

Press release: Lewes 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."