

# Jim McMahon OBE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Carolyn Wilkins  
Level 3  
Civic Centre  
West Street  
OL1 1UG

Our Ref: SM/WILK01005/01170732

24 November 2017

Dear Dr Wilkins

**Re: Oldham Council Resolution – Combatting Acid Attacks**

Thank you for contacting me recently regarding the above resolution.

Further to your letter, I have raised Council's concerns with the Ministry of Justice, and I am currently awaiting a response. Upon receiving a reply I will notify you immediately.

I am in support with Council in welcoming urgent and refreshed legislation to regulate the sale of corrosive substances and to outlaw under-age sales, in order to prevent such callous and shameful attacks. I have voiced these concerns with the Ministry of Justice, though it remains worthy of noting that cuts to the police force endanger both police officers and the wider community, and it is a manifesto pledge that Labour is committed to recruiting 10,000 more police officers in order to protect communities from such attacks.

I have raised the issue of increasing acid attacks previously with the Home Office and I attach the reply I received in response. This may be useful where the resolution is concerned.

I welcome The Rt Hon David Lidington's comments where this issue is concerned, and I hope that my intervention proves useful.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim McMahon".

Jim McMahon OBE MP  
Member of Parliament  
Oldham West & Royton

*Serving the Communities of Chadderton, Royton and Oldham*



Home Office

Sarah Newton MP  
Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and  
Vulnerability

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11 SEP 2017

CTS Reference: M7053/17  
Your Reference: [REDACTED]

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 17 July to the Home Secretary on behalf of [REDACTED] about charging and sentencing powers to deal with acid attacks. I am replying as the Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability with responsibility for this policy area. I am sorry for the delay.

The use of acid and other corrosives in violent attacks is a very serious matter that can result in huge distress and life changing injuries to the victim. That is why the Government has announced an action plan to tackle the issue. We are clear that there is no place in our society for these sickening attacks and that we must do all we can to prevent these horrendous attacks from happening in the first place.

The Home Office hosted a joint event with the National Police Chiefs' Council on 4 July which I attended, with medical experts, police officers, retailers and officials from a number of government departments, to discuss this important issue. The meeting agreed a set of actions to take forward.

The actions are based on four key strands: ensuring effective support for victims; effective policing; ensuring that legislation is understood and consistently applied; and working to restrict access to acids and other very harmful products.

A key strand of the action plan is to assess whether the powers available to the courts, including sentencing, are sufficient to deal with these serious offences. We are working with the police and Ministry of Justice to ensure that there are no gaps and that sentencing reflects the severity and physical and emotional impact that these attacks have on victims.

We have been clear that life sentences should not be reserved for victims of these horrendous attacks. We need to make sure that everyone working within the criminal justice system has the powers to severely punish those who both carry and use corrosives to commit these appalling crimes.

Anyone using acid or other corrosive substances in an attack has committed a serious offence. Depending on the severity of the injuries of the victim, an offender can be prosecuted with assault occasioning actual bodily harm or grievous bodily harm with intent, which can attract substantial custodial sentences on conviction, including life imprisonment.

I hope that this reassures you about the action the Government is taking to prevent acid and other corrosives being used in attacks. I will be updating MPs this month on the progress we have made with the action plan.

With best wishes,



Sarah Newton MP