



Home Office

Home Secretary

2 Marsham Street
London SW1P 4DF
www.gov.uk/home-office

Sian Jones
Partner, BDP Pitmans
50 Broadway
London SW1H 0BL

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Dear Sian

Response to Prevention of Future Death (PFD) Report issued by the Chief Coroner

Thank you for your letter of 19 December enclosing a copy of the Prevention of Future Death (PFD) Report issued by the Chief Coroner, His Honour Judge Mark Lucraft QC, following the completion of the Westminster Bridge terrorist attack inquests.

I am grateful to you for bringing these matters to my attention, and for the work of the Chief Coroner in thoroughly exploring the tragic events of 22 March 2017. My sympathies are with the victims of the attack, including PC Keith Palmer, and with all those affected.

The Chief Coroner makes three recommendations to which I am replying as Home Secretary: these affect the interests of the Home Office, the Security Service and the Department for Transport. A full response is attached, but the Government agrees with the Chief Coroner's recommendations and has taken action to address these.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours faithfully

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP

MC14 I suggest that the Secretary of State for the Home Department asks the authorities responsible for preparing and delivering advice on protective security to consider whether any further work can usefully be done on this subject, particularly in preparing and delivering consistent and up-to-date national advice

The Government accepts this recommendation.

As we have seen in recent terrorist atrocities and thwarted plots in the UK and Europe, any public location is potentially vulnerable to attack.

The step change in terrorist activity is matched only by an increased effort from Government (including the police and the Security Service) to stop attacks, bring offenders to justice, protect the public, mitigate against attacks and stop people being drawn into terrorism.

A vital part of this work is considering how we ensure the safety and security of the public at crowded places. The Government continues to undertake a range of communications with those responsible for crowded places and the public to:

- Raise awareness of the terrorist threat;
- Provide advice on public vigilance, the reporting of suspicious behaviour or activity, and appropriate action to be taken following a terrorist attack;
- Provide advice as to what constitutes appropriate and proportionate protective security measures; and
- Inform how planning and preparation for terrorist attacks can take place, for example through staff training and awareness raising, and the testing and exercising of emergency procedures.

Our provision of advice, guidance and communications activities is multi-faceted and significant in its scope and reach. It is reviewed and revised on a regular basis, in particular where there are changes to the nature of terrorist threats. It encompasses a range of efforts across Government, the police and Security Service including:

- Advice provided by police Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (present in every police region) and Security Co-ordinators to locations considered vulnerable to or attractive to attack.
- A range of online advice and guidance documents produced by Counter Terrorism Policing and the Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure, which are regularly reviewed and refreshed. For example, following the 2017 attacks, crowded places guidance from the National Counter Terrorism Security Office, was revised and reissued on 8 June 2017. This advice is designed to help those charged with security at crowded places to mitigate the threat and help make the UK less vulnerable to an attack.
- Advice provided to local authorities, planners, developers and architects through the National Planning Policy Framework and associated Guidance by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This is designed to ensure the security and resilience of new builds and refurbishments. On 12 July 2017, the Chief Planning Officer wrote to all local planning authorities to reiterate the role the planning system plays in ensuring appropriate measures are in place to help prevent terrorist threats.

- A range of stakeholder engagement, based around leading sectors (e.g. sports grounds, shopping centres, entertainment centres), member associations and organisations who own or are responsible for crowded places.
- A range of bespoke Action Counters Terrorism awareness raising events undertaken by police Counter Terrorism Security Advisers and Awareness Advisers in person with security managers and front of house staff. These events to those who manage or work at crowded places, provide them with advice on the terrorist threat, help them identify and report suspicious activity, and to prepare for the possibility of terrorist attack. Between April – September 2018 there were 3,674 such events delivered to 103,210 staff.
- A counter-terrorism learning product, entitled ‘Action Counters Terrorism Awareness e-Learning’, was launched in April 2018 to increase the scope of awareness raising efforts. As at December 2018 563,554 modules have been completed by staff from across crowded places organisations.

A large part of awareness raising efforts are provided through Action Counters Terrorism (ACT), a major communications campaign led by Counter Terrorism Policing which includes messaging via regular high-profile campaigns, web platforms, and social media. Some indications of its reach and outcomes achieved are provided below:

- In 2017 during its launch week the campaign achieved a 67% increase in calls to the anti-terrorist hotline. An LBC special counter-terrorism report week reached 1.5 million people, over 29,600 people listened to the campaign podcast, and the campaign information films achieved over 1.8 million views.
- In 2018, the Communities Defeat Terrorism ACT campaign achieved 3.8m views of the new counter-terrorism awareness film, reached over 11.26 million people through police social media channels alone, and over 57,000 people visited www.gov.uk/ACT . Within the first week of the campaign, the average number of online public reports doubled, and awareness of reporting online increased from 14% to 24% throughout the campaign.
- The ACT campaigns focused on crowded places are regularly run. In summer 2017, the Run Hide Tell, Stay Safe Abroad campaign reached 9 million people with public safety advice. In summer 2018, the crowded places safety advice during the football world cup used credible voices such as Alan Shearer, David Seaman and Paul Parker to reach 350,000 people on Twitter during the first launch weekend, and 1.98 million impressions across Counter Terrorism Policing social media channels.

These awareness and communication efforts are focussed on a range of terrorist threats, however there is also advice developed on specific threat types, such as the malicious use of vehicles and what can be done to mitigate these.

The Centre for the Protection of National Infrastructure (CPNI) guidance document “Integrated Design for Hostile Vehicle Mitigation in the Public Realm” provides information and stimulus to those responsible for integrating protective security measures. In addition, the Department for Transport and CPNI have issued three transport advisory leaflets (revised in September 2017) regarding mitigating vehicle threats for those responsible for public spaces. Following the 2017 attacks, in September 2017 detailed higher classification guidance (as it contains detailed

information on methodologies) regarding mitigating vehicle attacks, was developed by CPNI and provided to trusted partners (e.g. local authorities, owners and operators of crowded places).

These and other communication efforts by Government are undertaken in partnership with a range of organisations from across industry and other sectors. These strong relationships help ensure that we reach a broad audience, and that messaging is appropriately targeted.

Through all this work, Government is mindful of the audiences to whom advice, guidance and communications are provided or targeted, the effectiveness of messaging (in particular that it leads to meaningful learning or activity), and how and where we can most efficiently focus our efforts. This is ongoing work and we continue to actively consider the effectiveness of our strategic approach and within it communications activities.

MC16: I suggest that the Security Service considers whether it would be practicable and beneficial to introduce a procedure whereby any decision to close a person as a Subject of Interest is recorded with brief reasons.

Security Service Response

The Security Service acknowledges that the reason for closing a person as a Subject of Interest was not always recorded and accepts the Chief Coroner's recommendation. In the period between closure of Masood as a Subject of Interest in December 2010 and the Westminster attack, MI5 made improvements to the Subject of Interest closure process, and its ability to identify and manage any ongoing risk posed by Closed Subjects of Interest. In the Operational Improvement Review conducted after the 2017 attacks, the Security Service carefully considered its processes for record-keeping and management of Closed Subjects of Interest and identified further improvements that could be made.

This led to a number of initiatives that encompass record-keeping, information management and management of Closed Subjects of Interest. Those initiatives actively seek to embed further good practice and technology in those areas. In particular, in 2018 the Security Service implemented improvements to the Subject of Interest closure process. The current closure process ensures that a record is made of the details why the individual should be closed.

Commitment to continuing improvement and oversight

As the Director General said in his evidence to the Intelligence and Security Committee last year, the Security Service will continue to strive for improvement in its information management. Implementation of the initiatives flowing from the Operational Improvement Review, including the improvements to the Subject of Interest closure process, is being independently assessed by Lord Anderson QC. Lord Anderson QC will report publicly in due course of the work that is being done.

MC-18: I recommend that the Department of Transport and the British Vehicle Rental Leasing Association consider introducing a Code of Practice (or at lease guidance) on checks to be carried out and/or enquiries made before vehicles are rented.

The Government accepts this recommendation.

On 6th December 2018 the Department for Transport (DfT) launched the Rental Vehicle Security Scheme (RVSS). Vehicle Hire Companies joining this voluntary scheme agree to follow a 10 Point Code of Practice, including:

- Ensuring licence verification checks are undertaken when handing vehicles over to customers;
- Sharing data and information appropriately with law enforcement agencies
- Appointing a Recognised Security Contact;
- Training staff to identify and report suspicious behaviours;
- Only accepting electronic payment for all or part of the rental transaction.

The RVSS was developed with and is supported by government partners, including law enforcement, and industry stakeholders, including the British Vehicle Rental Leasing Association and United Rental System. The scheme is designed to support the development of a security culture in the vehicle hire industry and to support deterrence and potential detection of those seeking to use rental vehicles in attacks.

Details of the scheme are available on the gov.uk website:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apply-to-the-rental-vehicle-security-scheme>

Companies join the scheme by submitting a completed application form and declaration that they will produce a security plan outlining how they will meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. Plans may be subject to assurance checks by DfT. There has been an encouraging level of take-up of the scheme since its launch, including by market leaders.

In January an industry led Advisory Panel was launched to oversee the development of the scheme. DfT will review the impact and take-up of the RVSS within 12 – 18 months of its launch, including the case for putting some or all of the points in the code on a mandatory footing.