

MATCH.COM dating site now the number one service charged with rape attempts

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Match.com rapist Jason Lawrance jailed for life for attacking women he met on dating website

Jason Lawrance, 50, was described as a 'sexual predator' by police

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PA

A "sexual predator" who raped and assaulted women he met on a dating website has been sentenced to life in prison.

Jason Lawrance, 50, used Match.com to select his victims using the profile names KeepItStraightToday and StraightMan-Looking.

The father-of-three was sentenced today at Derby Crown Court after being convicted of raping five women and will serve a

minimum sentence of 12-and-a-half years before being considered for release.

Judge Greg Dickinson QC told Lawrance he had shown “no remorse” for his actions and described him as “devious, manipulative and dangerous to women”, telling the court he would rape again if given the chance.

Match.com said it was committed to online safety initiatives “I am compelled to the dreadful conclusion that you enjoyed raping women.

“After these terrible crimes you acted as if nothing had happened,” the judge added. “You have shown no remorse - zero appreciation of the seriousness of these offences - for the pain you have inflicted on these ladies, their families and their friends.

“Your aim was to get (the victims) into a compromising situation and then to do whatever you liked to them - anticipating that they would be too frightened or embarrassed to make a complaint, or that they would not be believed if they did come forward.”

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Man ‘raped five women’ after meeting them on Match.com

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Explaining his decision to impose a life term, Judge Dickinson said: "There is a significant risk to members of the public of serious harm occasioned by the commission by you of further offences.

"That phrase is taken from an Act of Parliament. In plain English - you are a danger to women.

"Given the chance, you will rape again. I do not know when it may be safe to release you into the community.

"A sentence of life imprisonment means that you will not be released unless and until the Parole Board considers that it is safe to do so."

Jason Lawrance, 50, was found guilty at Derby Crown Court of raping five women after meeting them on internet dating site match.com.

Lawrance, from Liphook in Hampshire, carried out the attacks between June 2011 and November 2014, including three assaults just months after he married a woman he met through the same website.

He was also found guilty of sexually assaulting and attempting to rape two other women after chatting to them online.

Derby Crown Court heard that four of the victims complained about Lawrance to Match.com, and one of the women was told administrators could not do anything because he had not sent abusive messages that would violate its terms of service.

Lawrance, a former company director turned self-employed builder, texted one of his victims after attacking her apologising for “hurting her” and saying: “When you were crying out for me to stop I couldn’t, I’m so mad at myself xxx.”

The jury heard that he raped another woman in the back of a van which he had parked in a field in Northamptonshire, while a third was attacked at her home while her son was asleep in a nearby bedroom.

He was arrested after a friend of a woman who was raped in Derbyshire in November 2014 went to police.

Shaun Smith, a barrister for the prosecution, told the jury that Lawrance was a Jekyll and Hyde character and that he targeted “vulnerable, naive, lonely women”.

Detective Chief Inspector Allison Rigby, from Derbyshire Police, said the trial had been “devastating” for the victims.

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"I certainly think he is a sexual predator who has preyed on women through match.com that he has met who have got (some) vulnerability," she said.

"He seems to have targeted females who are divorced and widowed.

"Only Jason Lawrance will know how many people he has sexually assaulted - it is possible that there are other people out there.

"I would say (the victims) have been very brave in the fact they have come forward to give evidence and confront him in court.

"I just hope once this case is finished, they can move forward and start to rebuild their lives."

A spokesperson for Match.com said the website welcomed the sentence after working with police for more than a year on the case.

"We are very sorry for those affected and appalled by these terrible acts. Sadly, there is a tiny minority of people who set out to harm others," she added.

"While this is not confined to dating sites or even the internet, those who do so should be convicted and sentenced, as has happened in this case. Our member's safety is our highest priority."

The company is working on a dating industry initiative with the Suzy Lamplugh Trust to spot suspicious behaviour and protect users.

Additional reporting by PA

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