



**Craig Whittaker MP**

**CALDER VALLEY**

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## **Salisbury incident & poisoning**

Thank you for contacting me about the incident in Salisbury.

After investigations into the sudden illness of Mr Skripal and his daughter, it was determined that they were poisoned with a military-grade nerve agent of a type developed by Russia. This left two plausible explanations. Either this was a direct act by the Russian state against the UK, or the Russian Government lost control of a military-grade nerve agent and allowed it to get into the hands of others. It was right to offer Russia the opportunity to provide an explanation, but they failed to explain how this agent was used or why they have an undeclared chemical weapons programme. There is therefore no alternative conclusion other than that Russia was culpable for the attempted murder of Mr Skripal and his daughter – and for threatening the lives of other British citizens in Salisbury, including Detective Sergeant Nick Bailey.

The threat to life of British people and others on British soil from the Russian Government cannot be tolerated, and I fully support the Prime Minister's efforts to work with our allies to defend our security, to stand up for our values, and to send a clear message to those who would seek to undermine them.

The Government has said it will expel 23 Russian diplomats who have been identified as undeclared intelligence officers, the biggest expulsion in over 30 years; develop proposals for new legislative powers to harden defences against all forms of Hostile State Activity; and make full use of existing powers to enhance efforts to monitor and track the intentions of those travelling to the UK who could be engaged in activity that threatens the security of the UK and of our allies. I also support action to freeze Russian state assets wherever there is the evidence that they may be used to threaten the life or property of UK nationals or residents. There is no place for the money of serious criminals and corrupt elites in this country.

This attempted murder in Salisbury was not just an act against the UK. It is an affront to the rules-based system on which the UK and our international partners depend. We must work with our allies and partners to confront such actions wherever they threaten our security, at home and abroad.

With regards to England's participation in the World Cup in Summer 2018, the Government and Football Association will keep this under constant review.

Thank you again for taking the time to contact me.

Kind regards,

Craig Whittaker MP