



Vernon Coaker MP
MINISTER OF STATE FOR POLICING, CRIME AND SECURITY
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Monday 20th October 2008

Dear Chief Executive,

I wanted to write to introduce myself formally in my new role as Home Office Minister of State for policing, crime and security.

I am delighted to have been given this responsibility by the Prime Minister and am looking forward to working closely with you and your colleagues across the policing and community safety landscape.

I am fortunate to have worked with many police forces, community groups and local partnerships in my former role as Home Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Crime Reduction and continue to be impressed by the work I have seen you do to make communities safer.

This work has delivered major successes in crime reduction. These have been achieved by the commitment of everyone working on the crime, policing and criminal justice agenda and have made a real difference to peoples' every day lives.

I am pleased to have been joined at the Home Office by my new Ministerial colleague, Alan Campbell, who will take up responsibility as Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Crime Reduction.

Our agenda covers many of the issues that concern ordinary people more than any others. Together we need to help people feel secure in their homes and local communities. I am very clear that our shared task is to continue to cut crime, especially violent, drug and alcohol related crime. This is what people expect – and I believe they are right to expect it.

Because the issues we are working on are so important, we all need to maintain and build on the level of delivery we have achieved so far, demonstrating to people that we are on their side and working together on the issues that matter to them.

With that in mind, my personal focus is very strongly on delivering some of the major challenges we have set ourselves.

We published the Policing Pledge in July as part of the Policing Green Paper, "From the Neighbourhood to the National". The Pledge is vital to the broader focus of the Green Paper, which puts the citizen at the heart of policing. It comes on the back of the tremendous achievement of police forces working with Government and partners to establish 3600 neighbourhood policing teams in every community in England and Wales.

Now we need to bring the Pledge to life, let people know about it, and let them see that we are delivering on it in all of their communities. I know it is a top priority for all of us to make sure we are responding to local needs, tackling the issues people care about and showing them the results of what we've done. The Pledge – and the tailored local pledges that all neighbourhood policing teams will be delivering – give all of us the chance to show communities that we take their concerns seriously and are acting on them.

Following on from her review 'Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime', Louise Casey has now been appointed as Director General of the Neighbourhood Crime and Justice Group in the Home Office to support you in ensuring that the public's voice is heard and is at the heart of how we deliver both policing and justice.

People need to know that crime is being tackled – so I am delighted to hear that police forces are making such good progress on crime mapping. We need to keep this up, so that by the end of this year everyone can find out the action that is being taken to make their communities safer.

As well as supporting partnerships and local communities, I am just as focused on serious and organised crime, and regional collaboration. I've seen SOCA (the Serious Organised Crime Agency), the police and local authorities make great progress in taking assets from criminal gangs and sharing intelligence across agencies to break up organised crime. I am very keen that we should learn from these successes, and we are looking to give greater support to all agencies involved in tackling the most serious crimes.

I also want to emphasise my personal commitment to continue to tackle serious and violent crime in particular knife crime, gun crime and domestic violence.

At the same time we need to keep up the pressure on anti-social behaviour. Last week was *Not in My Neighbourhood Week*. I am pleased that hundreds of partnerships up and down the country are out there showing that they won't tolerate crime and anti-social behaviour. I fully endorse this message. We need to challenge the minority who cause nuisance and disruption and ensure that the public see visible consequences for offenders.

Finally, I firmly believe that we have created many of the tools that are needed to make communities safer. We are freeing police and other front line workers

from red tape; we've invested in neighbourhood policing teams for every community; and we've helped you build effective local partnerships and to support Neighbourhood Watch and other community groups.

I am proud of what has been achieved together and always value the opportunity to see your work first hand and hear from you about how government can work with you. I am absolutely committed to supporting local partners and partnerships, and I am confident that together we can continue to drive down crime and make communities safer.

I am very excited by this challenge and hope you are too. I look forward to working with you all and if you do need to contact me, please do not hesitate.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Vernon Coaker". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

VERNON COAKER MP