

Jim McMahon OBE MP



HOUSE OF COMMONS
LONDON SW1A 0AA

Dr Carolyn Wilkins
Chief Executive
Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council
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Our Ref: SM/WILK01005/01170732

14 December 2017

Dear Dr Wilkins

Please find enclosed a copy of a reply I have received in response to my letter on your behalf. This concerns the Government's efforts in combatting violent attacks which include the use of acid and other corrosive substances.

I hope the reply is helpful. If not, or if you wish to respond to the letter, please do not hesitate to contact my office again.

Yours sincerely

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

Jim McMahon OBE MP
Member of Parliament
Oldham West & Royton

Encl.

Serving the Communities of Chadderton, Royton and Oldham

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Victoria Atkins MP
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Jim McMahon OBE MP
House of Commons
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CTS Reference: M12304/17
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0 8 DEC 2017

Dear Jim,

Thank you for your letter of 24 November to the Rt Hon David Lidington MP, Lord Chancellor, Secretary of State for Justice, on behalf Oldham Council, about the use of acid and other corrosives in violent attacks. Your letter has been transferred to the Home Office as the department with overall responsibility for this policy area. In your letter you support the proposal to prohibit the sale of products containing the most harmful corrosive substances to under 18s. I am replying as the Minister for Crime, Safeguarding and Vulnerability with responsibility for this policy area.

The use of these substances in inflicting violence on others is a terrible crime that can result in huge distress and life changing injuries to victims. The Government is clear that there is no place in society for these sickening attacks, and we continue to work with a range of partners to deliver our action plan to ensure we do all that we can to prevent them from happening in the first place.

As you may be aware, on 14 October, we published a consultation paper on offensive and dangerous weapons including the proposals to prohibit the sale of the most harmful products to those under 18 and to create a new offence of possession of a corrosive substance in a public place without good reason which would attract a minimum custodial sentence for a second conviction. We believe these proposals will further strengthen the law to tackle the use of acid and other corrosive substances in violent attacks.

Furthermore, the Poisons Act 1972 provides a legal framework for controlling sales of poisons and explosive precursors, including a number of acids. The Home Secretary has also announced the intention to include sulphuric acid on the list of regulated substances to limit public sales. The Act will continue to be reviewed in order to ensure that the right substances are being controlled in the right way. We are also working with retailers on what additional action they can take to restrict access to reduce the risk of products containing the most harmful corrosive substances being used in attacks.

As part of our consultation on offensive and dangerous weapons we are very keen to hear the views of members of the public and organisations with an interest. I can assure you that all responses to the consultation are treated seriously and that responses will be carefully considered. Our aim is to tackle the use of acid and other corrosives in violent attacks. The consultation is open until 9 December and is available on the gov.uk website <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/offensive-and-dangerous-weapons-new-legislation>.

We will ensure that Oldham Council's views are captured as part of the consultation and that they will be taken into account when considering the way forward. If Oldham Council would like to contribute further views to the consultation, these can be e-mailed to Offensive.Weapons.Consultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

I hope that this reassures both you and Oldham Council about the action that we are taking.

Yours,
Victoria

Victoria Atkins MP