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Ananova :

Man who persuaded girls to undress escapes prosecution

A man who persuaded two 11-year-old girls to undress in front of him is not to be charged with any offence.

The Crown Prosecution Service says no offence could be found to charge the father of two with.

A police file, including an admission from him that he had "induced" the two girls to drop their trousers and pants, had been passed to the CPS.

A spokesman for the CPS says that it had considered charging him with indecent assault, gross indecency, public order offences and child cruelty, but that under English law his actions did not constitute any offence. The case has led to calls for the law to be changed to close the loophole.

The man, who coaches children in sport in his spare time, told the two 11-year-old girls and their 12-year-old friend they were being entered in a competition with a mail order company for a £50 prize, but had to prove they were over 15 by undressing and showing if they had pubic hair.

The 12-year-old girl refused, but the two 11-year-olds, who cannot

be named for legal reasons, did take off their clothes.

Police and CPS legal experts have been unable to find a suitable charge, partly because the man did not touch them or threaten violence towards them.

The mother of the 12-year-old girl who refused to undress for the man said she was "absolutely gutted" that he would not be prosecuted. She said: "They (the children) were very scared," she said. "He said to them 'let's keep this between ourselves. You do not need to tell your parents about any of this'."

"The police have put a lot of time and effort into this case," added the mother. "They were really convinced that this was going to go to court and that they would get him on some charge. They were absolutely devastated when nothing came of this."

Det Con Cameron McConnell, who arrested the man, said in a letter to the girls' parents, that the man had "reluctantly admitted he did induce" the girls to undress in front of him. The officer, who works for the child protection team, apologised for the "most unsatisfactory conclusion" to the case but said there was nothing else to be done.

Story filed: 13:01 Tuesday 15th January 2002

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