

## **Let's change policing for the better, together**

Check against delivery

There is no greater testament to the bravery and honour of British police officers than the roll call of those who have fallen in the line of duty in the past year.

- DC Sharon Garrett
- PC Kevin Stoodley
- PC Russ Wylie

And we also remember PC Neil Doyle who died in tragic circumstances and whose death is currently being investigated.

We owe these men and women an enormous debt of gratitude.

The death of any police officer is a reminder of the very real dangers you face, day in and day out, as you put yourselves on the line to deal with violent criminals and dangerous situations. Your members strive to keep us and our families safe and take risks so the rest of us can live in peace.

So I want to begin by thanking everyone in this hall – and every officer the Police Federation represents – for the dedication and spirit of public service you show in your jobs every day.

Five years ago I addressed the annual Police Federation conference for the first time. In that speech I laid out my original vision for policing. And at the heart of that vision was a deal. I promised that I would give policing back its professional responsibility... by abolishing the central targets and bureaucratic accountability of Labour's time in office... and by giving you – the men and women of our police forces – the discretion and freedom to do what you joined policing to do: make our society safer.

And in return for this freedom, I said that policing must accept a transfer of power from Whitehall to communities... with the introduction of democratic, local accountability – and much more transparency and scrutiny.

Five years on I am pleased to say that has happened.

We have uncovered some difficult things along the way. We've found systemic failures, individual transgressions and, yes, some cultural problems too. Each time we have uncovered these issues, we have faced up to them and sought to put them right.

But today, the Home Office no longer believes it runs policing. You the professionals do. You do so unencumbered by the reams of bureaucracy and national targets that weighed you down and got in the way of doing your job.

You do so accountable to the people you serve, held to account by police and crime commissioners who are themselves accountable to communities in the strongest way possible: at the ballot box.

And you do so subject to more transparency than ever before, and more scrutiny – from a beefed-up IPCC, a more independent HMIC and a government unafraid to ask the most difficult questions.

I want to talk more about these things in a moment and my vision for policing in the next five years. But first I want to say this.

I know that the theme of this year's Police Federation conference is "cuts have consequences". I know too that delivering more with less can be challenging and difficult.

Over the past five years, we have had to make some tough and difficult decisions. We have reformed your pay and pensions, reduced police spending, and yes, there are fewer officers overall. But – despite the predictions of the Federation, and despite the predictions of the politicians who wanted to sell you a false dream of ever more spending – crime is down by more than a quarter since 2010, according to the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales.

This weekend, the Federation warned that spending reductions mean that we'll be “forced to adopt a paramilitary style” of policing in Britain. Today, you've said that neighbourhood police officers are an “endangered species”. I have to tell you that this kind of scaremongering does nobody any good – it doesn't serve you, it doesn't serve the officers you represent, and it doesn't serve the public.

In 2002, you said David Blunkett had “done more harm to the police in five minutes than others have taken years to do.” In 2004, you said Labour were going to “destroy policing in this country for ever”. And in 2007, you said the Government had “betrayed the police”. Now, I disagree with Labour policies – but even I don’t think those things are true.

You said police officers were “demoralised” in 2002, 2004, 2007 and 2012. You warned of police officers’ “anger” in 2002, 2005 and 2008. And you warned that the police – and the public – were being put in danger in 2001, 2004 and 2007. The truth is that crime fell in each of those years, it’s fallen further since – and our country is safer than it has ever been.

So please – for your own sake and for the thousands of police officers who work so hard every day – this crying wolf has to stop.

And let's just take a moment to remember where we have come from. Because back in 2010, when I first became Home Secretary, we had just been through the worst financial crisis since the Second World War. We had the biggest budget deficit in our peacetime history – bigger than Portugal and bigger even than Greece – a country which is still on the brink of financial disaster.

But today, thanks to the decisions we took, our economy is on the right track. We have come back from the brink. We are heading in the right direction. Earnings are up, unemployment is down, economic confidence is rising and the deficit is falling.

We are repairing the damage and clearing up the mess that this country was in.

So yes, cuts do have consequences. Because if we had not taken the action we did.....we would not have had the fastest growing major advanced economy in the world in 2014.

If we had not cut public spending.....we would not have halved our deficit as a share of our economy.

If we had not started to balance the books.....we would not have created more jobs in the past five years than the rest of the EU put together.

And let's be honest, if we had not reformed police pay and pensions, chief constables would have had little choice but to cut more police officers and staff.

I know that all this does not mean that spending cuts have not been difficult or painful. I know that you have not always agreed with the things that I've done. And when you haven't, you have always let me know that loud and clear.

Change isn't always easy. It can involve tough decisions and hard choices and it requires a determination to stay on course and see things through to the end. But let's not pretend that police reform has been all about reducing spending, because when you look at the reforms I have put in place, what they amount to is a programme to make policing fairer, more efficient, and more effective in cutting crime.

If we want to make things better, we must recognise when change is necessary.

That's why I want to congratulate the Police Federation on its decision to accept, last year, all the recommendations of the Normington Review.

I have always said that in this country we have the finest policemen and women in the world, and they deserve a Federation that serves them well.

So Steve, where you need my support, I will give it to you. I know, for example, that you are keen to enshrine the Federation's Core Purpose in legislation – so I can tell you that I will put that on the statute book.

And where it is the responsibility of the Home Office to deliver change, I will make sure change is delivered. I will, for example, bring forward proposals to make the Police Federation subject to the Freedom of Information Act as I said I would last year.

And where you come to me with serious propositions for the good of policing, I will listen to you, just as I have in the past.

When I first became Home Secretary, you asked me to honour the remainder of the three-year pay deal negotiated before 2010, and I did.

You said that life should mean life for cop killers, and so the Government changed the law.

You said there was a discrepancy in the way the spouses of police officers killed in the line of duty were treated, and we are taking steps to correct that injustice.

And I have listened to what you've had to say on targets, police-led prosecutions and charging decisions.

**Reform has been unambiguously good for policing.**

These are all changes that have been for the good of policing.

And on top of these changes we have achieved much more besides.

A proper professional body in the College of Policing owned by the police, for the police, to provide training, set standards and establish an evidence base of what works.

The abolition of national targets, key performance indicators and the stripping away of reams of unnecessary bureaucracy which wasted so much police time.

Crime maps, beat meetings and police and crime commissioners to bring transparency and accountability to the way you interact with the public.

The National Crime Agency with a proper mandate and the power to task and coordinate law enforcement so we can get to grips with organised crime.

New schemes such as Direct Entry and Police Now to bring in fresh talent, skills and expertise – and ensure that policing is open to the brightest and the best.

And to ensure policing is held to the highest standards, an HMIC that is truly independent and a beefed-up IPCC to deal with cases when things go wrong.

Each of these changes has been for the good. Together they are making British policing more professional, more accountable and more transparent.

So police reform is working. By cutting bureaucracy and central targets, we have saved up to 4.5 million police hours – the equivalent of 2,100 full-time officers.

The frontline service has been maintained and the proportion of officers in frontline roles has gone up to 91%.

And crime has fallen by more than a quarter since 2010, according to the independent Crime Survey for England and Wales.

## **The rationale for reform remains the same**

Now I know there are those who say that the police cannot cope with more reform. I have heard some chief constables and police and crime commissioners say that police forces cannot find more savings without cutting neighbourhood policing.

But I say if we want policing in this country to be the best it can be, then we must reform further.

This is not, as I have said, just about money – although budgets are important. There is no ducking the fact that police spending will have to come down again.

The last five years have shown that it is possible to do more with less – crime has fallen, the frontline service has been maintained, and public confidence in the police is up, even as spending has reduced.

But the deficit remains too high and more savings will need to be made and policing will have to play its part.

I know there are those who say there is no more waste to cut. But I simply do not accept that. It is perfectly possible to make savings without affecting the quality of neighbourhood policing.

Because I know – as you do – that there is still wasteful spending in policing and that resources are still not linked to demand.

And when chief constables say that they have found every last saving, or when they say they need more money to tackle certain crimes, I remind myself that in the year to March 2014, usable financial reserves for police forces in England and Wales increased by almost £250 million. They went up in 34 forces across the country.

And I think of the fact that in 2013-14, there were nearly the same number of officers and staff employed in Staff Officer roles in England and Wales as there were in roles investigating hate crime.

And I remember that HMIC has clearly shown that there remain significant efficiencies to be found if forces work together collaboratively, improve their ICT and understand demand better.

I am not saying financial reserves and staff officers are not important, or that better collaboration and ICT is easy to achieve. But to say there are no more savings to be found is simply not true.

As we move into the next five years and reduce spending, we will need to make sure that the frontline service is protected and crime continues to fall.

So it is not going to be enough to shave off a bit of excess here, and reduce some bureaucracy there. That is good, but reform needs to go much deeper than that.

Reform over the next five years will mean working to understand and reduce demand on policing.

We will need to face up to the changing nature of crime and the impact on police forces, including the much greater reporting of previously ignored or underreported crimes such as child sexual abuse. I have said before that what we are seeing is only the tip of the iceberg. So let me be clear, I am committed to ensuring the police have the resources they need to investigate these appalling crimes and bring perpetrators to justice. Just as we have ensured the necessary funding for Operation Hydrant – the national policing operation that coordinates investigations of child sexual abuse and is led by Simon Bailey.

And we will also need to ensure that police officers do not have to pick up the pieces when other public services fail to deliver.

As I have said, the police are not social workers, they are not mental health nurses, or paramedics. I stand by the sentiment.

It is not good enough for police custody to be used as an overflow facility for A&E - or for secure children's homes to use the police to control the children in their care.

And I will do everything I can to work with other departments to reduce other unnecessary demand on policing.

It will mean investing in new technology, not just to save police time but to improve the professional lives of officers and staff.

The use of body-worn video, for example, not only helps to improve accountability and provide valuable evidence, it has also been shown to reduce vexatious complaints and increase the number of early guilty pleas.

The same applies to handheld technology. Cambridgeshire Police have moved to an entirely paperless system to cut bureaucracy and improve productivity by equipping officers with tablets loaded with apps. Yet other forces still issue notebooks and pencils to new recruits.

And just as ambulances have transformed from little more than fast vans in the past that simply took patients to and from hospital, so too we must look at the role of police cars. Today ambulances can act as mobile critical incident rooms. I want to see police cars make the transition to mobile police stations – removing the need for officers to return to the station to type up their paperwork.

When you look at what I am talking about, I am sure everyone in this room recognises the huge opportunities for policing.

And if in everything I am talking about, the Federation comes to me with serious proposals to help change policing for the better, then I will listen.

Because if we do this right, if you come with me and if you work with me, then we will be able to deliver the reform necessary and improve the working lives of police officers while cutting crime for the public.

The choice is yours. As Home Secretary, I can – as I have for the last five years – reform the police without the support of the Federation. But the opportunity to work constructively with government should make the world of difference to you. So join me and work with me to change policing. The reward will be a better police – for officers and staff and the public you serve – and a country that will be safer and fairer than ever before.

So the choice is yours and it is clear. You can choose protest, and continue to shout angrily from the sidelines for the next five years. Or you can choose partnership, and work with me to change policing for the better.

I said at the beginning of my address that I would return to the deal that I first set out in 2010. That in return for real accountability to the communities you serve, I would ensure you have the freedom to get on with the job as best as you see fit. I want to do so now. Because I have always been clear that the police should only have one single mission – to cut crime.

That's why today I am announcing two things to further free up police time.

First, on the 27<sup>th</sup> May in the Queen's Speech we will introduce a new Policing Bill, which will allow us to go further and faster with reform freeing up police time and putting policing back in the hands of the professionals.

We will extend the use of police-led prosecutions to cut the time you spend waiting for the Crown Prosecution Service. We will overhaul the police complaints and disciplinary systems and make changes to the oversight of pre-charge bail.

And we will include measures to reduce the amount of time the police spend dealing with people suffering from mental health issues – while ensuring that these individuals still receive the support they need at a time of crisis.

The Bill will therefore include provisions to cut the use of police cells for Section 135 and 136 detentions, reduce the current 72 hour maximum period of detention for the purposes of medical assessment, and continue to improve outcomes for people with mental health needs by enabling more places, other than police cells, to be designated as places of safety.

Nobody wins when the police are sent to look after people suffering from mental health problems: vulnerable people don't get the care they need and deserve, and the police can't get on with the job they are trained to do.

These measures, along with the other work we have been doing – street triage pilots, the pilot of an alternative health-based place of safety, and the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat – will help to put that right: saving police time, caring for vulnerable people, and in some cases, saving lives.

But I know that without the proper provision of health and community-based places of safety, police cells will continue to be used to detain vulnerable people - using up valuable police resources and denying them the care and support they need. Last year, over 4,000 people detained under Section 135 and 136 of the Mental Health Act were held in a police cell rather than in a health-based place of safety.

So today I can announce that the Government will provide the beds and the funding that is needed to stop that happening. This will mean up to £15 million of new funding to deliver health-based places of safety in England and a guarantee from this Government that no person with mental health problems will be detained by the police due to the lack of a suitable alternative.

Because the right place for a person suffering a mental health crisis is a bed, not a police cell. And the right people to look after them are medically trained professionals, not police officers.

And in addition to the Bill, we will make further changes, including enabling the fire and rescue services to engage in much closer joint working with the police. And we will allow police forces to retain a greater share of the assets they seize from organised criminals to reward performance, boost funding and ensure crime does not pay.

## **Targets**

The second announcement I want to make goes back to that original deal in 2010. As I have said, when I became Home Secretary, I abolished Home Office performance targets and told chief constables that they had one single mission – to cut crime.

I called upon chief constables and Police Authorities, as they were then, to take the same radical approach to cutting targets and bureaucracy.

Because targets don't fight crime, they hinder the fight against crime.

Yet I know that in some places local targets still persist. Year after year I have stood here and told you that I'm just as frustrated as you are about these local targets. It can never be right for red tape removed by the Home Office to be simply reinstated at local level or for bureaucratic paperwork to be gold-plated by forces.

Last year, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary revealed not only serious faults in the recording of crime but also the continued existence of a target mentality on the front line in some forces.

When HMIC surveyed thousands of officers and staff for that inspection, nearly a third of respondents said that they had experienced pressure in the last two years – mostly from supervisors or senior management – that led to the misrecording of crime.

This local target culture is not the same everywhere. Some forces focus on broad priorities, others on specific performance regimes across a range of crime types. There are chief constables who manage their forces only by outcomes, while others retain a relentless focus on what is recorded by officers and staff. And I know that there are some police officers who like the comfort of ticking the boxes or meeting the targets that their supervisors set them.

So today, I can announce a major independent review of the use of crime and performance targets in every police force in England and Wales.

This review will be led by Irene Curtis – President of the Police Superintendents’ Association. It will examine in detail the use of targets in each force to bring transparency to where, how and why targets are being used, and analyse the impact of targets on police officers’ ability to fight crime.

It is not – and I could not be clearer about this – a criticism of the use of data to understand and manage the operational challenge of policing by chief constables.

Nor is it a rebuke to police and crime commissioners who use information to set the strategic direction of their force and hold their chief constable to account.

Information is critical to management and scrutiny. But there is a world of difference between the proper use of data to manage performance and the improper use of arbitrary targets.

And to those chief constables who are tempted to say that this review threatens their operational independence, who say that it is their right to be able to set targets wherever they see fit, I say that there is nothing operational and nothing independent about the use of targets in the fight against crime.

Because targets distort operational reality. They remove independent discretion from police officers. And undue focus on one target can lead to crimes that are not measured being neglected altogether.

And if anyone is in any doubt about the perverse outcomes targets can cause, they need only look at the culture of South Yorkshire Police in the early part of the last decade.

A police force allegedly so intent on meeting Home Office targets about car theft and burglary that it ignored hundreds of young girls being abused in Rotherham and Sheffield.

Where resources followed those so-called “priority crimes”, and may have been diverted away from issues like rape and sexual violence that were not on the list.

And a management culture, according to some whistleblowers, in which senior officers' pay was linked to these targets, meaning that it was possible to indirectly reward officers for neglecting the victims of sexual abuse.

We can never allow that culture to exist in policing again – and I am determined to root it out. I've got rid of the national targets, and now I want to take on the target culture imposed at local level. Enough is enough.

## **Conclusion**

So that is my offer to you: more reform to make your lives better, to save police time, and to give you more discretion so that you can get on with the jobs you are trained to do.

You can choose to work with me. Or you can choose to shout from the sidelines. What I offer is a positive vision for policing, and one in which it is an exciting time to be a police officer, where you have the freedom to get on with your job, where you are rewarded for your skills and hard work, and where policing is fit for the future. What I have set out today will help transform policing for the better. If you want British policing to be the best it can be, join with me to make that happen.

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**ENDS**