

Prime Minister opens first meeting of national policing board

The Prime Minister has today (31 July) opened the first meeting of the National Policing Board, which will drive forward the Government's commitment to recruit 20,000 new police officers over the next three years.

The Board, announced last week, brings together senior police leaders and government. During today's meeting the Home Secretary outlined plans to begin the unprecedented recruitment drive in September and hire up to 6,000 officers in the first year.

Opening the meeting, Prime Minister Boris Johnson said:

This first meeting of the new National Policing Board marks the start of a new partnership between the police and the Government.

My pledge to recruit 20,000 police officers over the next three years is an absolute priority and it will begin within weeks.

I am a Prime Minister who backs our police all the way and I am going to give them the resources and the confidence they need to get the job done.

Today's meeting was attended by senior policing figures, including Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council Martin Hewitt, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners Katy Bourne, National Crime Agency Director General Lynne Owens and Metropolitan Police Deputy Commissioner Sir Stephen House, among others.

Speaking after the meeting, Home Secretary Priti Patel said:

This Government will not hesitate to act and give the police the support they need to protect the public.

We have moved swiftly to set up this Board, provide strong leadership and deliver on our commitment to recruit 20,000 more police officers to crack down on crime and keep us all safe.

Following this meeting, the Government and police will move at pace to drive forward our plans to bolster the police's ranks.

The Board discussed the changing nature of crime and the increasingly complex demand on the police, including from child sexual exploitation, serious and organised crime, and fraud.

They agreed that the Board would be a useful forum for improving

collaboration and consistency across the 43 police forces in England and Wales.

The importance of police officer wellbeing and findings from the Home Office's Front Line Review were also discussed.

The National Policing Board will meet four times a year.

National Police Chiefs' Council Chair, Martin Hewitt QPM said:

I am pleased to have attended the first meeting of the new National Policing Board, which brings together Government and police leaders to deliver a transformational opportunity for policing.

This ambitious growth requires significant planning, and work has already begun with all involved to consider how we can successfully achieve our recruitment target in the next three years.

The Home Office is also considering how it can further support the police in the use of stop and search, including next steps on a pilot that has made it simpler for officers in seven forces to use Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

Section 60 powers allow police officers to stop and search anyone in a designated area, over a specific period of time, without reasonable grounds for suspicion if serious violence is anticipated.