. The neighbour was concerned about the ongoing campaign of harassment by the Defendant against her.
27. Breach 19 was on 16 August 2025. Again, a breach of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant and the same neighbour, drawing attention to himself and then playing songs containing sexually explicit lyrics or shooting noises.
28. Breach 20 was on 23 August 2025. This was a breach of paragraphs 5 and 6 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant being seen by an off duty police officer apparently intoxicated walking into traffic and causing a nuisance to road users.
29. Breach 21 was on 24 August 2025, a breach of paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant appearing heavily intoxicated and drinking from a bottle, arguing loudly with himself in public. A resident of the local area was walking her dog alone and tried to keep out of the Defendant’s way, but he spotted her and called her a “ **fucking cunt**” and then said similar things, stating that he would get her. The Defendant tried to hit her with a bottle, and the resident concerned stated she felt terrified and fearful for her life.
30. Breach 22 was on 28 August 2025. That was a breach of paragraphs 5 and 7 of the injunction. That involved the Defendant being abusive with police officers whilst carrying out their duty. The officers happened to be female, and the Defendant directed offensive remarks at them and grabbed his genitals whilst doing so.
31. The evidence contains other evidence of alleged breaches which the Claimant did not seek to prove at trial. However, it is apparent that the 22 allegations I have described form part of wider themes in the Defendant’s antisocial behaviour.
32. I have considered the guidelines in *Lovett v Wigan County Council* [2022] EWCA Civ 1631, and, considering the facts of the breaches of the injunction which I have just summarised, in my judgment, I have no real difficulty in reaching the conclusion so that I am sure that the Defendant’s culpability falls within category A on all of those breaches. Some of those breaches are very serious and deliberate breaches within their own right. Others, when viewed in the context of the breaches as a whole, paint a clear picture of the Defendant consistently breaching the order in a manner which is serious.
33. Turning to the harm occasioned by the breaches, there is clear evidence from victims of very serious harm or distress in the context of breaches 2, 3 and 21, which in my judgment clearly fall within category 1. I am satisfied so that I am sure that the violence involved in breach 4 must have caused serious harm or distress to the victim.

34. There are further breaches falling within harm category 1, in my judgment, because of the Defendant having directed antisocial behaviour against the same neighbours on multiple occasions. That, in my judgment, was liable to compound the harm or distress, such that it became very serious to the extent that it already was not. Breaches 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 19 fall into this class of harm caused. Of those, breaches 11 and 18 were liable to make the victim fear that she may have become the victim of a serious sexual offence, and breaches 14, 15 and 16 involved threats of violence.
35. Breaches which clearly fall into harm category 2 because they are not harm category 1 or 3 breaches, in my judgment, are breaches 12 and 13. Others which might have fallen into harm category 1 but for the fact that there is no direct evidence of harm or distress caused are the breaches in 1 and 6. I have resolved that issue in the Defendant's favour such that I find that those fall within harm category 2.
36. Police officers should be able to go about their duty without themselves becoming the victim of antisocial behaviour. The officers concerned have not given victim personal statements, but again, I am sure that behaviour like that of the Defendant will be liable to have a cumulative impact on them throughout the time that they serve in the police force. I therefore conclude that the Defendant's conduct was liable to cause them harm, falling into category 2, which then deals with breaches 7, 17 and 22.
37. The only breach which, in my judgment, caused little harm or distress was in breach 20, which I find falls within harm category 3, although that is liable to have disrupted road users' use of the road.
38. I therefore take as my starting point for breaches 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 21, one of 6 months in custody, with a category range of 8 weeks to 18 months. For breaches 1, 6, 7, 12, 13, 17 and 22, one of 3 months with a category range of adjourned consideration to 6 months, and for breach 20, one of 1 month, with a category range of adjourned consideration to 3 months.
39. Aggravating factors include the Defendant's antecedents, which include 67 criminal convictions for 123 offences. I have had a look at the summary, and what one quickly gleans from a reading of the summary of the Defendant's criminal convictions is that a number are public disorder offences, a number are offences against the person, and at least one of them is a previous conviction for assault on a police officer. A number of those are also bail offences. What is also clear from the offences is that there were a number which relate to the Defendant having a knife in a public place or offences which might be characterised as harassment.
40. In addition, the Defendant has received three sentences for previous breaches of the very injunction with which the Court is dealing. That includes on 2 March 2023, a 4 month immediate imprisonment sentence following a contested committal, on 7 July 2023 following a remand hearing, 5 months' imprisonment, and then on 27 October 2023, a 6 week term of imprisonment.
41. In my judgment, it aggravates the breaches now before the Court that some of them were directed at police officers conducting their lawful duties. I have not taken the culpability element of that into account elsewhere, although I did reflect the harm in the conclusions that I reached. I consider that the aggravated culpability should be reflected in the penalty for breaches 7, 17 and 22.

42. That sort of attitude is also reflected in the Defendant's recorded comments on the day of the trial towards the Claimant and the Court when the Defendant refused to come to Court from prison.
43. Breaches 12 and 17 involve racially aggravated abuse, which itself aggravates those breaches, in my judgment.
44. I take into account the Defendant's wider history of breaches of the injunction and the Defendant's failure to adhere to conditions of bail.
45. The Defendant has shown no remorse and no insight into the harm which his antisocial behaviour has caused. There is no hint of any introspection, of his looking at his own behaviour, which might then cause me to have some confidence that the Defendant is either ready or willing to change.
46. The Defendant has not fully engaged in the proceedings, but on the occasions when he has been before the Court, the Defendant has shown no remorse or any motivation to purge his contempt.
47. The Court has seen a report from Dr Uduwara that is dated 20 October 2024, and that concludes that the Defendant's mental and behavioural disorders are due to psychoactive substance abuse and alcohol abuse, that he suffers from no disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010, and that the Defendant would be capable of complying with the judgment were he to achieve sobriety.
48. In terms of mitigating factors, there are none. The Defendant has not attended Court today, and he has not, as I have indicated, shown in any way any remorse.
49. Taking into account the aggravating factors that I have set out and the lack of mitigating factors, in my judgment, I am going to adjust the sentence from my starting points as follows. For breaches 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19 and 21, I will move up within the range to a sentence of 15 months. On breaches 7, 12 and 22, I move up within the range to one of 6 months. On breach 17, I would move up beyond the range in the guideline to a sentence of 8 months. On breaches 1, 6 and 13, I will move up within the range to a sentence of 5 months, and on breach 20, I will move up within the range to a sentence of 2 months.
50. The Defendant was found in breach following a trial, so he receives no credit for a guilty plea.
51. When considering whether or not to suspend a sentence, the Court reminds itself of the purposes of sentencing, which is not only to punish but also to secure compliance with the order and to rehabilitate. In my judgment, given the flagrancy of the Defendant's disregard for the terms of the injunction and his attitude towards the Claimant and the Court, including what he was recorded as having said on the day of trial when he refused to get on the prison transport, the appropriate punishment can only be achieved by the imposition of an immediate custodial sentence. The Defendant has shown no realistic prospect of rehabilitation in the community. He has continued to flout the order, despite being brought before the courts on multiple occasions and having been given opportunity after opportunity to comply with the terms of the injunction. The Defendant's breaches have continued until very recently indeed. It follows from those

conclusions that, in my judgment, the more limited sentencing options are not ones which I consider to be appropriate in this case.

52. Taking the breaches together, I have applied my mind to how best to apply the principle of totality. I found it difficult to identify a sensible rationale for imposition of a combination of consecutive sentences. I have worked on the basis that I need to impose concurrent sentences because they are of a similar kind, namely antisocial behaviour, albeit that some breaches come with different levels of seriousness to others. Some of them took place within a few days of one another. For example, there are breaches focused around 15 and 16 November 2024 and three breaches on 19 July 2025. However, in order to address the number of breaches and the number of victims affected, some seriously, in my judgment, I need to reflect in some offences a higher penalty to take into account the Defendant's breaches and his offending behaviour as a whole.
53. I consider that I should treat breaches 2, 3, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18 and 21 as lead offences, and I move up again beyond the range to a sentence of 2 years. I appreciate that I have just indicated that that is outside the range contemplated by the guidelines, but if I am going to say that the sentences run concurrently, the sentence does need to reflect the wide scope of the Defendant's antisocial behaviour, proven through his multiple breaches of the injunction.
54. The sentences on the other breaches, so 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 18 and 19, remain 15 months, on breaches 7, 12 and 22 remain 6 months, on breach 17 is 8 months, on breaches 1, 6 and 13, those remain 5 months, and on breach 20, that remains 2 months.
55. The Defendant has spent a total of 69 days on remand for these breaches already, and so is treated as having served 138 days. The Defendant will therefore need to serve a further 592 days in respect of the breaches before the Court. I can work out what that is in months and days in a moment if needs be.
56. The Defendant has the right to apply to purge his contempt in accordance with rule 81.10 of the Civil Procedure Rules.
57. The Defendant also has the right to an appeal, that is rule 81.8. Given the permission to appeal, the time limit is 21 days, and any appeal must be made to the Court of Appeal Civil Division.
58. Because the Defendant may be eligible for release within the next year, and given the breaches of the injunction amounting to antisocial behaviour proven through the application before the Court, I think I should hear some submissions about whether I need to extend the term of the injunction.

(proceedings continue)

59. Having heard submissions from the Local Authority, I extend the term of the injunction until 27 October 2027. I have applied my mind as to whether I should consider amending the terms of the injunction, but the concern that I have is that, although the Defendant is no longer living in the original property, some of the evidence that has led to my imposing this sentence on the Defendant is from residents of that local area and his neighbours at the time, and of course the same principle applies to the later breaches. I hope that by extending the injunction, that will hopefully then provide some

protection to the past victims of the Defendant's behaviour and the wider public, as well as protecting others who have been in close contact, upon the Defendant's released from prison. The hope of the court is that, by the time the Defendant is released, he will in any event have been rehabilitated and will be in a better position to comply with the restrictions in the injunction.

60. I will need to direct a transcript of this judgment at the public expense.

This Transcript has been approved by the Judge.

The Transcription Agency hereby certifies that the above is an accurate and complete recording of the proceedings or part thereof.

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