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Teenager admits planning terrorist attack in London

A teenager has admitted to planning a terrorist attack in London - before being arrested by officers from the Met's Counter Terrorism Command.

Matthew King, 19 (04.10.03) of Essex was arrested by Counter Terrorism officers as part of a proactive operation in May 2022.

Enquiries subsequently found that he had planned an attack targeting police officers and a member of the armed forces.

He had also carried out hostile reconnaissance at several locations over

several months and had discussed committing a mass casualty attack on members of the public.

King appeared at the Old Bailey today (Friday, 20 January) and pleaded guilty to preparation of terrorist acts (contrary to Section 5 of the Terrorism Act 2000).

He will be sentenced on 14 April at the same court.

Commander Richard Smith, who leads the Met's Counter Terrorism Command, said: "It was not clear when or where King intended to carry out his attack, but he had conducted a significant amount of hostile reconnaissance.

"In online conversations, he talked about committing an indiscriminate attack on the public. Disturbingly, he also spoke about targeting police officers and army personnel.

"Concerns about King's mind-set were reported to police, and it was those reports that led to King being investigated and his attack planning being discovered.

"This is another case which shows how the round-the-clock efforts of police, with our partners, are keeping the public safe from very real threats.

"It also shows how important it is for the public to report anyone they think may be vulnerable to radicalisation, or already on that path."

An investigation into King was launched in April 2022 after information was received about concerns over his extreme Islamist mind-set. Further enquiries were carried out and King was arrested at an address in Essex on 18 May.

While he was held in custody, officers conducted fast-time enquiries and found evidence on his devices of his extremist beliefs, hostile reconnaissance he had carried out at various locations, and conversations about attack planning.

He had visited and filmed a London barracks and a police station, as well as recording officers at train stations, and outside a criminal court.

Enquiries found that he had taken steps to obtain a knife online, and he also planned to travel abroad to join Daesh.

He was charged with preparation of terrorist acts, contrary to Section 5(1)(a) of the Terrorism Act (TACT) 2006 on 31 May 2022.

+ Communities defeat terrorism, and information from the public is vital to counter terrorism investigations. If you see or hear something unusual or suspicious and think someone may be engaging in terrorist activity, trust your instincts and act by reporting it in confidence at www.gov.uk/ACT or the anti-terrorist hotline on 0800 789 321. In an emergency, dial 999.

Visit the ACT Early website at www.actearly.uk to find out how you can seek help and support for anyone who you suspect may be being radicalised.