



Home Office

Home Secretary

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www.gov.uk/home-office

Police Leaders of England and Wales

BY EMAIL ONLY

23 September 2022

Dear all,

OPEN LETTER TO THE LEADERS OF THE POLICE FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

I am delighted and honoured to have been appointed as Home Secretary, and I look forward to working with you all on our joint effort of making the streets safer and cutting crime. I have enjoyed meeting many of you over the last two weeks, and I look forward to meeting more very soon. I wanted to use this opportunity to set out my key priorities for the police and our crime cutting agenda.

I would firstly like to reiterate my deep gratitude for your integral contributions to the BRIDGES operation over the past two weeks. During the period of national mourning, and in the face of an unprecedented security challenge, you have demonstrated to the world the high standard of British policing. On behalf of the nation, thank you.

The last few years have been challenging for policing and I am dismayed by the perceived deterioration of public confidence in the police. We have seen too many high-profile incidents which have shattered public trust in communities across the UK. Culture and standards in the police have to change, particularly in London.

It is absolutely vital that trust is restored and to address this, we must have visible and responsive policing. It must deliver the public's priorities, and it must treat victims with the respect they deserve. The public have a right to expect that the police get the basics right:

driving down anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood crime which can so easily rip through our communities. To put it simply, the public want to know that an officer will visit them after a crime such as burglary. They want to feel safe in their cities, towns and villages. This is not just about doing your day job well, it is also about victims needing to feel supported and not ignored. Unfortunately, there is a perception that the police have had to spend too much time on symbolic gestures, than actually fighting criminals. This must change. Initiatives on diversity and inclusion should not take precedence over common sense policing.

Reducing crime is a key Prime Ministerial commitment, and I expect the police, working with local partners, to cut homicide, serious violence and neighbourhood crime by 20%. I have been heartened to learn that overall crime, excluding fraud and computer misuse, has continued to fall over the last decade, but there is more we must do to see a further reduction. We also need to see a renewed focus on tackling neighbourhood crime and antisocial behaviour. Drugs, vehicle theft, vandalism and graffiti are not being treated seriously enough. Yes, let's continue your brilliant work on county lines, but we need to go further and faster on other drug-fuelled crimes and anti-social behaviour.

My time as the Attorney General has influenced my top priority of delivering justice and high-quality outcomes for victims. Whilst I recognise our shared responsibility across the Criminal Justice System, I am deeply concerned by the current levels of cases being investigated and then being converted into charges and subsequent prosecutions. I want to investigate how we can improve charge rates which have dropped for many crimes, but none more so than for rape and sexual offences against women and children. I will expect all forces to engage with the learning from the Operation Soteria pilot and strongly encourage you all to take up the national model when available from June 2023 for all forces. Simply put, the system needs to work better together: we need more police referrals and more CPS charges.

I speak now to the six forces in His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's 'engage' process. I expect to see you all making the necessary improvements by working constructively with the HM Chief Inspector to bring about positive and lasting change. To do my part, I am committed to ensuring all forces have the necessary resources and tools to respond to the evolving profile of crime. This is why I am steadfastly determined to deliver the additional 20,000 officers promised through the Police Uplift Programme and I expect all Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners to be on track to fully deliver force level allocations by March 2023 and then maintain officer numbers. We are seeing a growing and strengthened workforce and in order to fully support policing this Government has committed to investing hundreds of millions in 2022-23. This funding will provide police

with the tools they need to meet the technological challenges of the future; this includes £100 million over the next three years to tackle fraud.

We must work effectively and transparently as individuals and as a system to cut crime and improve performance and accountability, underpinned by good, consistent data. An effective system which meets the public expectation sees Police and Crime Commissioners driving local policing priorities and acting as strong, visible leaders; Chief Constables leading the local operational response; forces working in close collaboration with their Regional Organised Crime Units, NCA, wider law enforcement and partner agencies to disrupt the organised criminal groups whose activities undermine our core British values; and the wider policing system pushing the service to operate as efficiently as possible.

At its best, policing in this country is the best in the world. That must and can be the standard that all forces hit. You have my full support in making that happen.

Sincerely,



Rt Hon. Suella Braverman KC MP

Home Secretary

Copied to:

Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council

Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners

Chief Constables of the 43 territorial forces in England and Wales

Police and Crime Commissioners, Mayors with PCC functions and the City of London

Corporation's Court of Common Council for the 43 territorial forces in England and Wales

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

The Chair and Chief Executive of the College of Policing

The Director General of the National Crime Agency

The Director General of the Independent Office for Police Conduct