

Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Chair of Science, Innovation and Technology Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA
United Kingdom

9 March 2026

Dear Dame Chi,

I write further to the Home Secretary's letters of 27 November and 30 January regarding work being done to reduce mobile phone theft. I am sorry not to have been able to provide this further response to the Committee by 24 February as requested. This has been due to the need to consult with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) on the very latest progress of their collaborative work on technical solutions with industry partners and to reconfirm the MPS's current position regarding their preferred approach.

As the Committee will be aware, law enforcement partners are taking robust action to drive down instances of phone theft. Since January 2025, the MPS has delivered its most comprehensive and intelligence-led response to mobile phone theft and robbery through Operation Reckoning. This work is strengthening understanding of the organised criminal networks driving this crime and has enabled decisive action against those responsible.

The MPS is already seeing the impact - mobile phone theft has fallen by 10,000 offences in the past year – a reduction of 12.3%. The most recent phase of Op Reckoning led to 256 arrests, including 43 priority targets, demonstrating what can be achieved when local teams and specialist officers work in a joined up and focused way.

These efforts are important. But I will be clear: I want to see more action from other partners aimed at breaking the business model that drives phone theft. Designing out this crime is one of the most powerful steps industry can take to protect the public.

In recent months, I am pleased to note that there has been stronger engagement from major technology companies on this issue, including Apple, Google, and Samsung. There is now shared agreement about the need to reach an outcome that sees the value of a stolen device significantly reduced. The MPS is continuing to work closely with these partners on technical solutions that would make stolen devices far less attractive to organised criminals. My officials are providing their support.

We look forward to public commitments from industry in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, I can also confirm that – at the current time – it remains the MPS's preference for more time to be granted to allow this work to continue. This enables potential solutions to be developed and tested appropriately, with law enforcement, government and industry sharing responsibility and acting together.

However, if meaningful progress is not made, the Home Office will look to consider any necessary action.

I welcome the commitment shown so far by our partners. Their support — offered voluntarily and in pursuit of public safety — plays a vital role in helping us disrupt organised criminality, protect Londoners, and reduce the harm caused by mobile phone theft across the capital and beyond.

I will continue to keep the Committee updated at appropriate intervals.

Very best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'SJ', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Sarah Jones MP
Minister of State for Policing and Crime