

Have you got what it takes?

Working with the Home Secretary and the Home Office



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Important facts

The introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) allowed the Home Office to withdraw from day-to-day policing matters, giving the police greater freedom to fight crime as they see fit, and allowing local communities to hold their police forces to account.

The Home Secretary continues to be accountable for national security and the role that the police play within the delivery of any national response to policing issues that arise.

The Home Secretary is ultimately accountable to Parliament and responsible for making sure our communities, in all force areas, are kept safe and secure and protecting our national borders and security.

The policing protocol, which can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-protocol-order-2011-statutory-instrument>, sets out the roles and responsibilities of the PCC, chief constable, police and crime panel and the Home Secretary.

Establishing and maintaining effective working relationships between these parties is essential. It is expected that the principles of goodwill, professionalism, openness and trust will strengthen the relationship between them and all parties will do their utmost to make the relationships work.

The Home Secretary is also under a statutory duty to issue a Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR), which she keeps under review. The SPR sets out what are, in the Home Secretary's view, the national threats at the time of writing and the appropriate national policing capabilities required to counter those threats. Whilst many threats can be tackled by individual police forces within their own force areas, national threats such as terrorism, civil emergencies, serious and organised crime, public order, a national cyber security incident and cross border Child Sexual Abuse cases require a coordinated or aggregated response in which resources are brought together from a number of police forces. The latest version of the SPR can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/strategic-policing-requirement>.

PCCs are required to have regard to this SPR when issuing or varying their police and crime plans. They must keep the police and crime plan under review in light of any changes made to the SPR by the Home Secretary. Chief constables must have regard to both the police and crime plan and the SPR when exercising their functions. PCCs will hold them to account for doing so.

Background

The Home Secretary is head of the Home Office and is responsible for all of its work.

The Home Office leads on immigration and passports, drugs policy, crime policy and counter-terrorism and works to ensure visible, responsive and accountable policing in the UK.

The Home Office is responsible for:

- developing the drug strategy and tackling drugs as a key driver of crime;
- shaping the alcohol strategy, policy and licensing conditions;
- keeping the United Kingdom safe from the threat of terrorism;
- reducing and preventing crime, and ensuring people feel safe in their homes and communities;
- securing the UK border and controlling immigration;
- considering applications to enter and stay in the UK;
- issuing passports and visas; and
- supporting visible, responsible and accountable policing by empowering the public and freeing up the police to fight crime.

The Home Office's priorities are to:

- empower the public to hold the police to account for their role in cutting crime;
- free up the police to fight crime more effectively and efficiently;
- create a more integrated criminal justice system;
- secure our borders and reduce immigration;
- protect people's freedoms and civil liberties; and
- protect our citizens from terrorism

How will the Home Secretary make sure that national and local policing issues are dealt with appropriately?

The Home Secretary has reserved powers and legislative tools that assist her to intervene and direct all relevant parties, if it is determined by the Home Secretary that such action is necessary in order to prevent or mitigate risk to the public or national security.

Such powers and tools will be used only as a last resort, and will not be used to interfere with the democratic will of the electorate within a force area, nor seek to interfere with the office of constable, unless the Home Secretary is satisfied on the advice of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary that not to do so would result in a police force failing or national security being compromised.

The Home Secretary has a duty to issue a Strategic Policing Requirement that sets out what are, in her view, the national threats at the time and the appropriate national policing capabilities that are required to counter them.

