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Ananova :

Bouncy castle boss jailed over sex offences

A convicted paedophile has been jailed for two years after admitting breaching a sex offenders' order six times while running a bouncy castle business.

Terrence Wilcox had also been charged with indecently assaulting four young girls, touching them while helping them on and off the bouncy castle.

He denied these charges and a jury at Cardiff Crown Court found him not guilty of all four counts.

During the trial, the jury had not been told that 42-year-old Wilcox, of Cwm, Ebbw Vale, south Wales, had pleaded guilty to indecently assaulting a girl under the age of 14 at a fete in August 1998.

For this offence, he was sentenced to a three-year probation order and told to register as a sex offender by magistrates in Abertillery, south Wales.

He owned an aeroplane-shaped bouncy castle which he would hire out for events such as children's parties and fetes, and he would supervise the children on the bouncy castle.

Because of his 1998 conviction, magistrates ruled in May this year, under the new Crime and Disorder Act, that Wilcox should only be allowed to administrate the business and take bookings. He should not have direct contact with the children.

A month later, this order was changed at Newport Crown Court to allow Wilcox to set up and dismantle the equipment on site, providing he did so not less than an hour before or after the event. But in June and July this year, Wilcox breached this order on six different occasions, including three children's birthday parties and a mother and toddler event at a community centre, all in south-east Wales.

Instead of hiring somebody else to supervise the children playing on the bouncy castle, he did it himself, helping them on and off the inflatable.

One of these occasions was at Usk Cricket Club, south Wales, where complaints from four young girls that Wilcox had felt their bottoms led to this month's trial at Cardiff Crown Court. Wilcox was acquitted of all these charges today.

Hilary Roberts, defending, told the court that Wilcox had been forced to supervise the children after being let down at the last minute by a member of staff. Wilcox needed to run the bouncy castle business to cover "mounting debts" following a divorce settlement.

Story filed: 18:26 Tuesday 18th December 2001

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