CORROSIVE ATTACKS
MAY 2017

BRIEFING NOTE

BACKGROUND
A corrosive attack is a form of violent assault; with the act of throwing acid or a similarly corrosive substance onto the body of another with the intention to disfigure, maim, torture, or kill. It has lasting physical and emotional damage for victims. These are commonly referred to as acid attacks or chemical attacks but may be acid or alkaline in composition.

Figures from police forces across the UK suggest that the number of assaults involving corrosive substances has risen by 30% in two years. The true extent of acid attacks in Britain is not known. No accurate statistics currently exist, data is not captured and police fear victims do not report the crimes because they are afraid of reprisals. In London, the number of attacks increased from 261 in 2015 to 454 last year. About 74% of police investigations since 2014 were wound down because the perpetrators could not be identified or victims were unwilling to press charges.

Requirements on the sale of sulphuric acid, one of the most commonly used substances in attacks, were introduced in 2015 due to its possible role in the manufacture of explosives.

WHAT ARE THE BRC AND ITS MEMBERS DOING ABOUT IT?
The BRC has an excellent relationship with the Home Office. The Explosive Precursors Working Group meets regularly with the Office of Security and Counter Terrorism and we have an ongoing dialogue with the Anti-Social Behaviour and Crime Types Team.