

THE GREEN PARTY'S POLICING PLAN

2024 Police and Crime Commissioner Elections

OVERALL APPROACH

Harm reduction

Policing works well when police focus on how best to reduce harm to everyone. This might mean listening to vulnerable repeat victims to see what crime is the most serious to them. It might mean putting effort into youth work to divert children away from crime. It might mean working more closely with other agencies to solve problems. It might mean support for ex-offenders who are trying to turn their lives around.



The Green Party's policing plan will focus on what works to reduce long-term harms.

All Green Party candidates for Police & Crime Commissioner at the May 2024 elections are committed to the pledges within this manifesto. They may also have local policies relevant for policing in their area.



PRIORITISING THE LOCAL

Community confidence

Policing needs to be grounded in support from the community. It's the right thing to do, it's the best way to get on top of crime, and it's the best way to make people feel that their community is being kept safe. Police who have the confidence of their communities are effective: police who are viewed with suspicion are ineffective.

Pledge: Make sure that policing does not mean alienating communities as an acceptable collateral damage for a slightly higher number of short-term arrests.

Reflecting communities

The police service can only protect the community if it reflects and respects it. We will make sure that whenever police interact with the public they are aware of diversity, and act to promote equity and equality.

Pledge: Back moves to establish and protect a culture which also makes these values clear.

Safety Officers

We will follow the example set by police in Cornwall and introduce Tri-Service Safety officers. These have training and powers as fire service first responders, as paramedics, and as Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs). They are permanently based in one area where they can develop long term links with the community which they are serving.

Pledge: Work with ambulance and fire services to establish this system in a way which is not used to justify any cuts in services. After 24 months we will introduce at least 10 Tri-Service Safety Officers, each based in a small town or large village. If this pilot scheme proves effective, we will expand their number.

Localising policing

Specialist squads are useful for some functions but they often only ever get measured on how well they solve one problem. Local policing teams have to get along with everyone, and they will be there after special operations finish.

Pledge: Look to expand and support local teams in building long-term relationships with their communities, if necessary at the expense of county-wide specialist squads.

Explaining why

Policing is complex, and sometimes the best way to run a police organisation is not immediately obvious. We will put time in explaining this to the public, rather than pander to ill-informed criticism from the media or reflexively implement the knee-jerk solutions they demand. For example, newspapers often demand 'cut back on civilian back-office staff', but police on the streets are only ever as good as the information they get. A good policing plan has to recognise that the back office matters too – and a good PCC has to help explain why to the public, who are paying for it.

Pledge: Communicate effectively, openly and honestly with the communities the police serve.

PLANNING FOR LONG TERM TURNAROUNDS

Online crime

Phishing phone calls and online fraud blight the lives of many of the most vulnerable in the community.

Pledge: Given the national nature of this particular crime we will make sure that each force's policing plan involves working closely with other forces and with the Home Office on national responses to this scourge, with a view to reducing its incidence and restoring confidence in communications.

Violence reduction

Violent crime is a small proportion of crime but it wrecks lives. This is particularly the case with domestic violence.

Pledge: Where there is no local violence reduction unit we will introduce one, or develop those already in place. We will develop links with other agencies and with schools, community groups, refuges, social services, and the health service – to see what we can all do to solve this problem.

Drug policing

The illegal supply of drugs damages people in many different ways. We will champion a harm reduction approach to drug supply, which will focus on preventing and suppressing the crimes associated with it, rather than a punitive approach which plays into the hands of organised criminals.

Pledge: Press for legislative change at national level and focus on how well the force can reduce harm via its policing plan. We will investigate how this might be tracked annually as a measure of success.

Mental Health

Many calls to police are at root issues of mental health, not criminal behaviour. Our policing plan will make time to train and re-train police officers and staff in recognising the signs of mental health crises and responding to them appropriately, which in most cases means guaranteeing public safety and making sure that any necessary intervention is made by health professionals, not criminal justice specialists.

Pledge: Integrate police response with that of social services and the health service; and maintain/extend joint working which puts mental health crisis teams alongside police officers with a view to reducing harm.

Traffic safety

More people are killed by vehicles in most places every year than via homicide. This is unacceptable.

Pledge: Continue the harm reduction approach when it comes to traffic policing. The Green Party's Policing Plan will involve targeted interventions designed to make pavements safer for pedestrians, and to make roads safer for *all* road users.

EFFECTIVE ADMINISTRATION

Hiring the right Chief Constable

All police forces need a Chief Constable who wants to embed long term safety and success, not chase short-term headlines. This is a highly demanding role.

Pledge: Green Party PCCs will support whoever they confirm/appoint to the job, speaking truth to power when necessary, but working in close partnership whenever possible, acknowledging the separate roles of Chief Constable and PCC.

Ethics committee

Pledge: Appoint/restore an ethics committee designed to mirror the communities which are policed by the force, and to hold the PCC, deputy PCC, PCC office, and decisions taken to account.

Police and crime panel

Community-based solutions to crime and fear of crime need close co-operation with local authorities.

Pledge: Work closely with the police and crime panel, in the interests of (re)building community safety initiatives throughout the service area and making the safer communities strategy board more effective. This includes working in partnership with local authorities in planning, transport, education, and other policy areas.

Lobbying and advocacy

Pledge: Work alongside existing lobby groups such as the Alliance for Police Accountability to improve the structures and policies which currently govern policing. We will work with the College of Policing, National Police Chiefs Council and the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, to help bring new perspectives to these institutions, and also make sure that the force is taking the best practice from them. We will lobby for long-term community funds.

Accountability gap

Funding cuts mean that many forces share crucial functions with neighbouring forces in the area. But there's no mechanism to make this area of its work accountable.

Pledge: Press for openness in all these relationships, make it part of the PCC office's core duties to help scrutinise them, and liaise with the PCCs in neighbouring forces to make sure that together they are held accountable to the public.

Keep the fire service independent

Pledge: Where not already part of the PCC's responsibilities, Green PCCs will resist the government pressure for the PCC's office to take control of the local fire and rescue service away from its existing authority. The current form of control via representatives of the various local authorities is a better way of delivering accountability, and resisting pressure for cuts.



Green Party

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