



Home Office

Baroness Williams

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

BY EMAIL ONLY  
Lord Paddick  
House of Lords  
SW1A 0PW

10 November 2021

Dear Brian,

**POLICE, CRIME, SENTENCING AND COURTS BILL: PLAIN-CLOTHED POLICE OFFICERS ON PATROL AND POST-CHARGE DETENTION OF CHILDREN**

During the Committee debate on 1 November, I committed to writing to you to outline the Metropolitan Police instructions for plain-clothed officers and the timescales in which they had been received (Official Report, column 1097). I would also like to take the opportunity to clarify a specific point regarding the post-charge detention of children following the debate on amendment 123A (Official Report, columns 1099-1102).

Plain-clothed police officers on patrol

Addressing your concerns regarding the point at which Sir Stephen House, Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, announced that plain-clothed Metropolitan Police officers would no longer patrol alone I can confirm that Sir Stephen made this announcement to a meeting of the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee on 30 September<sup>1</sup>. Specifically, Sir Stephen told the Committee that:

*“What we will be doing in future is saying that we will not operate plain-clothes officers on their own. If we do use them, they will be in pairs. I have to say, because we live in the real world, that there will be occasions when that is not possible because they may have started their operation in a pair but been split up, for instance if they are following two people and they go off in a different directions, and the officers may split and they may be then on their own. But, in general, we will in future deploy plain-clothes officers in pairs.”*

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<sup>1</sup> [Agenda for Police and Crime Committee on Thursday 30 September 2021, 2.00 pm | London City Hall](#) item 6, Appendix 1, p5

The Metropolitan Police Service further updated their website on 20 October<sup>2</sup> to reflect the instructions they have issued to their plain-clothes officers when acting along and approaching lone women and provide guidance for members of the public who may be concerned. This relates to their instruction that lone plain-clothed officers, including those reacting to incidents whilst off-duty, will proactively provide verification of their identity and purpose to any lone woman they need to engage with using a video call to a uniformed supervisor in police operation rooms, in addition to showing their warrant card.

#### Post-charge detention of children

I would also like to take this opportunity to put the record straight in response to your comments on post charge detention of children. In the debate, you noted that 4,500 children were remanded post charge by the police and 884 by the courts, and suggested that this meant there was no alignment between the two systems. As I explained to the Committee, post charge detention by the police serves a different purpose to custodial remand, so I do not consider it is factually inaccurate for the Government to note this alignment.

I would also like to respond to your comment about lengths of detention post charge. As you rightly observed, it is possible that a child arrested on a Saturday afternoon would be detained for more than 24 hours, until they could appear before the court on the Monday. However, as I said in my response to the debate, “in the overwhelming majority of cases a child remanded by the police will be held for no more than 24 hours”. I did not say, as you asserted, that “a child would *never* be remanded in police custody for more than 24 hours”. Again, I do not believe it is factually inaccurate for the Government to note the situation for the majority of children, whilst acknowledging the possibility that it may on occasion be the case.

I am copying this letter to Lord Rosser, Lord Coaker, Lord Ponsonby of Shulbrede, Baroness Chakrabarti, Lord Hunt of Kings Heath, Baroness Blower, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb and Lord Carlile of Berriew. I am also placing a copy in the library of the House.



**Baroness Williams of Trafford  
Minister of State**

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<sup>2</sup> [Changes to how lone plain clothed officers identify themselves to lone women | Metropolitan Police](#)