

Local News
The Seattle Times

Former counselor pleads guilty to child sex abuse

Originally published August 20, 2005 at 12:00 am

A 38-year-old man who was accused of sexually molesting several children while he worked as a counselor for the Children's Home Society...

By [Christine Clarridge](#) 

Seattle Times staff reporter

A 38-year-old man who was accused of sexually molesting several children while he worked as a counselor for the Children's Home Society in North Seattle pleaded guilty yesterday to two counts of child sexual abuse.

Court documents said that during the mid-1990s, when Kenneth Mark Bell worked at the children's home, he groomed at least three children between 12 and 15 with attention, bribes and threats and then raped or molested them.

In King County Superior Court, Bell pleaded guilty to one count of first-degree rape of a child and one count of second-degree rape of a child. In exchange for his plea, prosecutors agreed to recommend that Bell be sentenced under the state's Sex Offender Sentencing Alternative, which means he would spend six months in jail followed by two years in an intensive sex-offender treatment program.

If Bell fails to complete the treatment, King County prosecutors said, he faces a standard-range sentence of 13 years in prison.

The investigation into the Federal Way man began in 2003 after a 24-year-old man told police he'd been raped and molested by Bell when he lived at the residential facility for troubled or at-risk children. Because of that victim's age, the statute of limitations on the crimes had run out, but police discovered that Bell had other, younger victims.

In two separate investigations conducted in 1997 and 1998 by the licensing department of Child Protective Services (CPS), Bell was found to have sexually abused two children

with whom he had contact at the children's home.

One was the sister of a resident of the home. Another was a boy who was 12 or 13 when CPS found he'd been abused by Bell between 1995 and 1997.

That younger male victim, now 22, told police and CPS investigators that Bell had "spoiled" him with gifts and money, offered to pay him for sexual acts and threatened his family if he did not comply.

The Children's Home Society, which could not be reached yesterday for comment, fired Bell after his conduct was revealed. A state investigation cleared the home of wrongdoing.

Bell, who remains in custody, is scheduled to be sentenced next month.

Christine Clarridge: 206-464-8983

Christine Clarridge: 206-464-8983 or cclarridge@seattletimes.com; on Twitter: [@c_clarridge](https://twitter.com/c_clarridge).