

Riot Damages Act to be reviewed

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The Home Office has announced an independent review into the Riot Damages Act 1886 to examine the criteria determining compensation for victims.

Police and local authority responses to the riots of August 2011 will be investigated as part of the review, which will be led by Neil Kinghan, a former civil servant who previously led an independent review of Wandsworth Council.

The review, which is expected to be finished by September this year and will be followed by a public consultation, will work on aspects such as the definition of a riot, who should be liable in the event of disorder and what level of compensation is suitable to victims.

Damian Green, Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice, said the 2011 incidents in London, Manchester and other large English cities showed the need for an update of existing legislation.

"The Riot Damages Act was written more than a century ago and so it is only right that we take action to ensure it is fit for purpose," he said.

"The aftermath of the 2011 riots showed the need for improvements to speed up the payment of compensation to those who need it and weed out frivolous claims.

"This independent review will consider how best to reform the Act so it protects the most vulnerable and provides value for money to the taxpayer."

John Biggs, chair of the London Assembly's budget and performance committee, backed the decision to hold a review of the Act, adding he would send a copy of the committee's own report to Mr Kinghan for him to consider.

"The Riot Damages Act is crying out for reform," he said.

"Last year, following an in-depth investigation, we warned that the act was not meeting the needs of riot-hit traders and we are pleased that the Government is acting on our concerns.

"It is ridiculous that in the 21st Century we are stuck with a piece of legislation from 1886 that does not adequately define a riot or cover damage to cars and vans. The Government's new review must address these weaknesses and provide a significantly more efficient and streamlined act, that works in the modern world."

By [Liam Barnes](#)