

From: [REDACTED] **On Behalf Of** Cabinet Secretary for Justice

Sent: 03 October 2017 18:56

To: [REDACTED] Cabinet Secretary for Justice

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Lines to clear - UK plans to ban corrosive substances.

Mr Matheson is content with the lines.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 03 October 2017 17:48

To: Cabinet Secretary for Justice

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: RE: Lines to clear - UK plans to ban corrosive substances.

Copying in late shift colleagues and [REDACTED] on duty comms tonight. Once cleared by Mr Matheson this is for [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 03 October 2017 16:46
To: [REDACTED]

Subject: Lines to clear - UK plans to ban corrosive substances.

Hi [REDACTED]

The Daily Mail has asked us to comment on Amber Rudd's announcement that the UK Government will ban the sale of corrosive substances used in acid attacks to under 18s. They have asked us whether the ban would come into effect in Scotland, and if not what are our plans.

Grateful for Cab Sec's clearance of these lines, approved by policy and spads.

Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"Proposals relating to the sale of corrosive substances and the online sale of knives are potentially reserved under the Scotland Act. We are engaging with the UK Government on steps to strengthen the legislative regime in these areas, which are issues that should be properly considered on a UK-wide basis. We have pressed for action in relation to the online sale of knives and are happy to work with the UK Government as the details of specific proposals are worked up."

Regards,
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 11 August 2017 13:00
To: Cabinet Secretary for Justice
Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: Line to clear: Scottish Conservative release - Ministers must start recording figures on acid attacks

Hi Peter,

We've been approached by PA who are looking for a response to the below press release from the Scottish Conservatives calling on the Scottish Government to collect statistics on the number of acid attacks.

[REDACTED]

The following line has been agreed with policy and SpAds – I'd be grateful if the Cabinet Secretary could confirm he is content. I have also copied Police Scotland's line below.

A Scottish Government spokesperson said:

"We are committed to doing what we can, within our powers, to ensure communities are safe from harm. We'll be working closely with the UK Government on issues such as the online sales of corrosive substances, as it would be more effective for steps to be taken on a consistent basis across the whole of the UK if possible.

"Anyone who uses corrosive substances to attack another person can be prosecuted for assault and courts have wide-ranging powers to sentence up to life imprisonment. We always keep our criminal laws under review and that will include whether further steps are needed in relation to the carrying and use of corrosive substances."

Police Scotland:

Superintendent Andy McKay, Police Scotland Safer Communities, said: "There is no indication in Scotland of an increase in attacks involving corrosive substances; however, we would encourage traders to show due diligence to help prevent this from becoming an issue.

"As a precaution, we have circulated medical advice to officers in relation to the immediate actions to be taken following suspected acid attacks.

"I would also remind people that, depending on the circumstances, being found in possession of such substances in a public place without a reasonable excuse could constitute an offence."

Thanks,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S5W-10337

This PQ asked by Rachael Hamilton MSP, and S5W-10350 asked by Claire Baker MSP will have been asked following the recent publicity for a spate of acid attacks in London.

S5W-10350


- *Question Text: To ask the Scottish Government how many acid attacks there has been in each of the past five years; how many convictions there were, broken down by average length of sentence, and whether it plans to review the law on dealing with this type of crime.*

Further to this publicity, the UK Government has announced their plans as follows:

The Home Secretary has announced an action plan to tackle the use of acid or other corrosives in violent attacks based on four key strands:

- *effective law enforcement;*
- *ensuring legislation covering the use of acid and other corrosives in attacks is understood and consistently applied;*
- *working with retailers to restrict access to acids and other very harmful products; and*
- *ensuring effective support for victims through both the Criminal Justice System and health services*

In terms of actions, then these will include:

- *The Home Office will work with police and other departments to assess whether existing sentencing powers sufficiently reflect the seriousness of these offences.*
 - *New guidance will be provided to police officers on preventing attacks, searching potential perpetrators for harmful substances and responding to victims at the scene.*
 - *Further work will take place with retailers to agree voluntary measures to restrict sales of acids and other corrosive substances.*
 - *The Crown Prosecution Service's (CPS) guidance to prosecutors will be reviewed to ensure it makes clear that acid and other corrosive substances can be classed as dangerous offensive weapons, and what is required to prove intent.*
 - *The Poisons Act 1972 will be reviewed to assess whether it should cover more acids and harmful substances.*
- 

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Contact Name:
Ext:

[REDACTED]

BACKGROUND NOTE FOR S5W-10350

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S5W-10337

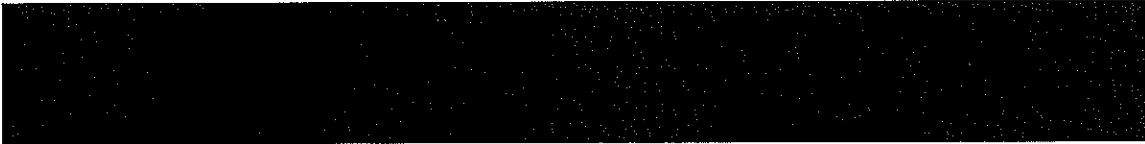
- *Question Text: To ask the Scottish Government how many acid attacks there have been in each of the last five years, and what action it is taking to reduce the number of and prevent such attacks.*

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Contact Name:

Ext:

[REDACTED]