

Victim tells of sexual abuse ordeal at hands of stepfather

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By Rachel Millard

A MAN who was sexually abused by his stepfather when he was a boy has told how the ordeal had long-lasting effects.

Nick French, 42, was tormented by Gary Moscrop, inset below, as a boy growing up in Brighton, including sexual abuse and psychological cruelty. Last Wednesday, his abuser was finally convicted of the historical offences after Mr French stood up in front of a jury to recount the abuse, which happened in Brighton and Sussex between 1979 and 1985. Bravely waiving his anonymity to speak to The Argus, Mr French, who now lives in Cumbernauld, Glasgow, said: "It me a long time to work out that I had not done anything wrong myself and nothing I had done warranted that behaviour towards me.

"I have had great assistance from the doctors and, since going back to the police a couple of years ago, it has been a huge weight off my shoulders putting everything down and saying this happened."

Moscrop, 76, of Hendon Street, Brighton, was jailed last Thursday for ten years after being convicted of ten offences against Mr French, including indecent assault, gross indecency with a child, buggery and child cruelty.

Mr French first spoke up about a small portion of the abuse in 1987 when he was 15, leading to Moscrop being cautioned.

He was finally prosecuted after Mr French revealed the full scale of the abuse in 2012, when he could no longer repress it after having children of his own.

He said: "It became more real because you think, 'how can someone harm a child?' "I had psychological help and I have been to see lots and lots of doctors to try and get rid of the memories.

"I had blamed myself for not saying something sooner. Why could I not explain it sooner?

"It took me a long time to be in the right place in my mind to be able to deal with it."

Jehovah's Witnesses denied access to records

POLICE visited the Jehovah's Witnesses in Brighton as Moscrop was a member, but the religious group "declined to give access to their records", a [Sussex Police](#) spokesman said.

Mr French said he was astonished about that and the fact that Moscrop appeared to have been reaccepted into the organisation years after being thrown out because of his caution for sexual abuse. He said: "I was astonished. There was never any form of repentance or apology or anything like that."

A Jehovah's Witnesses spokesman told The Argus they have a "deep abhorrence of child abuse" and Moscrop had not "held a position of trust in the congregation".

He said Moscrop had not "actively associated" with the congregation for several years. He continued: "Our Bible-based beliefs actively promote a very high moral standard. Jehovah's Witnesses have, for many years, promoted the safeguarding of children."

The group did not respond to an email asking about whether they give information to the police as policy.

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