
Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Andrew Dilnot CBE

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

6 July 2016

Dear Mr Burnham,

Police Grant 2016/17

Thank you for your letter of 13 April 2016 regarding the police grant, in particular the statement made by the Home Secretary on 11 April that "...we are protecting police budgets when the precept is taken into account"¹ and similar statements made by the Minister for Policing².

As I wrote in my letter of 9 March, 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 your question in this context.

In a Spending Review statement on 25 November 2015, the Chancellor stated that "there will be real-terms protection for police funding"³. This appears to refer to overall police spending for this period. In addition to the Chancellor's statement, the Written Ministerial Statement states that "for 2016/17, direct resource funding for each PCC, including precept, will be protected at flat cash levels, assuming that precept income is increased to the maximum amount available"⁴. I have considered these statements in light of the Home Secretary's statement of 11 April and consider them to be consistent since there are two separate commitments: first, protection for overall spending in real terms, and second, to 'broadly flat cash levels' at individual PCC level.

I have asked the Director General for Regulation to speak with Home Office statisticians to consider ways in which greater clarity could be provided around the statements made in the Statement and Police Grant Report.

¹ <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-04-11/debates/1604111000003/OralAnswersToQuestions>

² <https://hansard.parliament.uk/Commons/2016-04-11/debates/1604111000003/OralAnswersToQuestions>

³ <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201516/cmhansrd/cm151125/debtext/151125-0001.htm#15112551000003>

⁴ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Lords/2015-12-17/HLWS431/>

I am copying this letter to David Blunt, Chief Statistician and Head of Profession for Statistics, 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