

News Review



MRS CARTLEDGE

Grief and questions over senseless killings...



Is lack of mental health care the key problem?

- A midsummer day in a Reading park was ripped apart by a knifeman.
- Three victims are dead.
- Today, a nation in shock must ask why it happened.



What happened?....

- Eyewitnesses say that a man in his mid-20s dressed in a black t-shirt, screamed something unintelligible, then pulled out a knife and began running anti-clockwise around a circle of 10 people sat on the grass, stabbing them in the back or neck.
- The attack left three people dead and at least three more seriously injured.
- Khairi Saadallah, a 25-year-old Libyan, has been arrested on suspicion of murder.
- Police said that the stabbings were being investigated as terrorism.

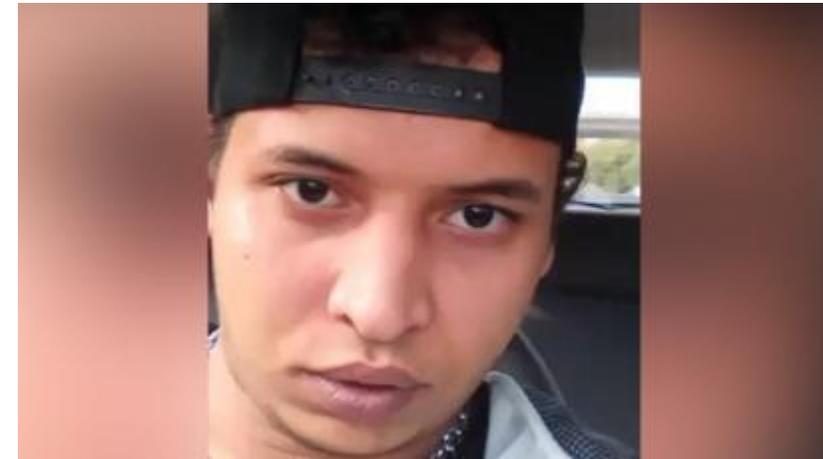
What are the questions that the nation needs to ask?

Firstly, why was he at liberty to cause harm?

- Saadallah was already known to the UK security services. Just last year, he was brought to the attention of MI5 as someone who might engage in *“terror-related activities”*.

Secondly, why was someone with obvious mental health issues receiving no professional help?

- The National Association of Probation Officers said Saadallah was understood to have *“severe mental health issues”* but was not *“in the system”*.



- Social workers have reported that the coronavirus pandemic has had a tremendous impact on the poor and vulnerable.
- Many were previously employed in precarious, low-paid jobs in the service industry and now have no income at all.
- They have been struggling with the mental and physical challenges of the lockdown with limited access to help and support.
- *So, rather than focusing on terrorism in this case, is lack of social care the key problem?*

Is a lack of social care the key problem?

- **Yes.** Saadallah is no “terrorist”. A Muslim by upbringing, who claimed to have recently converted to Christianity, he is better described as hopelessly confused. Vulnerable and lonely, and a heavy cannabis user, he was surely a prime case for social and mental care. The trouble is that, after years of cuts, there is no safety net. This is not terrorism.
- **No.** Nothing can excuse the evil of Saturday’s attack. There are plenty of people who suffer from mental health conditions and do not commit acts of carnage. The security services have again let an obvious suspect slip, only to wreak havoc on the public. Western governments need to realise that, while they have been transfixed by the Covid-19 crisis, terrorism has not gone away.