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## HOW THE BRITISH POLICE FIGHTS AGAINST CRIME

Despite having one of the most expensive criminal justice systems in the world, Britain remains a high-crime country. More than four million crimes - almost a quarter of which are violent - are recorded each year. Only half of the public trust the British criminal justice system to protect them from criminals.

Instead of providing effective protection to the public and the punishment and rehabilitation of criminals, prison and justice system has failed to break the cycle of crime and reoffending. Around half of prisoners commit offences within a year of leaving prison. The national audit office has estimated that the social and economic costs of these reoffenders alone are between £7 billion and £10 billion per year. An effective approach to cutting crime must ensure that prison, community sentences and rehabilitation work better. [1]

The Government's approach to fighting crime involves a radical shift in power from Whitehall to local communities. The police and their partners will be given far greater freedom to do their jobs and use their discretion. The public will have more power to hold the police and Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to account and feel empowered to reclaim their communities. This shift will be accompanied by a new and overdue focus on serious and organised crime at a national level. Success will not be judged by a myriad of centrally mandated targets. It will be judged by the public on the simple fact of whether crime has fallen.

The police has given one simple mission: to cut crime. But crime cannot be cut by focusing solely on catching and convicting those who have already committed crimes. It is also cut by preventing crime in the first place by tackling the risk factors that can drive it across society: from poor parenting and education to dealing with drug abuse and problem drinking. The Government is providing a £2 billion early Intervention Grant to local areas to support this work. At national level, the police will work to reduce the opportunities to commit crimes, by learning from behavioural science and ‘designing out’ crime through the manufacture and design of goods, services, and towns [4].

As around half of all crime is committed by people with a previous conviction, any plan to cut crime must also cut reoffending. Prisons will become places where they will learn the discipline of work, enabling them to make reparation to victims and gain job skills to help them resettle in the community and avoid committing further crimes. We will also rehabilitate offenders to tackle the problems which fuel their criminal activity by getting drug dependent offenders off drugs and into recovery and tackling mental health problems. More information on criminal justice reform was set out in the Ministry of Justice Green Paper: Breaking The Cycle: Effective Punishment, Rehabilitation and Sentencing of Offenders [2].

A national Crime agency will be created as an integral part of UK policing with a senior Chief Constable at its head and accountable to the Home Secretary. Consisting of a number of operational commands and harnessing synergies between them to get the best outcomes, the nCa will exploit the intelligence, analytical and enforcement capabilities of the Serious organised Crime agency and will establish a Border Policing Command. The nCa will connect its capabilities to those in police forces, HM Revenue and Customs, the UK Border agency and a range of other criminal justice partners.

In addition to core central government funding to police authorities, the police and their partners also receive ring-fenced funding such as the neighbourhood Policing Fund and the Drug Intervention Programme. That way, resources can be directed in a way that suits the needs of the local community. The funds will remain ring-fenced until that time because there will be no adequate mechanism for local accountability, except for the Metropolitan

Police authority in London. There, where the Mayor already has control over policing, the ring-fence for the neighbourhood Policing Fund has been removed and the other ring-fenced funds will soon go with it [3].

#### Reference list

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/2010-to-2015-government-policy-policing/2010-to-2015-government-policy-policing>
2. <http://www.rcc.int/articles/17/cooperation-in-the-fight-against-organized-crime-must-exceed-regional-borders>
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4. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/law-and-order/9492386/A-peoples-revolution-is-under-way-in-the-fight-against-crime.html>