

Please find below a statement from Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, sent on behalf of the National Coordinator Protect and Prepare.

Following the appalling terrorist attack last Monday night, detectives from the Counter Terrorism Command have been working round the clock as part of a fast paced wide ranging investigation.

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, national lead for counter terrorism policing, said:

“I completely understand the desire for information and answers but it is essential to protect the investigation, so at this stage I will not go into detail. Our aim must be to identify, arrest and put before a court of law those who are responsible - I am confident we will do that. I do not want to provide those people with any advantage allowing them to destroy evidence or any opportunity to counter what we have gathered.

“Broadly speaking, as with any investigation of this nature, we are focusing on understanding Abedi’s life; forensically examining a number of scenes, reviewing hours of CCTV from the night itself and the hours and before, financial work, communication, digital exhibits, the accounts from hundreds of witnesses and of course enquiries internationally.

“Eight men remain in police custody and we continue to make significant progress.”

On Tuesday, 23 May, the threat level to the UK was raised to critical based on an assessment by the Joint Terrorism Analysis Centre. Police across the country are planning to deliver an enhanced level of policing throughout the bank holiday weekend.

AC Rowley, added: “Even with all the progress made so far, there still remain important lines of enquiry that will further build our confidence and understanding of the events that led to this ghastly attack. That will enable those who set the threat level to revise their judgment.

“Whilst we remain at critical our aim is simple - we are working with event organisers to advise and support them so everyone in this country can go to the hundreds of events that are on and simply relax and enjoy their bank holiday.

“A complete review of the plans for over 1,300 events across the country has been carried out by specialist security officers and policing has been stepped up.

“There will be extra officers on duty, and that will include hundreds of armed officers. Extra firearms officers have been out on streets because we have backfilled some static guarding

posts at key places with military personnel. Their presence at these sites will continue throughout the weekend.

“I would like to thank those military colleagues, who are working hard as part of the UK’s policing operation, but also a huge thanks to all those who are working round the clock - those detectives, officers on patrol, support staff, our partners in the security services - to protect our country.

“My request to the public is simple - if this weekend you see something out of place, that causes you concern or raises your suspicions, tell us. If you have those suspicions now about someone - tell us - we will act on all information we are given and together we can defeat terrorism.”

In an emergency call 999 - For non emergencies call 101 - For the Anti-Terrorist Hotline call 0800 789321