

Press release: Attacker who attempted to burn Milton Keynes mum to death is jailed for life

A man who set a young mother alight and watched her burn has today been jailed for life after the Solicitor General, Robert Buckland QC MP, personally argued at the Court of Appeal that his original sentence was too low.

The victim Kirsten Ashby, 27, had known the offender Raymond Bowen, 24, for about a week through her friendship with Mr Bowen's girlfriend. On the night of the offence, Ms Ashby had wanted to check on her friend, who she was concerned was having a diabetic fit.

When Ms Ashby suggested calling an ambulance, Mr Bowen attacked her, pouring petrol over her before throwing a lighter at her. He then stood back and watched as she tried to put out the fire.

Ms Ashby sustained such severe burns to her face, arms, and torso that doctors were unsure she would survive the night. She faces many years of surgery and permanent disfigurement, as well as suffering serious psychological trauma.

Mr Bowen was originally sentenced at Luton Crown Court in April, where he was given a sentence of 19 years' imprisonment with a licence extension of 5 years. Today, after the Solicitor General argued at the Court of Appeal, he was given a life sentence with a minimum term of 12 years.

Commenting on the sentence increase, the Solicitor General said:

This was an appalling, unprovoked attack which nearly led to the death of a young woman. The victim will live with the physical and psychological impact of Bowen's actions for years to come. I am pleased that the Court of Appeal has today decided to increase Bowen's sentence, and hope it goes some way to righting this atrocious wrong.