

# WHO POLICES THE POLICE?

## Local communities depend on the police, but who makes sure the police work in the interests of local people?

### Who can people turn to when things go wrong?

**Police authorities police the police. We work independently, on behalf of local people, to hold chief constables\* to account for policing in their local areas.**

Police authorities put communities at the heart of policing. Responding to community feedback, we supported the roll-out of neighbourhood policing and police community support officers (PCSOs) across the country. Since 1995, we have worked closely with our partners, such as local councils, to ensure the police service continues to become more efficient and effective. This has delivered results – crime has fallen significantly and public confidence in the police is rising.

The Association of Police Authorities (APA) is the national voice of all police authorities in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. The APA works with the Home Office and the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) to set policy and to improve policing.

Through the APA, police authorities ensure that your local voice influences policing at the national level.

### Police authorities – local people, working for local people

Police authorities are made up of locally elected councillors and appointed independent members of the public. This mix ensures that policing decisions in your local area are taken on behalf of the whole community – not for party-political reasons or on behalf of one particular interest group.

The British model of accountability, which ensures that the police operate free from

**FACT** In the last five years, police authorities have overseen a reduction of almost one million recorded crimes.

**FACT** Policing costs more than £11bn a year, of which more than a quarter is raised through local council tax set by police authorities.

**FACT** 83% of people who have reported incidents to the police are satisfied with the overall way the incident was handled.

**FACT** Every police authority surveys local people to understand the crime and policing issues that are important to them. These surveys ask whether the police and their partners are dealing with the issues that matter locally. The national target is 60% by 2012.

**FACT** All police authorities publish local policing summaries, which are distributed to households at least once a year. They contain an independent and objective summary of police performance and priorities for the local area.

party-political interference, and in response to community priorities, is the envy of the world. We want to ensure that this independence continues and that everyone, including minority communities, can still influence policing.

### Police authorities make the police...

**...accountable to local people, not just politicians**

- We are structured in a way that stops any one group controlling the police, and ensures every community can influence what they do.

- We hire chief constables, and other senior officers, and hold them to account on behalf of local people.
- Every year we ask people for their views and concerns about crime and ensure that the police include local public priorities in their plans.

#### **...efficient**

- We decide how much local people pay for policing through their council tax.
- We ensure that money for policing is spent wisely – and have secured efficiency savings of over 30%, saving millions of pounds in the last ten years.

#### **...effective**

- We have overseen record reductions in crime – through holding the police to account and ensuring they work closely with partners such as schools, local authorities and health, probation and other voluntary organisations
- We set local policing priorities to balance strategic issues such as counter terrorism with local concerns like anti-social behaviour.

#### **...and fair**

- We have a legal duty to check that the police treat everyone equally and with respect – this includes ensuring that they use powers such as ‘stop and search’ fairly.
- We set employment targets to ensure that the police workforce reflects the make up of local communities.

It is in our mission to ensure that the police continue to do a better job on behalf of *everyone* in their communities.

### Contact us

**If you would like further information about the work of police authorities, or the APA, visit [www.apa.police.uk](http://www.apa.police.uk) or contact your local police authority.**