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Counter Terrorism Policing \ News \ **Man convicted of attempted murder – Cheltenham, Gloucestershire**



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A man has today (30/8) pleaded guilty to attempting to murder a woman during an incident outside a leisure centre in Cheltenham in March this year.

Following an investigation by officers from Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE) Joshua Bowles, of Welwyn Mews, Cheltenham, pleaded guilty to one count of attempted murder and one count of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

The 29-year-old will be sentenced at a future hearing.

During a hearing at the Central Criminal Court in London, details of the incident in which Bowles stabbed a woman outside a leisure centre in Tommy Taylor's Lane on 9 March this year were shared. The court heard how a man who tried to intervene while Bowles was attacking the woman was also assaulted by Bowles during the incident.

When the attack happened in March, officers from Gloucestershire Constabulary responded and began the initial investigation. Due to the wider circumstances surrounding this incident, the investigation was then passed to the counter terrorism policing network. This saw CTPSE take the lead, working alongside officers from Counter Terrorism Policing South West and Gloucestershire Constabulary.

As heard in court the victim was a US national who works for the US government. At the time of the attack, she was working at GCHQ, and this factor was cited by the defendant as a motive for his attack.

The court also heard that Bowles had previously worked at GCHQ but was no longer working there when the attack occurred.

Detective Chief Superintendent Olly Wright, Head of Counter Terrorism Policing South East (CTPSE), said: *"This was a violent and unprovoked attack on two innocent victims.*

"Through our extensive and thorough investigation, it is clear that Bowles had selected his victim because of where she worked.

"It is for this reason that it was appropriate for specialist counter terrorism officers and staff to lead the investigation. They worked closely with colleagues from Gloucestershire Constabulary, who had responded to the initial report of the incident and managed the early stages of the investigation.

"I am pleased that Bowles has taken the decision to plead guilty to these crimes due to the strength of our investigation and evidence against him. This will thankfully spare the victims from having to go through the traumatic process of re-living the events of that day through the trial process."