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Rt Hon Priti Patel MP
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Funding for Violence Reduction Units

Dear Home Secretary,

I am writing following the Government's announcement on Monday 12th August that eighteen PCCs are to be awarded an additional £35m to establish Violent Reduction Units to tackle violent crime. While I welcome news that the Government has acknowledged that increased funding is needed to tackle the most serious and violent crimes on our streets, I am disappointed that Cleveland continues to be omitted from this funding stream.

Cleveland is an incredibly difficult area to police, despite its relatively small size. It has a recorded crime rate of 101 per 100,000 of the population, the fifth highest level in the country and increasing by 12% last year. While these increases are reflected nationally, the increasing levels of knife crime are not. At 0.8 crimes per 1,000 population, Cleveland's rates of knife crime exceed those of significantly larger metropolitan areas such as Greater Manchester and Merseyside.

Risk factors influencing young people being drawn into serious violence are high in Cleveland. In a three month period in 2018, a shocking 1,834 children in Cleveland witnessed a domestic abuse incident and 91 children were identified as vulnerable, at risk of CSE, missing or trafficked. The rate of Looked After Children (LAC) is double the national average and the high prevalence of Class A Drug misuse has resulted in Cleveland being selected as a Heroin & Crack Cocaine Area by the Home Office. ¹



The Police & Crime Commissioner for Cleveland is an accredited Living Wage Employer with the Living Wage Foundation.

Considering our high crime rates and increasing levels of knife crime, it is incredulous that Cleveland is not among the 18 'worst affected' areas in the country for serious violence. This is in part as a result of the decision to use out-of-date hospital admission figures, which provide a one-dimensional view of the extent of serious violence and does not take into consideration the evidenced surge in knife crime which has taken place over the last 12 months.

The data fails to take into account the number of admissions per population, meaning as a smaller region of the country, Cleveland are clearly at a disadvantage. If a more proportionate approach had been taken, it would clearly show that Middlesbrough has the same number of knife-crime related hospital admissions as Doncaster, a town with double the population. It also does not consider violent assaults where a weapon other than a sharp object was used – or potentially no weapon at all.

Despite the challenges we face, we are optimistic about our ability to reduce levels of serious violence in Cleveland. We are grateful for the Home Office's £546,000 grant from the Early Intervention Youth Fund, which has allowed us to develop a Tees-wide Violence Prevention Strategy. This work will focus four key areas: prevention, early intervention, targeted intervention and diversion.

This investment has allowed us to double the funding for our four local authorities to spend on youth outreach services and will fund training for professionals about the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences. Young offenders will have increased opportunities to turn away from crime through diversion schemes and can access counselling to help them to rebuild their damaged relationships with family and friends.

You may have also seen that we have secured a visit from the Knife Angel sculpture, which serves as a haunting reminder of the cost of knife crime and the devastation felt by the families who have suffered loss. A range of educational presentations will accompany the Angel's visit, to create a lasting legacy with our young people.

My office are working with local partners to organise a conference on serious violence, due to take place in Hartlepool in October. We would like to extend an invitation to you to attend this event, to hear first-hand the pressure serious violence is placing on our public services and the good practice taking place to tackle the issue. Please let my office know if you would be interested in attending.

We're proud of the work we are undertaking in Cleveland to disrupt and prevent serious violence, but I have no doubt that we could accomplish so much more with the right resources. Once again, Cleveland has fallen foul to a funding system that fails to recognise the significant demand and social issues we face.

We would ask that the Government reconsider the sole use of hospital admission figures as a means of identifying areas in need of financial support, as this approach leaves

areas like Cleveland without the resources we need to tackle what is a growing and significant issue.

The use of this methodology has resulted in the allocation of almost £100m to only 18 out of 43 police forces, further deepening the inequality in public sector funding across the country. We would encourage you to prioritise our area in any future funding opportunities so we are able to stem this issue that has long lasting consequences on victims and communities.

Yours sincerely



Barry Coppinger
Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland

ⁱ The statistics within this letter were drawn from '*The changing nature and complexity of demand in Cleveland*', which was produced by Cleveland Police's Corporate Services department and presented to Cleveland Police and Crime Panel on Tuesday 13th November 2018. The document can be found at the following link: <http://www.egenda.stockton.gov.uk/aksstockton/images/att35010.pdf>