



# Neighbourhood policing

Under strict embargo - Thursday 1st February 2018

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## Overview

Neighbourhood policing involves teams of officers dedicated to working in a local community. Officers work on building relationships with residents and being a visible presence.

In 2015, the Police Federation chair Steve White warned the bobby on the beat was under serious threat from financial cuts, but was warned by then Home Secretary Theresa May to stop "crying wolf".

A year later, an Inspector of Constabulary, Zoe Billingham, warned that police forces could be "sleepwalking" back to an old model of policing.

And Labour's West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson has claimed neighbourhood policing had been "cut to the bone and with it crucial streams of intelligence have been lost".

We put those claim about neighbourhood policing levels to the test, analysing police workforce data over a five-year period from 2012 to 2017.

## Our findings

- Of the almost 11,000 police officer jobs axed in England and Wales, some 1,500 were neighbourhood policing posts - around 14% or one in seven
- The number of police community support officers in England and Wales dropped from 14,393 to 10,205
- In Northern Ireland, the overall number of police officers dropped by 581 (8%), but the number of neighbourhood officers dropped by 77% from 1,382 to 311
- Police Scotland does not classify officers in the same way nor employ police community support officers, but has 180 fewer officers overall than in 2012

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## How to use the spreadsheet:

### 1. All police officers

- We looked at the overall number of officers in each force, the number of neighbourhood officers and the number of PCSOs through 2012 to 2017. You can find that data in **Columns B to AI**
- **Column AO** shows the percentage increase/decrease in **all officers** for each force from 2012 to 2017 (Only three forces saw officer numbers rise: Dyfed-Powys, Surrey and South Wales)
- We identified 14 out of 45 UK forces that had the fewest officers in five years in March 2017. You can see those forces by clicking on the **Data** tab at the top of the **All UK forces** spreadsheet, then scroll down to **Filter Views**, and choose **Worst overall numbers since 2012?**

### 2. Neighbourhood officers

- We looked at the number of neighbourhood officers in each force. **Column AP** in the **All UK forces** spreadsheet shows the difference in the raw numbers of neighbourhood officers from 2012-2017
- **Column AQ** in the **All UK forces** spreadsheet shows the percentage change in the numbers of neighbourhood officers from 2012 to 2017
- Below are the forces to have lost the most neighbourhood police officers in percentage terms between 2012 and 2017

Police force	Percentage difference in neighbourhood officers 2012-17	Difference in neighbourhood officers (FTE) 2012-17
Northern Ireland	-77.50	-1071.00
Cheshire	-74.67	-593.57
West Yorkshire	-73.82	-1356.48
Greater Manchester	-62.67	-883.88
Lincolnshire	-58.42	-145.32
Devon & Cornwall	-58.12	-320.75
Norfolk	-56.17	-127.09
London, City of*	-54.13	-26.99
Suffolk	-51.28	-76.41
Essex	-49.85	-217.71

\* We have included an extra line of analysis in our spreadsheet combining City of London figures with those for the Met to illustrate what the impact on neighbourhood policing would be if "London" were a force

### 3. Neighbourhoods officers and PCSOs compared to population

- **Column AU** in the spreadsheet shows the percentage difference in neighbourhood officers and PCSOs combined from 2012 to 2017
- **Column AV** in the **All UK forces** spreadsheet shows the percentage difference just for neighbourhood PCSOs from 2012-2017 (Only four forces saw a rise: Dyfed-Powys, Hampshire, South Wales and Staffordshire)
- We identified **eight out of 45 UK forces** which had both the fewest neighbourhood officers and neighbourhoods PCSOs combined in five years in March 2017 and where numbers were at their strongest in 2012
- You can see those forces by clicking on the **Data** tab at the top of the **All UK forces** spreadsheet, then scroll down to **Filter Views**, and choose **Worst neighbourhood numbers since 2012?**

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## 4. Neighbourhoods officers and PCSOs compared to population

- We looked at the combined total of neighbourhood officers and PCSOs in each force and weighted it against population estimates for each force area from the Office for National Statistics
- **Column AK** in the **All UK forces** spreadsheet shows the difference in neighbourhood police officers & PCSOs per 100,000 people from 2012-17
- To sort the spreadsheet in order of the forces with most neighbourhood officers and neighbourhood PCSOs per 1,000 people in 2017, click in column **H** and then on the **Data** tab at the top of the **All UK forces** spreadsheet, then **Sort sheet by column H, A->Z**

## What the experts say:

### A Home Office spokesperson said:

“The independent Office for National Statistics is clear that overall traditional crime is continuing to fall, and is now down by almost 40 per cent since 2010, while fraud and computer misuse - the most commonly experienced crime - has reduced by 15% in the past year.

“We know the nature of crime is changing, and we’ve spoken to every police force in the country to understand the demands they are facing.

“In December, we set out a comprehensive settlement to strengthen local and national policing, which will mean police funding will increase by up to £450 million next year.

“We are clear that effective local policing needs to be about more than just visibility in isolation. With crime increasingly taking place behind closed doors and online it is also about safeguarding vulnerable groups or individuals and giving the police the powers they need to deal with emerging and hidden crimes.”

Further background for editors from the Home Office:

- The police workforce has remained stable over the past year. This follows the Government’s decision to protect police funding at the 2015 Spending Review.
- The number of people joining police forces as officers has increased by 58% since 2015/16, which shows that policing is still a desirable and sought after career.
- Decisions about frontline policing, and how resources are best deployed, are for Chief Constables and democratically accountable Police and Crime Commissioners.
- Forces are changing how they deliver local policing to reflect the priorities of local people and better respond to new crime types, and this settlement will support that work. Prevention and problem-solving remain key to tackling both traditional, and new and less visible crimes. Police forces are now consulting with the public in deciding priority policing areas, communicating with the public through social media and other online platforms, and providing front line services in alternative ways to ensure they become more accessible to the public.
- The 2018-19 Provisional Funding Settlement protects police grant funding, and provides PCCs with the flexibility to increase their funding.
- The Provisional Funding Settlement will increase funding by up to £450 million across the police system for 2018/19.
- This will include up to £270 million increase in police force budgets so individual forces have the resources they need to respond to changes in demand.
- The Government believes in local policing, accountable to local communities. That is why we abolished all central Government targets and put local people in charge by introducing directly elected police and crime commissioners.

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## Assistant Chief Constable Alan Todd, District Policing Command, Police Service Northern Ireland

“Neighbourhood policing is embedded as a core role of all local policing teams across Northern Ireland. Each officer shares ownership of a District Electoral Area within which they focus on problem solving and working with communities to keep people safe.

“In areas with higher levels of crime or deprivation, where there is a specific policing need or which are geographically isolated these officers are supported by a small number of bespoke Neighbourhood Officers. This is the primary change since 2015. Prior to then almost every community in Northern Ireland had a small neighbourhood team.

“The changes to Neighbourhood Policing in 2015 was one of a number driven by a requirement to realign the service to remain co-terminus with the new local council boundaries and to enable the PSNI to work within a significantly reduced budget and smaller number of officers.

“Given the continued reduction to the policing budget these structures are continually kept under review to ensure that the available police officers remain best placed to protect communities and keep people safe.”

Further information about PSNI District Policing Command can be found at:

<https://www.psni.police.uk/inside-psni/our-departments/district-policing-command/>



## Spreadsheet guide

To remove a filter view, just click the x in the top right of the screen.

Name: Worst neighbourhood numl Range: A1:AS47															
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K	L	M	N	
1	Police force	2017 All offic	2017 part-tin	2017 neighb	2017 All PCS	2017 neighb	2017 Neighb	Rank by 201	Mid-2016 poi	2016 All offic	2016 part-tin	2016 neighb	2016 All PCS	2016 neighb	2015 Ai
6	Cleveland	1282.55		161.68	125.32	119.02	0.50	16	564300	1258.56		202.815	122.687	122.687	
11	Durham	1143.99		146.18	141.87	124.96	0.43	22	627800	1114.84		152.00125	157.347027	143.347027	
21	Lincolnshire	1086.9		103.44	105.187	103.387	0.28	38	743400	1073.26		109.2225	137.73	133.93	
25	Norfolk	1515.08		99.16749996	148.91002	130.46002	0.26	39	892900	1514.5		235.835	197.45	166.48	
26	Northamptonshir	1187.75		145.42	181.38	84.548	0.31	36	733100	1214.29		100.79	196.15	196.15	
37	West Mercia	2055.36		61.1	239.48	239.48	0.24	40	1258700	2079.1		161.18069	208.8	201.7575549	
39	West Yorkshire	4720.24		481.007	551.1216216	527.4335135	0.44	20	2299700	4501.21		1350.70775	625.3124324	602.9672973	
46	Scotland	17256.091					N/A	N/A	5404700	17316.571					17
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## Sources

- Police workforce England and Wales statistics from the Home Office <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>
- An FOI request to Police Service Northern Ireland
- Police Officer Quarterly Strength Statistics Scotland from the Scottish Government <http://www.gov.scot/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice/PublicationPoliceStrength/PQQS2017Q3/Publication>
- The latest Office for National Statistics population estimates (mid-2016) rounded to the nearest 100

## Notes on data

- The officer and PCSO numbers provided are full-time equivalents (FTE)

## Picture credit

- Norfolk Police (NB: not for re-use by partners)