
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

Rt Hon Andy Burnham MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

9 March 2016

Dear Mr Burnham,

POLICE GRANT 2016/17

Thank you for your letter of 11 February 2016 regarding the Chancellor's statement in the 2015 Autumn Statement and Spending Review that "...there will be no cuts in the police budgets at all. There will be real-terms protection for police funding".

Data on police funding are not within the scope of official statistics, and therefore fall outside the UK Statistics Authority's statutory remit. Nevertheless, as a matter of principle, the Authority encourages compliance with the high standards of the Code of Practice in all public uses of data and information, regardless of whether the source is an official statistic or not. We have considered the Chancellor's statement in this context.

We have reviewed the Police Grant Report 2016/17¹, the Written Ministerial Statement² which accompanied the publication, and the analysis that was carried out by the House of Commons Library (which you shared with my office). This shows the change in Police Grant Report settlements between 2015/16³ and 2016/17. We have also contacted officials at the Home Office, who produce the Police Grant Report. They informed us that identifying what constitutes 'police funding' was not simple given the different components that constitute police funding.

The Written Ministerial Statement published with the Police Grant Report defines total police funding as government funding (which comes from a combination of the Home Office, Department of Communities and Local Government and Welsh Government) plus the precept (the amount raised in Council tax that goes toward police funding). It shows that total police funding will increase from £11,376m in 2015/16 to £11,572m in 2016/17 if Police and Crime Commissioners maximise their precept. This is an increase in cash terms of 1.7%, £196m and no change in real terms⁴.

The analysis carried out by the House of Commons library, which was based on the figures in the Police Grant Report settlement represents "the amount of the aggregate amount of grants for police purposes to be paid to each local policing body other than the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, and to the Greater London Authority on behalf of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime". We agree with the findings of this analysis that between

¹https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/486447/2015_12_16_provisional_police_grant_report_2016-17_final.pdf

² <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-02-04/HCWS510/>

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/401176/46784_HC_930_accessible.pdf

⁴ Using GDP deflator as of November 2015.

2015/16 and 2016/17 there has been a decrease in this element of police funding in real terms.

Having reviewed the Written Ministerial Statement, more could have been done to provide greater clarity about the data in the Statement and the Police Grant Report and how they relate. Providing a definition of the precept and implications should the precept amount change would also have been helpful.

I am copying this letter to David Blunt, Chief Statistician and Head of Profession for Statistics at the Home Office.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrew Dilnot". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE