



Newsletter from Tim Harding Wandsworth Chief Inspector Safer Neighbourhoods

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Dear Reader,

I am writing to update you relation some recent decisions regarding Police Community Support Officers ward allocation and to provide a brief in relation to terrorism, which you may find useful (information is the public domain - please feel free to pass on).

1. Ward Allocation of PCSO

You may be aware that the Borough was allocated an additional 24 PCSOs (an additional 3 for those 8 wards with the highest population). There was some concern that this was not the best criteria on which to assign additional resources. Following communications between the Metropolitan Police Authority, our Local Authority and Wandsworth Borough Police it has been agreed that the allocation to wards of these additional PCSOs may be decided locally.

Recent work has been completed that has considered ward demand data, including population figures, crime deprivation, priority crime figures (burglary, robbery etc.) total numbers of crime and antisocial behaviour analysis. Based on this work, the seven wards with the highest demand for resources have been identified and these will be assigned an additional 2 PCSOs per ward (total of 14).

It has also been decided that 10 of the 24 PCSOs will be assigned to Schools, to work along side the Schools Police officers. The Borough is a very large net importer of school children and there is a high demand for policing services in and around schools, not least to deal with some children who behave anti-socially (and criminally) going to and from school (those affected are very often school children, who need our protection and presence).

The table below shows the net result of this work and the decisions made. Just to clarify, all wards have a minimum allocation of 3 PCSOs. Those with schools that require additional resources have an additional PCSO and those 7 with the highest demand have 2 additional PCSOs.

The demand data used to enable decisions around allocation of PCSOs will be reviewed and where demands change, allocation decisions will be reviewed. We have based our decisions on operational objective data, which we feel is a practical and reasonable approach.

On the 15 January 2008 I attended the Safer Neighbourhoods Steering Group chaired by Councillor Cousins and attended by other Councillors and relevant Council officers. I presented my proposals to the Steering Group and overall, the Group were positive and were in favour of using this method to allocate PCSOs, rather than making the decision purely based on population statistics (which as it happens were not accurate).

Lastly we have allocated 21 of our Borough Special Constables to work with ward teams. Those wards which did not receive the additional PCSOs but came close to getting additional officers I have asked the Sector Inspectors to ensure they get assistance from those Special Constables.

There will be winners and losers in this process, but I hope I have shown that our approach in making these decisions has been fair and reasonable.

WARD	Wards with Schools PCSOs	Wards allocated additional PCSOs	Total no. of Ward PCSOs (Including schools PCSOs)
Balham		2	5
Bedford			3
Earlsfield	1		4
East Putney	1		4
Fairfield			3
Furzedown	1		4
Graveney		2	5
Latchmere		2	5
Nightingale	1		4
Northcote			3
Queenstown		2	5
Roehampton		2	5
St. Mary's Park		2	5
Shaftesbury			3
Southfields	1		4
Thamesfield			3
Tooting		2	5
Wandsworth Common	1		4
West Hill	1		4
West Putney	1		4

2. Terrorism Update

Some Frequently Asked Questions

Threat

Q: What is the threat to London and the UK from international terrorism?

A: The threat from international terrorism remains real and serious. It is from overseas and the UK mainland. We encourage the public to remain vigilant and alert and to report anything suspicious to police. Currently, there is no specific intelligence of a specific threat to places, events or people in the UK that would lead us to issue a specific warning to the public.

Q: How many people are currently awaiting trial in connection with alleged terrorist-related offences?

A: Approximately 90 people are currently awaiting trial in the UK. But we would not want to say anything that could prejudice ongoing or future legal proceedings and prejudice the ability of the defendants to receive fair trials.

Q: Why does it take so long for the trials to come to court?

A: These cases by their very nature are complex and as a result are likely to take some time to come to trial. Some of the cases relate to individuals, some to networks. It is important that all parties involved should have time to prepare thoroughly for the trials and we would not want to say anything that could prejudice ongoing or future legal proceedings and prejudice the ability of the defendants to receive fair trials.

Policing in London

Q: What is the MPS doing to keep Londoners safe?

A: Public safety remains a priority for the MPS. Our contingency planning remains under constant review and this involves close liaison with central and local government, other emergency services and other agencies. The Met constantly reviews a wide range of policing tactics, including the deployment of high visibility policing at a variety of locations. These additional policing measures may be put in place for a number of reasons, including as a response to seasonal crime patterns or as a precautionary measure in the light of the current and continuing threat from international terrorism.

Overt policing is used in combination with a range of other police activities including covert tactics that by their nature are not obvious to the public.

People who live, work and visit London will continue to see a selection of policing tactics used in the future.

We encourage the public to remain vigilant and alert and to report anything suspicious to police. We cannot be complacent.

Each of the 32 London borough police commands now has a counter-terrorism liaison officer from the Counter Terrorism Command to provide expertise at a borough level.

Community

Q: Do police target specific communities when investigating terrorism?

A: We can categorically say that no individual is targeted by police because of their culture, faith, race or religion. Police inquiries are carried out under the provisions of existing UK law which takes into account the human and legal rights of those involved. Terrorist investigations go where the intelligence and evidence takes them.

Every effort is made by police to ensure that minority communities are not criminalized or victimised in any way. The overwhelming majority of the Muslim community are law abiding and reject all forms of violence.

The bedrock of British policing has always been to work with, for and on behalf of the communities we serve. It would be counter-productive for us to target any specific community as it is not police actions alone that will ultimately defeat terrorism, but the combined actions of all communities.

We need the support and confidence of communities to improve the two-way flow of information in order to arrest and prosecute terrorists in order to protect the whole community. Communities can defeat terrorism.

Q: Can you give me information about the 'Communities Together' Help and Advice Line?

A: The MPS set up an advice line to offer advice and reassurance, particularly to those communities who feel vulnerable as a result of the terrorist attacks in July 2005.

It is recognised that everyone who lives, works or visits London may be affected by these events, but that some people and communities may feel particularly isolated, concerned and vulnerable. So while the service is open to all, it is hoped that members of our minority communities will feel encouraged to contact the advice line, and our staff will provide advice and support where they can.

The 'Communities Together' Help and Advice Line is a 24-hour freephone number 0800 028 2390.

Q: How can I get 'Communities Together' information?

A: You can download the latest 'Communities Together' bulletin from http://www.met.police.uk/communities_together/

Anti-Terrorist Hotline – 0800 789 321

Q: I am concerned that someone will find out I have contacted the Anti-Terrorist Hotline.

A: Police understand that people might have reservations about contacting police - either because their friends or family may find out, or their suspicions may prove to have innocent explanations.

But we can reassure the public that all calls and information are treated in the strictest of confidence.

Q: What happens if the information I give is wrong?

A: We know that people who contact the hotline do so in good faith. All information received by the hotline is thoroughly analysed and researched before, and if any, police action is taken. Let police decide if the information you have is important. Members of the public may unknowingly have information which could be a crucial piece of the investigative jigsaw.

If You Suspect it Report it.

Q: If I don't want to contact police is there anyone else I can talk to?

A: You may feel more comfortable talking to another organisation about any information you may have about terrorism. Members of these organisations can then pass the information on to the police so that you can preserve your anonymity:

Fair Forum Against Islamophobia and Racism
www.fairuk.org

Muslim Safety Forum
Muslim line 020 8840 4840

Hindu Forum Britain
www.hinduforum.org
020 8965 0671

Equality and Human Rights Commission
www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Community Security Trust (for members of the Jewish community)
www.thecst.org.uk
020 8457 999

You can also report crime or information online through http://www.met.police.uk/reporting_crime/index.htm or via Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

Thank you for your continued support and help in working to make our communities safer and feeling safer.

Best Wishes,

Tim Harding

