

All Leaders of London Borough authorities

7 July 2017

Dear colleagues

Re: Acid attacks in London

I am writing to you in the light of the rising number of acid attacks in London, including another attack on Wednesday, and the terrible incident that took place in Newham on 21 June 2017. The Mayor and I are very concerned by these attacks. I wanted to reassure you that the police are taking these matters very seriously.

There is no place for this type of violence in our communities. The police will take a zero-tolerance approach to it wherever it occurs. These are serious criminal offences and those caught and prosecuted face going to prison. I understand the impact these attacks can have on communities and would encourage anyone affected to report them to police or through community reporting channels to help ensure that offenders can be brought to justice and victims offered appropriate support.

To give some context to what is happening, and to enable us all to speak about this to our families, friends and colleagues in an informed way, here is what we know about the attacks:

- The latest data from the last 12 weeks (1 April to 30 June 2017) indicate that there have been 118 victims of offences involving noxious and corrosive liquids. The majority of these offences were classified as 'violence against the person', which includes serious wounding, assault with injury and common assault, but also included other offences, such as robbery and criminal damage.
- Twenty of those offences occurred in Newham. The victims were of Asian, African-Caribbean or white ethnicities and were aged between 15 and 37 years of age. Nineteen of the 20 victims were male. Of all the offences that have occurred in the last 12 weeks, one offence (the one that took place in Newham on 21 June), involving two victims (one male, one female) is being treated as a hate crime offence.
- By way of further context, in the year to 31 March 2017, there were 408 recorded incidents in London. Eight in 10 of the victims were male and were mostly likely to be in their 20s. These incidents have happened in various parts of London, but there was a greater prevalence in East London - Newham, Barking and Dagenham and Tower Hamlets. None of these offences were hate crimes - the victims were not targeted purely on the basis of their race or religion, or any other characteristic that identifies a hate crime.

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It is important to recognise that this is a national issue and is not confined to London. Work is underway with the Home Office and other forces to deal with this issue and also to reassure communities that the police will do everything possible to keep them safe.

Of course none of this takes away from the seriousness of these incidents or from the fact that people, and Muslim women in particular, are worried about what might happen to them when they leave their homes. Those arrested will face the full force of the law and could receive a prison sentence of up to seven years.

If you are aware of people in your communities who are worried, I would urge you to reassure them that they should feel confident to report it to the police, who will take a zero-tolerance approach, and that work is underway in London and nationally to address this worrying trend. In an emergency always dial 999, but reports can also be made through our smartphone app and through third-party organisations, such as Tell MAMA. The app can be found by entering "MOPAC Hate Crime App" in Google. Anyone who has been a victim of crime can receive free, confidential support through the MOPAC service with Victim Support on this freephone number: 0808 16 89 111.

Both I and the police are monitoring these incidents closely and I will be working with the Met Police's senior officers to tackle this problem.

Yours sincerely



Sophie Linden
Deputy Mayor for Policing And Crime