

Arson offences in London

Key information

Publication type: Current investigation

Publication status: Adopted

Publication date: Thursday 22 May 2025

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Introduction

The London Assembly **Fire Committee** will hold a meeting on 3 June 2025 to examine the increase in arson incidents across London.

Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

In this one-off meeting, the Committee will examine why there has been an increase in arson incidents across London and the nature of those incidents. The Committee will also scrutinise the role of local policing and the London Fire Brigade in responding to arson incidents and wider prevention strategies.

Key issues

- There has been an increase in arson offences across London, the highest has been reported in Greenwich which saw a 67 per cent increase in arson cases over the past two years. The Metropolitan Police has recorded 6,411 arson incidents in London, which has been reported as the highest figure of any force area in England.

- The International Fire and Safety Journal noted that offenders are rarely charged despite the increase in offences. Recent figures published by Legal Expert show that only 5 per cent of reported arson incidents across London led to charges. Furthermore, the journal reported a change in age demographic for offenders in London, with the largest number of arson cases in London (332 incidents) attributed to 30-39 year old demographic.
- There have been reports of arson cases being linked to foreign interference, In October 2024, a man was arrested and pleaded guilty for breaching the National Security Act in connection with an arson attack targeting a warehouse in Leyton in March 2024. Another individual in November 2024 was arrested for assisting with the same arson attack and pleaded guilty for accepting pay from a foreign intelligence agency, in this case Russia.
- Over the past few years there have been several cases of wildfires potentially being linked to arson cases, most recently in April 2025 there were 65 outdoor fires with the LFB reporting “a minority” of the fires recently attended are believed to have been started deliberately.”

Key questions

1. Why has there been a rise in arson incidents in London?
2. What types of arson incidents have contributed to the increase in the past two years?
3. Who is responsible for arson incidents in London?
4. How is LFB working with policing partners and stakeholders to engage with different communities to reduce arson cases?
5. How do LFB and the Metropolitan Police Service work together when an arson incident takes place?

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