

# PM speech at Police Bravery Awards 2019 reception

Welcome everyone to this particularly special afternoon. It is a huge privilege to be hosting you all here ahead of tonight's event.

Nothing says more about our outstanding policemen and women than the everyday acts of heroism that we hear about at the Police Bravery Awards.

In my time as Prime Minister, and previously as Home Secretary, I have attended many police award ceremonies. I have also attended police memorials. I unveiled the memorial stone for PC Keith Palmer here at No10. And I have spoken to police chiefs and police constables up and down the country who have carried out extraordinary acts in the line of duty.

Almost all of them have responded to praise by saying: "I was simply doing my job."

Indeed – those were the words of those incredibly brave officers who rushed towards London Bridge two years ago as others fled the appalling terror attack.

Their courage and quick-thinking in the face of enormous danger doubtless saved many lives.

So if there is one thing I have learnt in my time in office, it is that doing your job is quite unlike doing any other.

Because it is not many of us that get up in the morning not knowing whether that day will bring regular duties on the beat or a confrontation with a violent criminal.

Not many of us get up not knowing whether someone will come at us with a weapon.

Not many of us get up not knowing whether that day we will have to try and save someone's life.

But that's what you face every day as you get up and do your jobs.

And you do so to serve and protect the public – and so today, on behalf of the entire country it is our turn to say thank you.

Today I know that policing isn't getting any easier.

You face huge challenges and increasingly complex crimes.

New technology is not only changing crime, but the way you fight crime.

And public expectations are rising.

In my time as Home Secretary I tried to make policing more efficient, more accountable and more effective in cutting crime.

Because police reform has always been about much more than simply making savings – it is about making policing work better for you, and for the public.

That's why we scrapped national targets and put operational control back where it belongs – with the police.

We've introduced schemes such as Direct Entry and Police Now, set up the College of Policing to drive up standards and establish an evidence base for what works in cutting crime.

In recognition of the hugely damaging consequences of organised crime across our entire society, I established the National Crime Agency to drive real change in the way we deal with this threat at home and abroad.

Today I know the police face an incredible pressure from knife crime and serious violence. Indeed, many of you here have had to deal with people wielding knives.

No one should have their life taken away or threatened by someone with a knife – and we simply can't accept a situation where young people are frightened of what they might face on the streets.

So we are backing you in pursuing offenders and taking weapons off the street.

We've tightened up the law on offensive weapons, made more money available, and set up a cross government task force dedicated to tackling serious violence.

Because it's not just about policing, it's actually about the whole of society – we all need to work together to deal with knife crime and serious violence.

And we recognise as part of that the importance of positive opportunities and alternatives for young people, so we are putting money into our Youth Endowment Fund and Youth Futures Foundation to support groups and projects that can really make a difference.

Only a few days ago I had representatives from some of those projects here in No10, talking about how they're helping young people to move away from a possible path of violence and crime.

But of none of these reforms would mean anything without you, and your colleagues up and down the country, on the frontline, keeping us safe.

In honouring you – we honour all our police officers.

You demonstrate the true meaning of public service.

You put yourselves on the line, time and time again, for the sake of others.

You are the reason why in this country we have the finest police officers in the world.

And I want to wish everyone here the very best of luck at tonight's awards.

These awards have firmly established they are a great policing institution – and I want to thank the Police Federation, who are celebrating their centenary this year, for championing the bravery of our police.

And on a personal note, I just want to say this. The Police Bravery Awards were my first ever reception as Prime Minister here at No10 – and today they are also to be my last.

And I can think of no better way to begin and end my time as Prime Minister than by standing among some of the country's finest and bravest policemen and women.

It has been an honour to host you here today.

Thank you for your incredible service.

Thank you for everything you do, day in and day out, to keep us all safe.