



Home Office

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Rt Hon Dame Karen Bradley DBE MP
Chair, Home Affairs Select Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

7 August 2025

Dear Dame Karen,

Thank you for your letter of 15 July regarding police reform and the number of police forces in England and Wales. I am replying as the Minister of State for Policing and Crime Prevention.

You have raised three questions which I will answer in turn:

1. What assessment the Government has made of the financial, workforce and other efficiencies which could be realised by significantly reducing the number of police forces in England and Wales?

This Government is committed to addressing the strategic challenges policing faces. We specifically recognise the problems around fragmentation and resultant inefficiencies across the policing landscape, which many system leaders have highlighted. As crime becomes ever more complex and threats cut across force boundaries, we need to look carefully at the capabilities delivered at the local, regional and national level and the way they are co-ordinated. The policing system must be equipped to serve the public effectively and to make efficient use of its funding and resources. This is why the Home Office will publish a White Paper on police reform later this year. It will include a comprehensive package of reforms to policing in England and Wales that will drive quality and consistency of performance, and increase efficiency and collaboration across forces.

As part of Police Reform, the Government is considering a range of options to drive greater efficiencies in the policing system and has set up a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme to ensure delivery of savings during the Spending Review 2025 period. These will be sustained and accelerated by the creation of the new National Centre of Policing as the primary means to realise further efficiencies and drive up standards overall.

As set out by the Home Secretary last year, the Police Reform White Paper will make a range of proposals to drive quality, consistency and efficiency and ensure that all police forces are equipped to deliver the Government's Safer Streets Mission. We recognise that some policing leaders have called for a reduction in the number of police forces, and we will continue to consult the views of policing colleagues on the optimum model for local policing structures. Any proposals to tackle fragmentation and drive consistency in the policing system will be included within the White Paper, which will be published later this year.

2. What engagement has the Government had with key stakeholders on the question of reducing the number of police forces in England and Wales?

In her speech to the APCC-NPCC Summit in November 2024, the Home Secretary committed to working in partnership with policing on police reform. Since then, Home Office officials have engaged with a range of policing stakeholders to develop ambitious policy proposals. At the end of 2024, we established a Joint Police Reform Team to oversee and drive the vision and delivery of police reform. The team consists of Home Office civil servants working alongside secondees from the National Police Chiefs' Council, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and wider policing organisations. The Home Secretary and I have continued to have regular engagement with policing stakeholders on police reform through a range of meetings and roundtables.

3. Whether the option for reducing the number of police forces in England and Wales is under active consideration.

As stated above, we recognise that some policing leaders have called for a reduction in the number of police forces, though it is worth saying that there is no established consensus across all policing leaders on that point, or on the optimum model for local policing structures, which is why we are continuing to discuss those issues with policing colleagues. Proposals to tackle fragmentation and drive consistency across policing will be included within the forthcoming Police Reform White Paper, which will be published later this year.

In respect of force boundaries, the Government has committed through the English Devolution White Paper to realising greater alignment of public service boundaries. As part of the process of transferring PCC functions to mayors to unlock the benefits of wider join up across local services, we are working with the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to consider opportunities for the alignment of policing and mayoral boundaries. This not only paves the way for more transfers of PCC functions to mayors but also creates opportunities to drive efficiency and effectiveness across local policing and improve public safety. Our proposals for police reform will be released later this year, at which time I will ensure that the Home Affairs Select Committee is notified of the publication.

We would be open to forces themselves coming forward with proposals for their own force, and we will actively listen to these.

Thank you again for taking the time to write.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Diana Johnson', followed by a period.

Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson DBE MP
Minister of State for Policing and Crime Prevention