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# United Against Crime

## Policy Paper 138

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## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The Liberal Democrat approach**

1.1.1 Preventing crime and ensuring people feel safe are crucial to achieving social justice. It is the poorest and most vulnerable who suffer most from crime and who benefit most from good policing. Liberal Democrats want to build a police force that is fit for the 21st century, in which police officers feel valued and able to focus on cutting crime – so that they can more effectively protect people and prevent crime.

1.1.2 Levels of serious violent crime in the UK are currently much too high. Almost every day, someone is stabbed to death on Britain's streets. Homicides are at their highest rate in a decade. Far too many victims are children and young people. The Government's response has been to introduce new laws to put more young people in prison on short-term sentences that don't work to prevent crime. At the same time, the Conservatives' excessive cuts to police funding have taken officers off the streets and left forces stretched much too thin.

1.1.3 These cuts have contributed to the spread of violent crime, but that is not the only type of crime that is rising. Burglaries and robberies are also rising in all types of community – rural, suburban and urban – and people are increasingly concerned about falling victim to this type of crime. Conservative police cuts have left communities with a lack of officers – meaning that it is taking police longer to respond to calls and allowing offenders to get away – and a shortage of detectives and resources to solve the vast majority of crimes. Too many victims do not see that their cases resolved, eroding public confidence in the police across our communities.

1.1.4 Meanwhile, other demands on the police are growing, from investigating child sexual abuse and online fraud to responding to mental health crises and searching for missing people. Police forces are constantly being expected to do more with less.

1.1.5 The result is that there are more and more places in the country where people simply don't see any visible policing – whether police officers or police community support officers on the beat – or expect the police to respond quickly. In other areas of the country, communities feel over-policed and under-protected. Both erode confidence and make people feel less safe: young people feel a need to carry knives for protection; elderly people are concerned about leaving their homes.

1.1.6 Liberal Democrats recognise the vital importance of having more police officers on the streets, to make our communities safer and to make people *feel* safer too. Recruiting more officers will clearly require a substantial increase in government funding for police forces. Instead, Ministers announced another inadequate funding settlement for the police in December 2018, which abrogated responsibility from national government and passed the buck to Police and Crime Commissioners to fund their forces through council tax rises.

1.1.7 Equally damaging have been the Conservatives' cuts to the many services that help prevent crime and can support the police – including youth services and social services. Liberal Democrats understand that more police is only part of the answer. Like any epidemic, tackling violent crime requires a public health approach that addresses not only the disease but also its underlying causes. That will mean enabling better-funded police forces to work more closely with a broad range of partners, from youth services and community groups to schools and the NHS.

1.1.8 We must recognise that the nature of policing has changed and will continue to change. We need to find new solutions that are effective at the very local level as well as enabling police forces to collaborate with each other, internationally and with other organisations. We want to prevent crime and ensure people feel safe. Our priority is to prevent people becoming victims of crime and – when

that has not been possible – to ensure that victims are listened to and treated equally.

1.1.9 The focus of this paper is on how we should support the police to achieve this objective. We have focused on how we can support the police to prevent crime, reduce communities' concerns about crime and help victims of crime. The working group has not sought to review existing policy around drugs or counter-terrorism: we fully endorse existing party policy as set out in policy paper 118 *Doing What Works to Cut Crime* (2014) and policy motion *Regulatory Framework for Cannabis* (2016) on drugs and policy paper 123 *Safe and Free* (2016) on terrorism. This paper also does not address questions around rehabilitation, as this is covered by the new spokespeople's paper *Turning Lives Around*.

## **1.2 Crime in the UK today**

1.2.1 The first step in developing policy on crime and policing is to build a proper understanding of the current situation. Statistics on the number of crimes are an important part of this, but they are not the whole picture. The policies in this paper are intended, as well as actually making people safer, to also make people *feel* safer – so we must look to the crime statistics to tell us both about what is actually happening as well as what people *perceive* to be happening. This is an urgent issue – recent polling suggests that people see crime as the third most important issue facing the UK (after Brexit and healthcare), which is a clear indication that people are increasingly worried about crime.

1.2.2 Currently the main source of statistics about crime are the crimes recorded by the police and the Crime Survey for England and Wales. The Crime Survey, while it has limitations, is useful because it includes crimes that aren't reported to the police – so it shows the types of crimes that tend to be underreported – and also asks people about their attitudes towards crime. However, both sources need to be looked at together for a full picture and require careful interpretation.

1.2.3 A simplistic reading of the Crime Survey data might quickly lead to complacency. For this shows the medium-term trend for crimes to be falling – despite reducing police numbers. Yet the Survey data in the last three years is increasingly at odds with data on crimes recorded by the police, and there are a variety of reasons why a simplistic reading of the Survey data is misleading:

- Serious violent crime is picked up first and more accurately by recorded crime statistics, not the Survey (because serious violent crime remains relatively rare compared to other crimes and so is under-represented in the survey). This measure shows such crimes have been rocketing: knife crime reached a record high in 2019, up 8% from the previous year and up by over 75% since 2015, while gun crime and homicide have both increased by around a third since 2015. Robberies and organised crime are increasing too. Such serious crimes inevitably require more police input to solve.
- Over the past ten years, a lot of crime has shifted online and this hasn't been captured by the Crime Survey, which only started asking about it in 2015. The drop in crime was never as substantial as it appeared on the face of it.
- The mixture and complexity of crimes that police are investigating has increased – from terrorist incidents to a greater number of people reporting cases of rape, domestic abuse and historic sexual abuse to the police. These are more resource-intensive to investigate and have been increasing while resources have been dwindling.
- Hate crime is rising – both in terms of incidents reported to the police and the total number of incidents measured in the Crime Survey – and spiked following the Brexit referendum as well as in the aftermath of the 2017 terrorist attacks.
- An average of two women per week are killed by their partner in England and Wales and the police receive a call every minute

about domestic abuse – 89% of these are from women being abused by a man.

- A substantial amount of police time is spent handling things that are not crimes: 80% of calls to the police do not result in crimes being recorded. Police spend an increasing amount of time dealing with mental health crises (estimates for police time taken up this way range from 20% to 40%). Missing persons work has seen another huge rise in demand over the past year.

1.2.4 Because of the types of crime that are increasing – as well as the additional pressures on the police meaning that they are a less visible presence in communities – the public perception is that crime is getting worse. And the people who feel this most keenly are the poorest in society, who cannot afford home security and live in or near the areas where crime is rising.

1.2.5 Confidence in the police is also a key concern – especially among ethnic minority communities. Arrest rates are generally higher across all ethnic minority groups than they are for the white group and black and mixed ethnicities are arrested at much higher rates: a black person is more than three times more likely to be arrested than a white person. Grievances over policing tactics – especially the disproportionate use of Stop and Search, have a hugely negative bearing on trust in the police.

### **1.3 Fit, focused, valued and effective**

1.3.1 To tackle these challenges, we want to build police forces that are:

- **Fit for the 21st Century:** by ensuring that the police have the right resources and structures to provide high quality community policing and cooperate across forces both nationally and internationally.

- **Focused on tackling crime:** by adequately resourcing other services to reduce the amount of time that police officers spend on non-criminal incidents.
- **Valued to deliver:** by paying the police fairly and investing in their professional development.

And we want to ensure that both the police and other services are **effective in preventing and reducing crime:** by working with young people, listening to victims and investing in communities. To enable effective community policing we must restore community confidence in the police, including by ensuring that police powers – especially Stop and Search – are used proportionately and only when necessary.

1.3.2 There are five areas where change is most urgently needed. We commit to:

- A major investment in community policing, providing funding for two new police officers for every ward in the country.
- Investment in mental health services, to ensure that people get the help they need and to ease the pressure that mental health crises place on the police.
- Additional resources to end youth violence, including promoting diversionary schemes and building genuinely innovative and engaging youth services.
- Substantial extra funding for the National Crime Agency to combat serious organised crime.
- The creation of the new Online Crime Agency to effectively tackle online crimes such as personal fraud and threats and incitement to violence on social media.

## **2. Fit for the 21st Century**

### **2.1 The new challenges facing police in the 21st century**

2.1.1 Today's police face a different set of challenges to that which they have in the past: violent and organised crime is increasing; anti-social behaviour remains a challenge in many parts of the country; crime increasingly takes place online. The police are increasingly required to work across local, national and international levels to tackle a complex range of crimes but – especially with resources stretched – the service is currently configured to tackle crime within their areas of responsibility and national and international crimes that are difficult for forces to deal with, are increasing.

2.1.2 At the local level violent crime is increasing, people are increasingly concerned about becoming the victims of burglary or theft, communities are losing confidence in the police and there are policing vacuums that criminals are exploiting. These local challenges are increasingly fuelled by criminals operating at the national and international level: serious organised crime has reached new heights, including modern slavery and the 'county lines' gangs that exploit children to traffic drugs. The national and international nature of these criminal networks means that it is impossible for each of the 43 regional police forces in England and Wales to tackle them independently. The growth in online crime means that it is becoming more commonplace for perpetrators and victims to be based in entirely different parts of the country, which makes it difficult for the police to combat.

2.1.3 The other factor in the changing landscape of 21st century policing is the emergence of new technology that gives the police access to a range of new tools that seem to offer new ways to tackle crime: facial-recognition software can be used to identify those who have committed crimes; advances in forensic technology, such as for investigating road collisions, help bring closure to the families of

victims; the prevalence of data might help police find missing people; and developments in surveillance technology could help the police to prevent crime.

2.1.4 We believe that there is a place for new technology, but that its use must not come at the cost of individual liberty: a person's right to privacy should not be breached lightly and it is vitally important that new police powers are regulated and subject to oversight.

2.1.5 To build a police service that is fit for the 21st century, we must:

- Invest in the police, to ensure that there are enough police officers with the right set of skills.
- Ensure that the police service is structured in a way that allows them to operate effectively at local, national and international levels.
- Equip the police to tackle the rise in violent crime and tackle gangs.
- Ensuring that there is proper protection for individual liberty before the police rollout use of new technology.

## 2.2 21st century policing

2.2.1 The changing demands on the police mean that a reset is needed: we need to look again at what we want the police to achieve and ensure that they have the resources and structures that they need in order to do this.

2.2.2 The most fundamental change that is needed is a dramatic increase in the number of police officers and a renewed focus on community policing. **We would provide enough funding for two new police officers in every ward** and ensure that they are able to focus on community policing. The precise numbers of extra police officers in each area would vary according to local need, but we expect that two

extra police officers would be the typical increase that people would see in their area.

2.2.3 We would build a system in which police officers are visible, trusted and known personally to local people. This also means ensuring that the police have the time to gather the intelligence that is vital for both preventing and solving crimes, to forge relationships with individuals in the community, and to work in partnership with schools, youth services, community groups and other local organisations.

2.2.4 The police also need to be responsive and accountable to their communities. It must be quick and easy to report crimes, and victims should be kept informed of the progress of their cases. When crime does occur, we need to make sure that victims and their families are supported in the aftermath. This means ensuring that the experiences and rights of victims are at the heart of the system: the Victims' Code sets the minimum standard of service that victims can expect – where this isn't met it should be as straightforward as possible to complain, so there must be a single point of contact for all victims' complaints.

2.2.5 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) were introduced to increase local accountability of the police. However, there is such a low-level of engagement in the election of PCCs that it is clear that they have not had this affect. To increase local accountability, we support the Party's existing policy to abolish PCCs and replace them with police boards – representative bodies composed of local authority members. These bodies would have representatives from all of the local authorities that fall within the jurisdiction of a police force. While PCCs do exist, we support changing the legislation to allow people with spent convictions to stand for election.

2.2.6 We would advise PCCs – and, in the future, police boards – to adopt a national baseline standard for community policing and provide forces with sufficient central government funding to resource it. That standard will consider the different needs of rural, suburban and urban

communities, and will include protected time for neighbourhood policing so that officers cannot be diverted to other duties. Every school will have a named local police officer who makes regular visits.

2.2.7 There will be parts of the country where this means investing in police stations, so that people know there is a place where they can go to report crimes. In some areas where there is already the infrastructure, this might be effectively achieved by putting small police stations in libraries or post offices. In rural areas, it is Liberal Democrat policy to invest in developing hubs for the co-location of services and we would ensure that small police stations are included in these hubs where there is local demand.

2.2.8 For local police forces to properly focus on community policing, certain types of crime should be tackled at the national and international levels. This is particularly true for serious and organised crime (SOC) and online crime – from fraud and intimidation to hacking and child sexual abuse. Investigating these crimes is technically complex and crosses police force boundaries and even national borders.

2.2.9 The Government estimates the economic and social cost of SOC to the UK to have been £37 billion in 2015-16, with drugs supply and fraud against businesses and the public sector accounting for three quarters of that cost. Other major types of SOC include the illicit supply of tobacco and cigarettes, modern slavery and child sexual exploitation.

2.2.10 The National Crime Agency (NCA) leads efforts to combat SOC, including investigating child sex abuse images on the dark web and working with local police forces and Regional Organised Crime Units to tackle county lines drug trafficking (see §2.3.3). The NCA's Director General, Lynne Owens, has argued that the growing scale and complexity of SOC requires substantial extra investment in both the NCA and other law enforcement agencies. Liberal Democrat policy

already calls for investment in an accountable, intelligence-led Border Force, and we will also provide significant extra funding for the NCA.

2.2.11 While the NCA deals with the most serious forms of online crime, local forces currently expend a lot of time and resources investigating other online crime, such as social media abuse and personal fraud. We believe that this is a substantial enough – and growing – area of crime that it should be dealt with by a dedicated national agency, freeing up local forces to focus on community policing. We would invest in this new agency to ensure that it would attract people with the necessary skills and be able to work effectively across the country. This would be new funding and would not be taken from existing police budgets.

2.2.12 Crime is increasingly a cross-border problem requiring international co-operation between law enforcement agencies, and Britain's membership of the European Union – and with it, the European Arrest Warrant – is a critical part of that co-operation.

2.2.13 Since it was introduced in 2004, the European Arrest Warrant more than 15,000 people have been arrested on one in the UK, and more than 1,600 suspects have been extradited from elsewhere in the EU to face justice in the UK. British leadership in Europol has helped to make it effective at tackling the biggest cross-border criminal threats we face: human trafficking, the illegal drug trade, cybercrime and terrorism. Direct access to EU-wide data-sharing systems enables British police and Border Force officers identify and arrest traffickers, terrorists and other international criminals. The Schengen Information System, for example, allows police officers to receive alerts on foreign criminals in the UK and to issue alerts about criminals who may have fled abroad. The UK accesses it more than 500 million times a year.

2.2.14 All of this would be lost if the UK leaves the European Union. To ensure that British police retain access to the European Arrest Warrant and data-sharing systems, and to continue the UK's leadership

role in Europol, it is vitally important that we stop Brexit through a People's Vote.

## **2.3 Tackling violent crime and gangs**

2.3.1 Serious violent crime is rising alarmingly. While investing in community policing and restructuring the police will go some way to ensuring that the police are better-able to tackle this, it is not the end of the matter. The rise in violent crime is underpinned by changes in the ways that gangs are now functioning and tackling violent crime means understanding and responding to the ways that gangs now operate.

2.3.2 Since the turn of this century gangs have changed. People are joining gangs at an earlier age and fewer are maturing out of gangs as they used to. For some people, their gang is a substitute for their family. To some, gang membership is seen as something akin to a career. As there are more people in gangs, there is more competition to rise through the ranks – and this means both that gang members are pressured to be ever-more violent and that discipline within a gang is enforced through stabbing as a punishment: both are, partly, responsible for driving the increase in knife crime.

2.3.3 The emergence of county lines is also contributing towards an increase in violent crime. As the drug markets in major cities have become saturated, gangs have sought to get drugs to smaller towns. Gangs from major cities now run drug networks in towns across the UK: sending people to market towns to take over the drug trade in those places. These county lines involve a great deal of exploitation, including control, violence (including sexual violence) and threats. They are also causing friction between the gangs running county lines and those gangs that are already established in the area, which leads to further violence. It is estimated that there are 1,000 county lines run from London and this is changing the nature of towns around the country dramatically.

2.3.4 The use of social media and the internet by gangs is fundamentally altering the way in which they work. Gangs are increasingly using the internet to advertise and sell drugs: they have people carrying drugs around their areas, ready to deliver them to whoever wants to buy them at short notice – and these people are, of course, targets for other gangs and groups. Increasingly gangs are using young women to carry drugs – this is not just an issue that impacts young men. Social media is also used to increase tensions between gangs, and this too spills over into violence and sexual violence.

2.3.5 The epidemic of violent crime – and the behaviour of gangs that are driving – it is a serious problem. The reduction in the number of police officers has clearly contributed to the problem: their decreased visibility has led to an increase in the number of ungoverned spaces where gangs have stepped into the void. It is not just a reduction in the police that has led to these spaces: the reduction in community safety personnel and youth services has also played a role.

2.3.6 The first step to reducing violent crime is recognising that it is an epidemic and treating it as a public health issue. This approach has been pioneered by Scotland's Violence Reduction Unit, established by Strathclyde Police in 2005. As with any disease, treatment begins by diagnosing the problem and understanding its causes. Addressing those causes requires not only the police, but also health professionals, social workers and teachers, working closely together to stop more people being infected by the disease. This approach has proven remarkably successful in the context of Glasgow, with the murder rate falling by 72% since 2005 and the number of hospital admissions for stabbings falling by 62% over the past decade. **We believe that this is how we should combat serious violence: investing in the police and adopting a public health approach that tackles the root causes.**

2.3.7 It should be noted that it is unlikely that the Glasgow approach can be precisely replicated throughout the country: Glasgow is a relatively small city – especially compared to London – and the nature of gangs that operate there is quite different to that of the gangs that are active throughout the rest of the country. However, the central lessons are applicable: the police need to work with other services – youth services, the health and mental health services, and schools – to effectively reduce violent crime.

2.3.8 This is easier said than done. In the past few years – as resources for all services have become increasingly stretched – organisations have increasingly focused on their own areas of responsibility and the culture of collaboration between services has suffered. This needs to be addressed. The first step towards this is to put the relevant services together, so we will fund services to co-locate with the aim of promoting collaboration. We will also pilot mobile task forces consisting of the police and – as relevant for the area in which they are working – mental health professionals, school exclusion officers, substance/drug misuse workers.

2.3.9 Gang activity is closely linked to the drug trade. We believe that existing Government drug policy in the UK unnecessarily criminalises too many people. Cannabis is the most widely used drug in the UK and the existing Lib Dem policy to introduce a legal and regulated market for cannabis would tackle this problem. In several places around the UK, police forces are already taking a similar attitude towards dealing with drugs by not pursuing or criminalising people in possession of drugs for personal use – instead focussing resources on gangs and organised crime. We support local police services using this type of pragmatic, evidence-driven initiatives to target their resources in a way that is effective in reducing crime.

## **2.4 Civil liberties and new technology**

2.4.1 Liberal Democrats believe that people have a right to privacy in their lives: policing should not intrude on this right for people who are not suspected of any crime.

2.4.2 Big data and artificial intelligence are increasingly being applied to tackling crime: this includes automated facial recognition surveillance, used by three forces, as well as the use of algorithms to attempt to identify 'high risk' individuals – essentially an attempt at 'predictive policing'.

2.4.3 For example, the Metropolitan Police's 'Gangs Violence Matrix', introduced in 2012, assigns an automated 'harm score' to individuals in an attempt to identify those most likely to be involved in gangs and violence. Similarly, Durham Police have been using a Harm Assessment Risk Tool to assess how likely a person is to commit an offence over the next two years.

2.4.4 We believe that the police and other agencies should take advantage of new technologies to prevent and solve crimes, especially given that serious and organised criminals are taking advantage of them to perpetrate them.

2.4.5 However, while new technologies present exciting opportunities to improve public safety, they also raise significant concerns, in terms of both civil liberties and discrimination. The Liberal Democrats believe that any form of surveillance must remain a measure of last resort.

2.4.6 The collection, retention and use of personal data by the police poses a threat to the individual's right to privacy, which we hold to be of utmost importance. For example, facial recognition surveillance matches live images of people to a watch list, many of whom have never been convicted of any crime. There is also potential for images

from the internet (such as photographs on social media) to be used, and even passport and driving licence photos.

2.4.7 More fundamentally, **we must not allow the UK to become a society where innocent people feel as though their every movement is being watched by the police.**

2.4.8 The police must also treat all citizens fairly and equally, irrespective of background and personal characteristics. However, the evidence is that AI tends to adopt existing societal biases. Automated facial recognition is most likely to wrongly identify black people and women. 72% of those flagged for 'gang violence' by the Met's Gangs Matrix are black, despite black people only accounting for 27% of serious youth violence in London.

2.4.9 Facial recognition technology is also very inaccurate. According to Big Brother Watch, as of May 2018 the Met Police had correctly identified just two people, but had incorrectly matched 102 innocent people. A Cardiff University report found that, at Welsh rugby matches in 2017-18, one female suspect generated a total of ten false positive matches.

2.4.10 To ensure privacy, fairness, equality and efficacy, we will ensure that the use of AI and personal data by the police is subject to clear regulation and robust oversight, set out by Parliament in primary legislation:

- Use of personal data and AI must respect the privacy of innocent people.
- AI systems must not be used unless and until it has been shown that they can operate without any racial, gender or other bias.
- Use of personal data must be both transparent and accurate.

- The police must justify any deployment of automated surveillance, such as facial recognition, and post signs alerting the public to its use.
- The police must not hold or use images of people who have not been convicted of an offence and are not wanted in connection with a crime or suspected of terrorist activity. Similarly, images captured in the process of facial recognition surveillance must not be retained.

2.4.11 The Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioners will have responsibility for enforcing these regulations and be given the powers and resources they need to do so.

2.4.12 The current use of automated facial recognition surveillance by a small number of police forces does not conform to these principles. We will therefore halt it immediately.

**To ensure that the police are fit for the 21st century, we will:**

- Set a national baseline standard for community policing and provide forces with sufficient central government funding to resource, ensuring that we meet the needs of different types of community and that time for community policing is protected.
- Increase funding for the National Crime Agency to enable them to tackle serious organised crime and the most serious forms of online crime.
- Create a new national agency to tackle online abuse and personal fraud.
- Protect existing arrangements between UK and European criminal justice agencies by stopping Brexit.
- Adopt a public health approach to violent crime.
- Co-locate the services that need to work together to tackle violent crime and pilot mobile task forces.
- Support the police to focus resources on tackling gangs and violent crime by introducing a regulated market for cannabis

and not criminalising people in possession of drugs for personal use.

- Immediately halt facial recognition surveillance by the police.
- Regulate any use of data and artificial intelligence by the police through primary legislation that ensures it is unbiased, transparent and accurate, and that it respects the privacy of innocent people.

### **3. Focused on cutting crime**

#### **3.1 The changing demands on police time**

3.1.1 Liberal Democrats believe that the police service should be able to focus on reducing crime. However in 2016/17 data suggests that only 24% of the incidents that police responded to were crime related while 64% of incidents were non-crime related – eg, mental health crisis, missing person reports etc – and the remaining 12% was the police responding to anti-social behaviour. To give police more time and resources to focus on combatting crime and to carry out preventative community policing, we must reduce non-crime demand on officers' time by ensuring that the police are supported to act quickly and effectively refer people on to the appropriate agencies.

3.1.2 Inadequate mental health services leave them effectively having to act as mental health first responders, often taking them away from their beat for hours as they have to stay with the patient for too long before hand-over. Liberal Democrats have a proud record of campaigning for proper investment in mental health services and this would reduce the pressure on police. In government, we expanded access to talking therapies and introduced the first-ever waiting time standards for treatment. Initiatives by our Health Minister Norman Lamb – for example the crisis care concordat between the NHS and police – led to greater co-operation and better understanding by officers and medics. We want to build on this record.

3.1.3 Missing persons is another huge source of demand on police time and has increased in the past year. Part of the demand is from care homes and foster parents: a large number of children go missing from care and many children repeatedly go missing – some as many as 60 times in a year.

## **3.2 Mental health crisis**

3.2.1 On top of preventing crime, the police have found themselves picking up the pieces of a broken mental health service that has been badly affected by cuts. Data from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has shown that over half of all mental health patients who need help in a place of safety are taken there by the police rather than the ambulance service. In some cases the police may be the appropriate service to initially respond to mental health crisis, so that fact in itself is not necessarily a problem.

3.2.2 However, the police are picking up the pieces after other services have gone off duty. The key demand on police for mental health related incidents is 3-6pm weekdays and 5-10pm weekends. It appears that at the end of each working day, there is a shift in responsibilities for mental health from partner organisations (who have the proper skills and expertise to deal with mental ill-health) onto the police – simply because the police are a 24/7 organisation. It means that although the police will invariably do their best to respond, sufferers of mental ill-health are likely to receive a poorer service out-of-hours. The problem is worsened by the scarcity of out-of-hours mental health services and the amount of time this means police are spending taxiing people to these services and waiting with them until an appropriate professional is available.

3.2.3 We propose introducing a target for the amount of time that people suffering from mental health crisis spend with the police: we would aim to ensure that people suffering from mental health crisis could be transferred to a mental health service within an hour of being collected by the police unless mental health services provide a good reason – based on the welfare of the person in crisis – why this is not the best course of action. We would require police to report on progress towards this target and invest substantially in mental health services so that this is possible.

3.2.4 It is also important that the police are adequately prepared to respond to mental health crises. Forces are investing in mental health training, but it is inconsistent. However, the quality of training, and the involvement from other services is variable. Training for police is essential: their instinct is to restrain people and in the case of mental health crisis – without proper training on safe restraint techniques – this can often make matters worse. All Police Forces should be supported to reach minimum levels of training in mental health and this should be developed alongside external organisations. Training should be conducted together to enhance partnership working. The training should involve people with lived experience of mental ill health and crisis.

3.2.5 While police training can be improved, it is not feasible to expect police to reach the same level of expertise as mental health professionals: to provide this expertise we need to ensure that mental health professionals are embedded in the police. This practice is known as mental health triage and it is currently operating in 42 of the 43 police forces in the country.

3.2.6 HMICFRS found that 21 forces now employ a nurse or mental health professional in the control room. These forces have a higher proportion of flagged mental health incidents. The call handler applies a flag to identify the type of call and indicate what extra support the person might need. Flags are also a useful way of helping forces identify and analyse demand. Most forces flag mental health incidents. But their command and control systems cannot identify the different types of mental health incident that fall under this broad heading. The higher proportion of incidents flagged indicates that extra specialist support at first point of contact could be helping forces identify people with mental health problems.

3.2.7 The results of the street triage pilots showed a reduced use of custody for section 136, and an increased use of health-based places of safety. The Department of Health made several recommendations,

including better joint training. The study found control room or telephone-based support to be more cost-effective and suggested that triage should be available at all times, seven days a week.

**3.2.8 Liberal Democrats would ensure that all polices forces have mental health practitioners in the control room at all times and that they have access to any mental health records that would help the police manage on-going situations.** This model of mental health triage should complement other crisis services and not serve to replace them and commissioning healthcare for people in police custody should be done by the NHS.

### 3.3 Missing people

3.3.1 The most recent figures from the UK Missing Persons Unit show that there was a 17% increase in the number of calls that police received to report missing people – compared to an increase of 5% in the year before. Responding to these incidents places a high demand on police time and – because the consequences of not investigating cases can be extremely serious, especially when the missing person is young or vulnerable – it is right that the police take these reports seriously.

3.3.2 Children who go missing from home or care are not solely the responsibility of the police: the Government’s statutory guidance requires an interagency approach to prevent children from going missing and to protect them when they do. HMICFRS found examples of children in foster care or care homes who frequently went missing, who had either no, or poor quality, multi-agency action plans in place to protect them in the longer term. Return Home Interviews – which are the responsibility of the local authority) to assess why a child went missing, and so enable the local authority and police to put in place ‘trigger’ plans to prevent it happening again – are not being carried out consistently. Research commissioned by Norfolk Police has found that

just half of runaways in Norfolk are given “return home interviews” despite it being a statutory requirement.

3.3.3 This is an area where we think that the police are performing well – other services need to do more to support them. Most forces have introduced dedicated officers to respond to cases involving missing and absent people, although few have yet evaluated the impact of these new posts. We would evaluate whether these dedicated officers are having an impact and – if they are – we would encourage police forces to use some of the additional funds that we would provide for police recruitment to bring people into these roles.

3.3.4 What is really needed to tackle this problem is to look at what is making children go missing from care and to offer them greater support when they are in care. We should hold Children’s Services to account for their role within missing children – and we must ensure that they carry out Return Home Interviews routinely. When a child goes missing from care, Children’s Services must properly assess why it happened and put in place a plan to prevent it happening again.

3.3.5 We recognise that Children’s Services are also stretched and would ensure that they were adequately funded to perform this role.

**To ensure that the police are focused on cutting crime, we will:**

- Introduce a target of one hour for the police to handover people suffering from mental health crisis to mental health services – funding mental health services so this is possible.
- Support all police forces to reach minimum levels of training in mental health response.
- Ensure that all polices forces have mental health practitioners in the control room 24/7.
- Review the impact of police officers that are dedicated to working with missing persons with a view to recruiting more officers for this role.

- When a child is reported missing from care, require Children's Services to assess the reasons behind this and put a plan in place to prevent it happening again.

## **4. Valued to deliver**

### **4.1 The pressures on the police service**

4.1.1 Like all public services, the police are over-stretched, and this is placing unreasonable demands on police officers, causing stress and mental health problems. There is also a feeling among the police that their work is not valued by government or politicians: the Conservatives have asked the police to do more with fewer resources and have accused them of scaremongering when they have voiced concern; Labour are at best lukewarm in their support for the police. The Liberal Democrats should be the party of the police: they protect the most vulnerable in society and protect our individual freedoms and we need to show that we value their work.

4.1.2 In 2018, spending on police overtime reached its peak since 2013. Over the past five years this has cost £1.7 billion and has meant that officers average 97 hours of overtime each per year. As more demands are placed on police – eg, to respond to mental health crises, or to the heightened terror threat level – and as the number of police officers have reduced police services too often have no option but to ask their officers to work long hours.

4.1.3 This is exacerbated by the number of rest days that police officers are having cancelled. The problem is most stark in London where at least 189,000 rest days are owed to officers, but it is a problem across the UK: there are almost 250,000 rest days owed to officers throughout England and Wales and a further 25,000 rest days owed to officers in Scotland. This means that too many officers are not getting rests between their shifts, which means that officers will get fatigued and be less able to protect the public. It also means further shortages when the police do take the time off that they are owed.

4.1.4 Given this, it is little surprise that research by Mind has suggested that 91% of police officers have experienced stress and

mental health at work. This figure is much higher than for the general population, but police are far less likely to take time off from work as a result. Many officers continue to be exposed to traumatic and stressful situations without ever properly addressing their mental health. This can put tremendous strain on relationships and impact their ability to do their jobs. We must ensure that the mental health of police officers is a priority: so that they can do their work effectively and are not forced to sacrifice their wellbeing.

4.1.5 If we want the police service to feel valued, we need to tackle these issues and ensure that police officers only work reasonable amounts of overtime, can take rest days and have the chance to look after their own mental health.

## **4.2 Supporting the police**

4.2.1 Liberal Democrats will support the police, show them that their work is valued and ensure that they have the skills and support needed to carry out their challenging work. We believe that we should be supportive yet critical friends of the police: we must support the overwhelming majority of honest, hardworking members of the police, act as supportive partners with police leadership and staff associations, recognise their commitment and the value of the Service while holding their leaders accountable for effective service delivery.

4.2.2 As a starting point it is essential that we put in place measures to look after the mental health of police officers. Part of the answer to this is increasing police numbers, so that fewer officers are having to work overtime or have their rest days cancelled. If we want the police to increase recruitment – and to show them that they are valued – then we need to be willing to pay them properly. The Conservatives have repeatedly refused to implement the recommendations of the independent Police Remuneration Review Body. When they have given police officers a pay rise, they have failed to fund it properly from central government, so that forces have to find the money from

existing budgets. We would retrospectively implement their 2018 recommendation and give all police the full three per cent pay rise that was recommended. In the future, there would be a presumption that government would fund the recommendations of the independent review body.

4.2.3 But police officers still routinely experience stressful and distressing situations and we must also ensure that appropriate support structures are in place for officers suffering from stress or recuperating from injuries. The police, though under pressure, do already place an emphasis on the wellbeing of police officers and we regard the introduction of the Blue Light Framework – developed with Mind – as a positive step forward that we would like to see all police services adopt. We would also provide funding so that local services can offer their officers proactive mental health and wellbeing check-ups every six months.

4.2.4 The modern police service requires people with a wide range of skills. It needs: programmers and tech-literate people to tackle the rise in cybercrime; officers who are skilled in partnership-working, who can lead collaborative preventative programmes; people who can communicate effectively and compassionately while demonstrating assertiveness and resilience. We can help the police attract people with the required skills by ensuring that they are properly funded and that staff are paid an appropriate amount. However, more can be done in terms of training existing staff or investing in recruiting people with especially in-demand skills by paying the market rate. We will work with the police to ensure that the right staffing profile is achieved with particular focus on recruitment and training processes.

4.2.5 There is an important role for the police leadership to play in this. We want a police service that has innovative and creative leaders who are committed to empowering their staff and streamlining their organisations. There is a role here for the College of Policing, to define

the leadership style and approach that is right for a 21st century police service.

4.2.6 We believe that police forces should look like the communities that they serve: this means ensuring a welcoming and supportive environment for all officers and providing entrance routes for people with a wide range of backgrounds. Female police officers struggle with ill-fitting uniforms that cause them pain and do not protect them properly, because they are designed for male officers: we would ensure that female officers have uniforms that are designed with them in mind.

4.2.7 As part of this process, we believe that there is a role for apprenticeships. In 2016, the National Police Chief's Council announced that, by 2020, all police officers would have to be educated to degree level: either by recruiting graduates or requiring prospective officers to complete a three-year Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship course. This is intended to help modernise the service and increase the number of police officers and staff who are able to investigate and gather intelligence online or using other computer skills. This model requires people to complete a level 3 qualification (A-level or equivalent): we believe that the police service should offer apprenticeships at an earlier stage to provide an alternative entry route so that people can enter the police without studying for A-levels: this would still enable people to acquire the required skills and would open up opportunities for more people.

**To ensure that the police are valued to deliver, we will:**

- Retrospectively implement the independent police pay review and the grant police the full three per cent pay rise and introduce a presumption that future recommendations will be funded by the government.

- Encourage all police services to introduce the Blue Light Framework for wellbeing and to provide proactive mental health assessments every six months.
- Work with the police to improve training of staff so that they are better placed to adapt to the changing demands of 21st century policing.
- Introduce a police apprenticeship scheme.

## **5. An effective approach to reducing crime**

### **5.1 The need for a whole system approach**

5.1.1 Violent crime, burglaries and robberies are all rising – there must be an effective approach to reducing these, and all other, crimes. This means understanding what causes people to commit crime and intervening at the earliest possible stage to prevent crime. It means taking measures to ensure that people who have committed crimes don't get sucked ever-deeper into a life of crime; it means making sure that vulnerable groups are protected; it means making sure that people in every part of the country feel safe. The problems are exacerbated by the criminal justice system's failure to properly rehabilitate criminals, which fuels increases in crime.

### **5.2 Working with young people**

5.2.1 The single most fundamental thing that we can do to support young people is to reinvest in youth services. We want youth services that are active presences in communities across the country, where youth workers are able to build meaningful and supportive relationships with young people. Part of this means providing young people with a safe space that they can go to, but it is also important to invest in youth outreach services. We are committed to providing local authorities with the funding required to transform youth services, deliver street-based youth services and make youth workers a visible and trusted presence in communities. We will introduce substantial funding for partnerships between local authorities and the private sector to develop genuinely innovative and engaging youth services that are effective in understanding how young people want to spend their free time and that are designed to appeal to them.

5.2.2 There is clear evidence that young people are more likely to become involved in violent crime if they have adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), undiagnosed or untreated mental health issues,

inadequate parental support, or if they grow up in a poor area. People who experience four or more ACEs are 10 times more likely to be involved in violence every year by the time they are 18, compared to a young person who hasn't experienced any ACEs. It is important to recognise and understand this in order to develop an approach that is effective in reducing the involvement of young people in violent crime.

5.2.3 The Youth Violence Commission has argued for the implementation of a trauma-informed approach to working with young people – all professionals who have a statutory responsibility for the safeguarding and wellbeing of young people should be trained in the significance of ACEs, in recognising trauma and in the proper processes for helping a child who is displaying trauma-related behaviour. So youth workers, teachers and police officers who may otherwise misread and mishandle challenging behaviour, must all be trained in understanding the significance of ACEs and in how to respond to young people who have experienced them. A trauma-informed approach – including by the police – is also important more generally and should also be applied to, eg, women and girls at risk of criminal justice contact, people with complex needs and victims of domestic and sexual abuse.

5.2.4 Young people are particularly affected by the rise of violent crime. We support a public health approach to youth violence based on the World Health Organisation's principle of treating violence like a disease and responding with a whole-systems approach. The public health approach means working with those in the health, education and social work to tackle the problem. In the case of young people, it is important to address links between violence – both as victim and perpetrator – and trauma or adverse childhood experiences. We would introduce Youth Victims Commissioners whose role would be to represent young victims of crime with a view towards addressing the links between young people being a victim of crime and then going on to commit crimes.

5.2.5 Though public discourse on crime often discusses victims and perpetrators as entirely separate groups, the same young people are often at greatest risk of being both victimized and involved in criminal behaviour. It is important to intervene in a constructive way when people are caught up in knife crime. We are impressed by the work of RedThread – a charity that has embedded trauma-informed youth intervention specialists in London’s four major trauma centres – and has recently expanded to Nottingham and Birmingham. These specialists emphasise to the young person that they are in a safe place, help identify others who might be at risk from knife crime and work with the young person to establish safety plans – ensuring that they feel safe returning home. RedThread’s success clearly demonstrates the value of youth workers intervening at this key stage and we want to entrench their success and spread it to other regions. **We will therefore embed teams of trauma-informed youth intervention specialists in all 27 major trauma centres in England, fully funded by central Government, to prevent young people being caught in the cycle of serious violence.**

5.2.6 Diversion schemes for young people have a vital role to play. For the vast majority of crimes, landing young people with criminal records only serves to entrench their view of themselves as a criminal and increases the likelihood of them reoffending. Diversion schemes, which enable low-level criminal behaviour to be addressed without putting young people through prosecution or formal cautions, have been shown both to reduce reoffending and cut costs. They are especially important in those communities that are over-policed. Currently a third of forces do not operate a pre-charge diversion scheme: we would make youth diversion a statutory duty of Youth Offender Teams (YOTs) so that every part of the country would have a pre-charge diversion scheme for young people up to the age of 25.

5.2.7 We support interventions whereby the local police force immediately refers young offenders to a non-criminal justice agency so that their initial contact with the police may also be their last. The

existing evidence strongly suggests that this is the most effective way to handle youth diversion. It requires substantial investment in other services, and we would provide this so that YOTs are able to pursue this approach.

5.2.8 We oppose the Conservative Government's introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders (KCPOs). These are essentially ASBOs for knives that could be imposed on children as young as 12 even if they've never been caught carrying a knife or been convicted of any crime. Breaching the conditions of a KCPO – by being in the wrong place, hanging around with the wrong people, or even just failing to notify the police of a change of address – would be a criminal offence punishable by up to two years in prison. All the evidence suggests that this sort of heavy-handed approach only serves to unnecessarily criminalise young people and is entirely contrary to the diversionary approach that has been shown to reduce the number of young people becoming deeper involved in criminal behaviour.

5.2.9 Instead, as another tool to use as part of our wider diversionary approach, we would introduce Anti-Blade Contracts: these could be entered into the first time a young person is caught with a knife, but could also be used proactively for children involved in gangs or who might be considering carrying a knife. The young person would sign a contract promising not to carry a knife and in return would receive the services specified by the contract in order to help them feel safer. They would be supported by proper conversations between young people and youth workers about knives. And by making clear that there are consequences for breaking these contracts, such as larger fines or tougher community sentences than they would otherwise have received if they are convicted for carrying a knife in future.

5.2.10 There is also a clear link between school exclusions and a propensity to become involved in youth violence and the Government's Serious Violence Strategy recognises school exclusions as one of the

identified risk factors for involvement in violent crime. We support the Youth Violence Commission's recommendation for an aspiration of zero exclusions.

5.2.11 To work towards this, we would – in line with existing party policy – give local authorities the remit and resources to act as Strategic Education Authorities for all schools in their area, including responsibility for places planning and exclusions. We would support young people who wish to voluntarily move to a new school if they or their parents/guardians feel it would be beneficial. Local Authorities would be responsible for ensuring that every child has a school place (or that suitable arrangements are in place for home schooling) and that if exclusion from a school is necessary there will be a managed move to a new school. We would also implement the Children's Commissioner's recommendations for tackling exclusions.<sup>1</sup>

### 5.3 Putting equality at the heart of the system

5.3.1 Crime has a greater impact on those in society who are already negatively impacted by inequality: both in the sense that they are more likely to be victims of crime and in the sense that the harm caused is usually greater. An effective criminal justice system should aim to reduce the chances of being impacted by crime for the most vulnerable in society and it should work to support those people if they do fall victim to crime.

5.3.2 Inequality increases people's vulnerability to crime in a variety of ways. The poorest in society are at increased risk of being victims of crime – often because they live in the poorer parts of the country where crime is more prevalent. The Conservatives' botched roll-out of universal credit and the 2015 cuts to work allowances are making matters worse – driving up poverty and inequality. Elderly people are at

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<sup>1</sup> See policy paper 135 [Eradicating Race Inequality](#) (2019) for more detail.

increased risk of fraud, and violent crime against the elderly has increased alarmingly.

5.3.3 LGBT+ people are still likely to be victims of hate crime – particularly transgender people. Increasing the number of police officers and ensuring that they have more time to focus on crime prevention will go some way to tackling these issues. In between March 2017 and March 2018 there were 2 million reported victims of domestic abuse in England and Wales: this disproportionately affects women who are around twice as likely as men to have experienced domestic abuse.

5.3.4 There is a lack of trust of the police among some communities – especially black communities. Grievances over policing tactics – especially the disproportionate use of Stop and Search, whereby you are more than nine times more likely to be stopped and searched if you are black than if you are white, even though you are less likely to be in possession of drugs – have a hugely negative bearing on trust. There is a perception that the police service is still institutionally racist and – if policing is going to be effective in all communities – this problem needs to be addressed.

5.3.5 Part of the reason that crime is more likely to impact the least well off is that areas of poor, over-crowded housing, lower educational achievement, poorer health, higher poverty rates are also often areas with high crime rates. To tackle this, we would establish a Breaking the Cycle Fund, intended to encourage innovative approaches to tackling the problems faced by these communities. We would encourage organisations to build partnerships involving local authorities, housing providers, mental health trusts, businesses and the third sector to test new approaches. We would require that residents be involved in leading the projects. We would initially test this approach in the twenty most vulnerable areas in the country, with a view to expanding to the 200 most vulnerable if it is successful.

5.3.6 The Victims' Commissioner (and the London Victims Commissioner) have an important role to play in ensuring that the experiences of victims are properly heard and that inequalities are tackled. We want to ensure that the Victims Commissioner is effective in responding to particular local challenges, and so we plan to establish regional commissioners who would report to the national commissioner and be responsible for building an understanding of challenges facing local communities and engage with police forces. Their focus would be on representing all victims and making sure that every victim of a crime is treated equally.

5.3.7 Many excellent structures which had previously ensured that BAME, faith, LGBT+, and disabled voices were heard no longer exist. There is a role for regional boards that build partnerships between communities and tackle any discourse which feeds, incites or expresses misogyny, racism, antisemitism, islamophobia, transphobia or homophobia. We would introduce new regional boards to build these relationships and tackle inequalities, modelled on Safer Neighbourhood Boards which are successful in bringing police and communities together to decide local policing priorities and solve problems collaboratively. One part of the role of regional commissioners could be to chair these boards.

5.3.8 We would also amend the Public Order Act to ensure that all forms of hate activity are aggravated offences, not merely race and faith, and that incitement of hatred provisions apply equally to trans and disabled people as they do to people targeted because of their race, faith and whether they lesbian, gay or bisexual. We also recognise that judges, Crown Prosecution Service and the police need to develop improved guidance to meet the needs of trans people and to better understand and prosecute transphobic hate incidents and care for victims and witnesses.

5.3.9 Domestic abuse – including coercive control – and stalking disproportionately affect women. Other groups are affected too: 29% of

LGBT+ people experience domestic abuse and 25% of trans people in a relationship experience domestic abuse. Our new victims' commissioners would have a duty to monitor prevalence of domestic abuse and map provision of prevention and crisis support for female, male, LGBT+ and disabled victims while taking into account ethnicity and other factors. This will enable us to ensure that we have the information required to target appropriate support and we would ensure that every victim of domestic abuse has access to the right kind of support.

5.3.10 As well as ensuring that every part of the country has diversion schemes for young people up to the age of 25, we also support diversionary approaches for all people, especially those from vulnerable groups. This means that in cases where a person has committed a relatively minor offence, in part because they have been a victim of crime, we would seek to divert these people away from the criminal justice system and support them in other ways, rather than unnecessarily criminalise them. Every area should have gender-specific diversionary programmes, to ensure women and girls at risk are appropriately diverted and supported.

5.3.11 Regarding Stop and Search, we are entirely opposed to the disproportionate use of this power. Police forces should all have targets to use this power proportionately, and data on the ethnicity of the people over whom this power is exercised must be consistently monitored. We would make each chief police officer responsible for ensuring proportionate use of this power and – where the evidence suggests their force is acting disproportionately – would require them to publicly explain why this has happened and outline the steps that they will take to redress the situation.

## **5.4 Ensuring that people feel safe**

5.4.1 The Liberal Democrats know how important it is not just to be safe but to feel safe too. The preamble to our Constitution clearly states

that no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. Fear should be added to that list: fear or a perceived lack of safety in your home, community and surroundings can be crippling. These effects can curtail social activities through an unwillingness to leave our own homes and can increase stress, fear and anxiety. There can also be a cost to local communities as people become less willing to engage in community activities, leading to less resilient and supportive communities.

5.4.2 The gap between the perception of crime and the risk of becoming a victim is real – in 2016 one in five people thought it was likely that they would be a victim of crime in following 12 months. This sense of insecurity is most pronounced amongst already vulnerable groups. Factors such as age, lifestyle and employment status were all found to be relevant to how you perceived your safety.

5.4.3 The problem is especially stark in rural areas. The proportion of people who think that their local police do a good job is decreasing: research by the National Rural Crime Network shows that local police in rural areas only receive a 27% net good rating, which is down 11% from 2015 and compares unfavourably to the Crime Survey for England and Wales which has 62% of respondents rating their police as good or excellent. Their research also shows that fear of crime is increasing: people believe that crime is increasing, that organised crime is becoming more active in their area and – worryingly – one in ten people in rural areas report feeling unsafe in their home after dark. And fear of crime is primarily felt by those from poorer backgrounds.

5.4.4 More generally, we know that even when crime was falling, people tended to report that crime was rising, they also placed their risk of becoming a victim of crime as higher than the statistical reality. It is important, then that policy should explicitly and directly address feelings of safety and pull policy levers to increase feelings of safety in the community.

5.4.5 These perceptions may have partly increased because of cuts to policing numbers – whereas previously you were likely to see police officers and other uniformed individuals regularly in ordinary settings, now you would most likely see them responding directly to crime. This could no doubt give a sense that crime is increasing. The lack of police – or any other sense of 'state presence', gives the impression of ungoverned spaces. This engenders fear and can lead to some terrible and tragic consequences, such as young people arming themselves with knives for protection and giving criminals the impression that they can act with impunity.

5.4.6 Clearly, increased visibility would help perceptions of safety in communities; however, there are many other policy levers that can be used, and we must think about safety beyond policing. We want to support communities to build cleaner, greener and safer spaces. To do this we will:

- Extend 'Community Safety Funds'. We believe that communities are best place to know how to add value in their area – whether by investing in youth clubs, tidying up the high street to make it an attractive destination for all who live there etc. We would use money seized under the Proceeds of Crimes Act fund grants that community organisations can apply for in order to improve their area.
- Implement the 'Place Principle' in England and Wales. This requires that all those responsible for providing services and looking after assets in a place need to work and plan together, and with local communities, to improve the lives of people, support inclusive growth and create more successful places.
- Divert money spent on low-level arrests for personal drug use etc to other services eg, mental health, drug and alcohol programmes and homelessness.

- Design services with safety in mind: this is particularly important in rural areas where people can feel unsafe when they are out on their own – this means, for example, ensuring that bus stops are placed away from hedges and in well-lit areas.

5.4.7 There is an important role for community safety groups. We would support the establishment of community groups composed of representatives of local charities, faith groups, public sector organisations and businesses that would work with police and local authorities to help people feel safer.

**To effectively reduce crime and ensure that people feel safe, we will:**

- Provide local authorities with the funding required to transform youth services and make youth workers a visible and trusted presence in communities.
- Embed teams of trauma-informed youth intervention specialists in A&E departments to prevent young people being caught in the cycle of serious violence.
- Train youth workers, teachers and police officers in understanding the significance of adverse childhood experiences and in how to respond to young people who have experienced them.
- Make youth diversion a statutory duty so that every part of the country would have a pre-charge diversion scheme for young people up to the age of 25.
- Support youth diversion schemes that do not involve the criminal justice system, as intervention by other agencies is shown to be more effective.
- Oppose the Conservative Government's introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders and introduce Anti-Blade Contracts as an alternative.
- Introduce a goal of zero exclusions from school to end the exclusion to crime pipeline.

- Establish a Breaking the Cycle Fund to test innovative approaches to prevent the most vulnerable becoming victims of crime.
- Expand the Victims' Commissioner by introducing regional sub-commissioners across England and Wales to act as a link between victims and police and ensure appropriate provision of domestic abuse support services.
- End the disproportionate use of Stop and Search.
- Extend Community Safety Funds to invest in communities and ensure that people feel safer.

## Summary of policy proposals

We want to build police forces that are:

- **Fit for the 21st Century:** by ensuring that the police have the right resources and structures to provide high quality community policing and cooperate across forces both nationally and internationally.
- **Focused on tackling crime:** by adequately resourcing other services to reduce the amount of time that police officers spend on non-criminal incidents.
- **Valued to deliver:** by paying the police fairly and investing in their professional development.

And we want to ensure that both the police and other services are **effective in preventing and reducing crime:** by working with young people, listening to victims and investing in communities. To enable effective community policing we must restore community confidence in the police, including by ensuring that police powers – especially Stop and Search – are used proportionately and only when necessary.

### **To ensure that the police are fit for the 21st century, we will:**

- Set a national baseline standard for community policing and provide forces with sufficient central government funding to resource, ensuring that we meet the needs of different types of community and that time for community policing is protected.
- Increase funding for the National Crime Agency to enable them to tackle serious organised crime and the most serious forms of online crime.
- Create a new national agency to tackle online abuse and personal fraud.
- Protect existing arrangements between UK and European criminal justice agencies by stopping Brexit.
- Adopt a public health approach to violent crime.

- Co-locate the services that need to work together to tackle violent crime and pilot mobile task forces.
- Support the police to focus resources on tackling gangs and violent crime by introducing a regulated market for cannabis and not criminalising people in possession of drugs for personal use.
- Immediately halt facial recognition surveillance by the police.
- Regulate any use of data and artificial intelligence by the police through primary legislation that ensures it is unbiased, transparent and accurate, and that it respects the privacy of innocent people.

**To ensure that the police are focused on cutting crime, we will:**

- Introduce a target of one hour for the police to handover people suffering from mental health crisis to mental health services – funding mental health services so this is possible.
- Support all police forces to reach minimum levels of training in mental health response.
- Ensure that all police forces have mental health practitioners in the control room 24/7.
- Review the impact of police officers that are dedicated to working with missing persons with a view to recruiting more officers for this role.
- When a child is reported missing from care, require Children's Services to assess the reasons behind this and put a plan in place to prevent it happening again.

**To ensure that the police are valued to deliver, we will:**

- Retrospectively implement the independent police pay review and the grant police the full three per cent pay rise and introduce a presumption that future recommendations will be funded by the government.

- Encourage all police services to introduce the Blue Light Framework for wellbeing and to provide proactive mental health assessments every six months.
- Work with the police to improve training of staff so that they are better placed to adapt to the changing demands of 21st century policing.
- Introduce a police apprenticeship scheme.

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- Make youth diversion a statutory duty so that every part of the country would have a pre-charge diversion scheme for young people up to the age of 25.
- Support youth diversion schemes that do not involve the criminal justice system, as intervention by other agencies is shown to be more effective.
- Oppose the Conservative Government's introduction of Knife Crime Prevention Orders and introduce Anti-Blade Contracts as an alternative.
- Introduce a goal of zero exclusions from school to end the exclusion to crime pipeline.
- Establish a Breaking the Cycle Fund to test innovative approaches to prevent the most vulnerable becoming victims of crime.

- Expand the Victims' Commissioner by introducing regional sub-commissioners across England and Wales to act as a link between victims and police and ensure appropriate provision of domestic abuse support services.
- End the disproportionate use of Stop and Search.
- Extend Community Safety Funds to invest in communities and ensure that people feel safer.

## **United Against Crime**

### **Policy Paper 138**

This paper has been approved for debate by the Federal Conference by the Federal Policy Committee under the terms of Article 8.4 of the Federal Constitution.

Within the policy-making procedure of the Liberal Democrats, the Federal Party determines the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom.

The Party in England, the Scottish Liberal Democrats, the Welsh Liberal Democrats and the Northern Ireland Local Party determine the policy of the Party on all other issues, except that any or all of them may confer this power upon the Federal Party in any specified area or areas.

The Party in England has chosen to pass up policymaking to the Federal level. If approved by Conference, this paper will therefore form the policy of the Federal Party on federal issues and the Party in England on English issues. In appropriate policy areas, Scottish, Welsh and Northern Ireland party policy would take precedence.

## **Working Group on Crime and Policing**

Note: Membership of the working group should not be taken to indicate that every member necessarily agrees with every statement of every proposal in this paper.

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