# Norwich teenager jailed for deliberate fires in two shopping centres despite ban



In a concerning escalation of antisocial behaviour, 19-year-old Robin Couzens has been sentenced to 27 months in prison for setting fires in two Norwich shopping centres, Chantry Place and Castle Quarter, within hours of each other. Prior to these incidents, Couzens was subject to a community protection notice prohibiting entry to both venues due to previous disruptive actions. The fires, ignited on 29 November, led to the evacuation of over 1,000 people and incurred substantial financial losses exceeding £10,000 for local businesses.

The courtroom proceedings revealed a troubling background to Couzens’ actions. He was arrested just days prior for breaching the CPN when entering Castle Quarter, and his subsequent behaviour prompted significant emergency responses. The initial incident at Chantry Place involved a failed attempt to ignite a fire, with scorch marks found in a bathroom. However, the more serious incident at Castle Quarter involved setting fire to toilet paper, generating considerable smoke and panic that required a rapid evacuation. John Morgans, the prosecutor, highlighted that the Vue Cinema and a bowling alley were both packed with patrons at the time, emphasising the potential dangers posed by Couzens' actions.

Judge Katharine Moore remarked on the recklessness of Couzens’ behaviour, indicating that multiple lives were endangered and that his decisions wasted critical emergency services resources. During the defence, Andrew Oliver acknowledged the limited grounds for mitigation, asserting that while the first fire was low-level, the second posed a significantly higher risk. Couzens has been described as "extremely vulnerable" with difficulty managing his emotions and high levels of anxiety.

This case is part of a broader narrative of arson incidents within Norwich. Recently, 54-year-old Pip Long was sentenced to an indefinite hospital order after causing extensive damage by setting fire to a property, which affected several neighbouring homes. Similarly, 57-year-old Darren Ince received a four-and-a-half-year prison sentence for igniting a charity shop, an incident that resulted in losses over £90,000. These incidents underscore a troubling trend in the area, revealing the substantial impact such crimes have on communities, both in terms of emotional distress and economic strain.

Mental health appears to be a recurring theme, as seen in related cases. Metkel Gebremeskel faced legal proceedings for setting fire to a mattress at his flat, leading to significant property damage and displacement of residents. His case, delayed due to a mental health crisis, exemplifies the complex intersection of psychological issues and criminal behaviour.

As Norwich navigates these challenges with arson and community safety, the authorities must consider not only punitive measures but also effective mental health support systems to address the underlying issues that drive such offences. Couzens’ case serves as a poignant reminder of the need for comprehensive strategies to prevent further incidents and protect both businesses and residents in the community.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25187643.teen-banned-two-norwich-malls-sets-fire/?ref=rss)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25187643.teen-banned-two-norwich-malls-sets-fire/?ref=rss), [[2]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/december/man-sentenced-for-arson-in-norwich/)
* Paragraph 3 – [[3]](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/july/man-sentenced-for-charity-shop-arson-in-norwich/), [[4]](https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/23758443.arson-case-aborted-defendant-tried-take-trousers/), [[5]](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/24659105.jail-norwich-arsonist-caused-8k-damage/)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/25187643.teen-banned-two-norwich-malls-sets-fire/?ref=rss> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/december/man-sentenced-for-arson-in-norwich/> - Pip Long, 54, was sentenced to an indefinite hospital order after setting fire to a property on Hall Road, Norwich, on 26 June 2023. The fire spread to three neighbouring properties, damaging four terraced houses. Long knew the occupant was extremely vulnerable and had limited mobility. No one was injured, and residents are still unable to return to their homes. ([norfolk.police.uk](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/december/man-sentenced-for-arson-in-norwich/?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/july/man-sentenced-for-charity-shop-arson-in-norwich/> - Darren Ince, 57, was sentenced to four and a half years in prison after setting fire to a charity shop on St Benedict’s Street, Norwich, on 25 February 2024. The fire caused over £90,000 in losses due to damage and lost sales. Ince was arrested shortly after the incident and pleaded guilty to arson with intent to endanger life and arson reckless as to whether life is endangered. ([norfolk.police.uk](https://www.norfolk.police.uk/news/norfolk/news/news/2024/july/man-sentenced-for-charity-shop-arson-in-norwich/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/23758443.arson-case-aborted-defendant-tried-take-trousers/> - Metkel Gebremeskel, 28, admitted arson and being reckless as to whether life was endangered after setting fire to a mattress at his flat in Balderston Court, Norwich, causing over £8,000 in damage. The sentencing hearing was adjourned due to Gebremeskel experiencing a mental health crisis in the dock, leading to the need for a psychiatric report. ([eveningnews24.co.uk](https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/23758443.arson-case-aborted-defendant-tried-take-trousers/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/24659105.jail-norwich-arsonist-caused-8k-damage/> - Metkel Gebremeskel, 29, was jailed for two years after admitting arson and being reckless as to whether life was endangered. He set fire to a mattress at his flat in Balderston Court, Norwich, causing over £8,000 in damage and leading to the evacuation of the block of flats. ([edp24.co.uk](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/24659105.jail-norwich-arsonist-caused-8k-damage/?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23961623.criminals-jailed-norfolk-norwich-november-2023/> - In November 2023, several individuals were jailed in Norfolk, including Benjamin Macann, 34, who was apprehended in Bulgaria after a two-year manhunt for his involvement in a sophisticated cocaine operation. He was sentenced to 10 years in prison. ([edp24.co.uk](https://www.edp24.co.uk/news/23961623.criminals-jailed-norfolk-norwich-november-2023/?utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/duo-in-that-had-drugs-in-car-were-travelling-at-120mph-9355343/> - Harry West, 27, was seen driving at 120mph on the A47 in King's Lynn and was found to have drugs in his possession. His passenger, Adam Couzens, 32, also had drugs on him. West appeared at Lynn Magistrates’ Court and pleaded guilty to dangerous driving and possession of Class A and B drugs. ([lynnnews.co.uk](https://www.lynnnews.co.uk/news/duo-in-that-had-drugs-in-car-were-travelling-at-120mph-9355343/?utm_source=openai))