

Arson attacks in March-May 2026: LFB's response, community engagement, and lessons learned

Key information

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Meeting aims and objectives (Terms of Reference)

This one-off meeting will examine London Fire Brigade's (LFB's) response to the arson and terrorist incidents that targeted London's Jewish community between March and May 2026. The meeting will scrutinise how effectively LFB responded to these incidents,

including its operational response, partnership working and engagement with affected communities. The Committee will consider the lessons and insights that should inform the Brigade's future response to similar incidents.

Key issues

- London's Jewish community has been targeted by a series of antisemitic arson attacks from March 2026.
 - 23 March: Four volunteer-led Hatzola ambulances were set on fire in Golders Green and destroyed. The fire was attended by approximately 40 firefighters and six fire engines and was treated by the Metropolitan Police as an antisemitic hate crime.
 - 15 April: two attempted arsonists threw petrol bombs at Finchley Reform Synagogue; no damage or injuries were reported. On the same day, an ignited container was thrown at the offices of Persian news organisation Volant Media.
 - 17 April: A bag containing bottles of fluid was seen being lit in the doorway of a building in Hendon that was previously listed as the head office of the educational charity Jewish Futures.
 - 18 April: A bottle suspected of containing an accelerant was thrown through a window of Kenton United Synagogue in Harrow, causing minor damages.
 - 5 May: Police and firefighters were called to respond to a suspected arson attack targeting the former East London Central Synagogue in Tower Hamlets.
- The 23 March incident prompted a significant multi-agency response involving LFB, the Metropolitan Police, and community organisations, which the Mayor described as "rapid, comprehensive and commendable". Following the incident, Deputy Assistant

Commissioner Paul Askew said that LFB’s Community Engagement Team was supporting residents impacted by the fire on the night and the following days.

- In 2024, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) carried out an inspection of LFB which rated its response to major and multi-agency incidents as “outstanding”, highlighting the “extensive role” the brigade plays in counterterrorism.

Key Questions

1. How effective was LFB's operational response to the antisemitic arson attacks in March and April 2026? What were the greatest challenges?
2. How did LFB engage with the local community during and after the arson attacks?
3. How did LFB work with partners, such as police and local community stakeholders, to coordinate a joined-up response to these arson attacks?
4. What lessons can LFB and its partners draw from its response to inform its preparedness for, and future response to, arson terrorist threats facing London’s communities?

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