

## **BBC News**

Looking for letter bomb links

**Copycat activists are a likely source of this week's letter bomb attacks, according to one security expert.**

David Hill, a former head of Gwent CID, commander of the Western Area of the National Crime Squad and government advisor in counter terrorism, says recent letter bombs, while sinister, are unlikely to be organised.

"It does not appear, at this stage going on what information there is (to be organised terrorism)," he said.

"It's more likely somebody bringing attention to a cause.

"If it was terrorism, it would be more defined and targeted and the destruction involved would be higher.

"These letter bombs seem to be not fully charged with explosives. They are unlikely to cause loss of life, but would certainly cause burns and injuries.

"There is always the element of copycat behaviour - people will look and think 'that's a good way of getting attention'.

"It's an easy method to employ to breach confidence and make people feel insecure."

Last month, explosive jiffy bag packages were sent to two companies in Abingdon and one in Birmingham.

They all bore the name of deceased animal rights activist Barry Horne - one woman suffered minor injuries.

On Monday, a woman received minor injuries in a "small" explosion at Capita - a leading business out-sourcing company which runs London's congestion charge system in Victoria Street, London.

The incident is being investigated by Scotland Yard's anti-terrorism unit.

Thames Valley Police were quick to state that it was too soon to speculate whether Tuesday's explosion at Vantis in Wokingham, was connected.

But that line of inquiry will be high on their agenda said Mr Hill.

"There is speculation that this week's incidents are linked to some sort of traffic regulation campaign," he said.

"Police will be looking at all the information they have from all these recent incidents, they have to see if they can link them."

But, Mr Hill, who now works for security consultancy red24, said the level of successful prosecutions in relation to letter bomb incidents has, historically, not been high.

"There is certainly a high level of knowledge and intelligence," he said.

"But often there is not sufficient evidence to proceed with charges."

Instead he believes police will try to infiltrate a suspect group in an attempt to bring about charges.

But, as he points out, "people who are involved in this type of thing tend to work alone".

"I'm pretty confident that if police had any suspects at this stage they would be executing warrants," he added.

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