

[Press release: Arsonist jailed following Solicitor General's referral](#)



A man who set fire to his neighbour's front door has been jailed after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, referred his sentence to the Court of Appeal as unduly lenient.

Lee Batchelor, 40, used a bottle of white spirit to start a fire outside his neighbour's flat after growing upset with the noise coming from the property. Fortunately, the building's fire alarm alerted the victim to the incident, and she was able to help her friends escape through the window before putting out the fire.

Batchelor was originally sentenced at Lewes Crown Court in August, where he was given 2 years imprisonment suspended for 2 years. He was also ordered to complete a rehabilitation activity and unpaid work, and pay £500 compensation to the Housing Association. Today, after the Solicitor General's referral, the Court of Appeal increased his sentence to 3 years 2 months immediate imprisonment.

Speaking after the hearing, the Solicitor General said:

"This was a serious act of reckless arson, which could have been life-threatening for not only those targeted but others living the building. It is important that Batchelor's sentence reflects this."

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Press release: Government to toughen rules banning sex offenders from councils

Rules to prevent people found guilty of serious crimes from serving on local councils will be strengthened, Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak MP announced today (18 October 2018).

The new rules will mean any person who is subject to an Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction, a Criminal Behaviour Order, a Sexual Risk Order or who is on the Sex Offenders' Register, will no longer be able to stand for elected office in their community.

Current conditions make clear that anyone convicted of an offence carrying a prison sentence of more than 3 months is banned from serving as a local councillor.

The new measures will strengthen this further by bringing disqualification

rules in line with modern sentencing to include the alternatives to a prison sentence as a barrier to becoming a councillor.

These changes to the rules for who can stand for election, or hold a post as a councillor, will make sure those who represent their communities are accountable and held to the highest possible standards.

Local Government Minister Rishi Sunak MP said:

Elected members play a crucial role in town halls across the country, and are the foundations of local democracy. They are community champions, and have a leading role to play in building a better society for everyone.

With such an important role comes great responsibility, and these changes will protect residents while upholding the values and high standards of behaviour we all expect.

Anyone convicted of a serious offence that results in a sentence covered under the new disqualification criteria will be banned from standing for election, or would be forced to step down if they were convicted whilst in post.

The changes will better reflect rules governing standards of MPs, where members face suspension from the House for anything that contravenes the parliamentary code of conduct.

Futher information

Government will look to identify a suitable legislative opportunity to bring the changes into law. It will require changes to primary legislation, in particular the Local Government Act 1972, the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, and the Greater London Authority Act 2009.

Once the rules are implemented, councils across England will have the power to prevent individuals from standing as a councillor or mayor at the point they trigger the revised disqualification criteria. These proposals will not apply retrospectively.

This consultation was open to everyone between 18 September 2017 and 8 December 2017. We particularly sought the views of individual members of the public, prospective and current councillors and those bodies that represent the interests of local authorities and councillors at all levels.

A [summary of consultation responses and the government response](#) has been published today.

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[News story: DASA dial in event: Behavioural Analytics](#)

DASA will be hosting a dial-in event on 29 October 2018, 10am to midday. The competition team will provide a short briefing on the Behavioural Analytics competition followed by an open forum Q&A session.

Following the dial-in there will also be an opportunity to book a 20 minute one to one slot with the competition team to discuss questions specific to your proposal.

Further information about the competition can be found in the [competition document](#), where you will find links to register for the dial-in and one to one meetings.