

TERRIFYING TASTE OF A TERRORIST ATTACK

David Williamson, The Western Mail, Sep 13 2003

CARDIFF was yesterday given a terrifying hint of the challenges a terrorist attack would bring to the city.

Chemical poisoning at the British Gas headquarters in the city centre resulted in 22 people being taken to hospital, and 2,700 being evacuated from the Helmont House building. A further 14 people were treated at the site by the emergency services's decontamination units.

Police searched the building and do not believe the poisoning was deliberate but the result of an accident. Workmen on the roof had apparently mixed chlorine with other chemicals used to treat water.

This is thought to have released bromine acid fumes which escaped into the air conditioning system. Among the symptoms associated with exposure are burning sensations, coughing, dizziness, headaches, laboured breathing and sore throats. In the worst cases it can prove corrosive.

Staff had reported a chlorine-like smell at lunchtime.

Ends