

Surge in neighbourhood police in communities fighting crime

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Government meets target to put over 3,000 additional neighbourhood police into roles 2 months early.

Over 3,000 additional police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) have been put into neighbourhood roles in less than a year, as new figures reveal the government has hit this target 2 months ahead of schedule.

While murders and serious violent crimes are at their lowest level for more than a decade, communities have continued to be blighted by shop theft, mobile phone theft and drug offences.

Figures released today show that 3,123 additional neighbourhood police officers and PCSOs have been hired or redeployed since April last year and are now focused on fighting local crimes in communities.

Last year the government pledged to have 3,000 additional neighbourhood policing personnel by the end of March 2026, meeting the target in January.

The increase in neighbourhood officers is already delivering results. The Home Office's Winter of Action scheme across December and January saw almost 18,000 arrests across more than 600 towns and cities as police presence and patrols were ramped up.

Of these, over 5,000 were for retail crime, over 1,000 for sexual offences, almost 1,000 for street crime, and over 10,000 – more than half – were for violent assault.

Crime and Policing Minister, Sarah Jones, said:

Neighbourhood policing was hollowed out under the previous government. Communities were left to face an epidemic of everyday crime that all too often seemed to go unpunished.

To make matters worse, too many officers have been stuck behind desks in support roles when we need them out on our streets.

We're delivering the biggest reforms to policing in over 200 years and, crucially, putting 13,000 more neighbourhood officers where they belong – on the beat and fighting crime in our communities. The government will halve knife crime within a decade, saving lives and protecting communities.

Significant successes have been seen across some of the busiest individual forces in country, including these self-reported examples:

- South Wales reporting a 37% reduction in home burglaries and a 14% reduction in anti-social behaviour

- Greater Manchester Police making more than 1,300 arrests – more than 400 were for anti-social behaviour, 272 for retail crime, and 170 for serious violent crime
- Merseyside Police making 1,045 arrests, with retail crime arrests up 26% on the previous 2 months before the campaign, while street crime arrests increased by 71%

The early delivery of additional neighbourhood officers marks a major milestone in meeting the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, which will ultimately see 13,000 additional neighbourhood personnel by the end of this parliament – an increase of more than 75%.

The guarantee is putting officers back on the beat, tackling the issues that matter most to their local communities. Arrests already rose by 5% last year, as the renewed focus on neighbourhood policing delivers real results.

All police forces have now also published bespoke antisocial behaviour action plans – another key commitment of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee – setting out how they intend to continue tackling antisocial behaviour (ASB) in their communities. The plans were published by each force's designated antisocial behaviour lead, roles that were established last year as part of the guarantee.

John Hayward-Cripps, CEO of Neighbourhood Watch Network, said:

The government increasing the number of neighbourhood police officers is welcome and essential, and the quality of relationships built with communities will embed confidence. That is where the benefit of working with people and community organisations is realised.

Neighbourhood Watch has been advocating for named, contactable local officers for many years. Local people know their areas best, and when police engage with communities meaningfully, it generates valuable intelligence and insight that simply cannot be gathered any other way.

Harvinder Saimbhi, CEO of ASB Help, said:

It's positive to see 3,000 neighbourhood officers are now in place, with a mandate to deliver the ASB Action Plan and work with key local agencies on priorities most important to communities.

For ASB victims to be able to have direct conversations about their concerns will provide crucial reassurance that their experiences are taken seriously, and that meaningful steps will be taken to address the issues affecting their daily lives.

Dal Babu, former Chief Superintendent at the Metropolitan Police, said:

The government's investment in an extra 3,000 neighbourhood officers is an excellent opportunity to focus on the crimes which cause huge harm in our communities.

As someone who worked on reducing anti-social behaviour in my 30-year police career, I

am extremely pleased to see the decades-long hollowing out of neighbourhood policing is being reversed.

Association of Convenience Stores Chief Executive, Ed Woodall, said:

We strongly welcome the government's commitment to increasing police presence in communities, which has led to a majority of retailers reporting better relationships with their local police forces.

We now need to capitalise on this momentum so that more repeat shop thieves are brought to justice and taken out of the cycle of reoffending. Local shops remain committed to working with the police to make this happen.

Today, the government will launch its plan to halve knife crime within a decade. Titled 'Protecting Lives, Building Hope', it will save lives, transform the futures of young people and protect communities across the country.

To tackle knife crime, the government will support young people so they get the best start in life, stop those at risk from turning to knife crime and police our streets to catch and punish perpetrators.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/surge-in-neighbourhood-police-in-communities-fighting-crime>