

Mr Brown, you have pleaded guilty to one count of causing grievous bodily harm.

You committed the crime in the afternoon of 9 June 2024, after you had seen the complainant standing alone in a street, as you and your partner drove past. There had been problems between you for some time. The specifics are not relevant, but there had been arguments between you in the past.

Your partner was driving the vehicle. Upon seeing the complainant, you told her to pull over and you then approached the complainant. A verbal argument broke out between you. By this time, the complainant's parents had arrived to collect him. During the course of the argument and despite the efforts of the complainant's mother to de-escalate the situation, you took hold of the complainant's T-shirt and forcefully head-butted him in the forehead just above his nose. You then punched him three times to the face. He attempted to get away from you but then lost consciousness and fell to the ground. While he was on the ground and unconscious, you punched him twice more to the face. You then left him lying injured on the ground, and left the scene.

The complainant was seriously injured as a result of your violence. He was slipping in and out of consciousness and was treated by an off duty nurse and then ambulance officers at the scene. He was taken to hospital where he later regained consciousness. He suffered multiple fractures to his nose, eye socket, cheek and jawbone as well as displaced teeth and fluid behind the eyes. He underwent surgery during which several metal plates and locking screws were inserted into his fractured jawbone. His impact statement describes the significant ongoing physical and psychological consequences of his injuries.

You are now 22 years of age and were 21 when you committed this crime. Your criminal record demonstrates a concerning history of violent offending. You were dealt with for common assault on two occasions as a youth. On 7 February 2023, you were convicted of family violence offences against your partner, which included assault. You have since committing this crime, been sentenced for a variety of offences, including family violence matters, some of which were committed in breach of a suspended sentence. On 17 December 2024, you were sentenced to seven months imprisonment for some family violence offences which were committed around the time of the crime with which I am dealing. Some of these were committed shortly after the commission of this crime. A sentence of seven days imprisonment was added on 13 February 2025 for the breach of a family violence order. You have now been declared to be a serial family violence perpetrator.

You had a difficult upbringing which included violence perpetrated against you within the family home and instability in your living arrangements. You also have a serious drug problem. You claim to have some insight into the underlying problems which result in your violent offending and you claimed to be determined to reform. You say that you are motivated to do so by the fact that you are the father of a young child. Since being in custody, you have enrolled in courses and placed yourself on waitlists for therapy and treatment with respect to your drug and anger problems.

This is a serious case of causing grievous bodily harm. The argument which led to the violence was instigated by you. You claim that your attack on the complainant was provoked by an

insulting comment made by him during the argument, but, although I must accept this because it is not challenged by the prosecution, it does not justify or even explain the extent of the violence perpetrated by you. The crime was committed in public and, as you well knew, was witnessed by the complainant's parents. The violence was brutal and sustained. Your actions in continuing to punch the complainant to the head when he was lying unconscious on the ground are particularly concerning. The agreed mental element is that you actually foresaw the likelihood of serious injury to the complainant, but you proceeded with your attack nonetheless. There is some distinction between this mental element and a positive intention to cause grievous bodily harm but in the circumstances of this case, the difference is not significant in terms of your moral culpability. On any view of it, you deliberately perpetrated a sustained and violent attack which was almost certain to result in serious injury. A sentence which emphasises general deterrence and denunciation of violence of this nature is called for in this case. Further, in light of your history of violent offending, some emphasis of specific deterrence is also appropriate.

In mitigation, I accept that your plea of guilty was entered at an early time, and has significant utilitarian benefit, for which you should receive appropriate credit. At the very least, it has avoided the need for the complainant to give evidence in court against you in a trial. The early plea is also consistent with the claims you have made about remorse and insight. I will take into account totality, but the effect is limited, because the relevant sentences, including this one, have been imposed for discrete and unrelated offending.

In my view, the only appropriate sentence is a significant term of imprisonment. I will permit an early opportunity for you to apply for parole, having regard in particular to your plea of guilty, your young age and your stated intention to reform.

Liam Brown, you are convicted of the crime to which you have pleaded guilty and sentenced to imprisonment for a term of two years. That sentence will commence from 19 May 2025. Were it not for your plea of guilty, I would have imposed a sentence of two years and six months. You are not eligible for parole until you have served one half of the sentence.