

By e-mail:

The Rt Hon Alex Norris MP

12 August 2026

Dear Lord Chancellor,

Thank you for your letter on 4 August to Emily Spurrell, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners. We are replying as the joint leads for the Victims and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) portfolio to raise concerns about the early release of prisoners and suggest some interventions to better support victims.

PCCs and Deputy Mayors are dedicated local victims' champions, raising and prioritising the victims' voice, convening local criminal justice agencies to tackle their key issues in partnership and commissioning vital victims support services that meet and reflect their needs.

We know that early release has had and will have a devastating impact on many victims and communities. Conversations with victims locally have been deeply concerning:

"It took 5 years for my case to get to court, that was the worst 5 years of my life, the justice system pulled me from pillar to post, shattered my nervous system and brought all the pain and memories back to the front of my mind"

"I convinced myself I was doing the right thing, and the court would protect me, and now you're telling me he will more than likely be released early"

"Wow... gobsmacked... I don't want to be involved with any of this anymore I'm sick to death of being let down by the system"

If victims feel that pursuing criminal justice outcomes is no longer worthwhile, or that they feel unsafe and unprotected from their perpetrator in their own communities, then the system has failed victims in the most fundamental ways.

As Deputy Mayors and PCCs, we are working to ensure victim safety throughout the implementation of the Sentencing Act. Our constabularies too, without any additional funding, are safeguarding victims from further harm. We are all working together in this goal and seek your support in doing more for victims.

We welcome the changes to the Sentencing Act set out in your letter and the inclusion of additional measures to support victims within the outcomes of your review. We are particularly supportive of the strengthened package of support for victims, including an additional £10m investment in support for victims, and your commitment to work closely with PCCs to design local funding for vital victim support services.

Our ability to work at pace, responding to current circumstances with targeted support for victims underscores the unique value of the Deputy Mayor and PCC roles. Future policing and crime governance arrangements following the abolition of PCCs must preserve this capability to respond rapidly, consistently and flexibly to similar requests.

The additional Sentencing Act changes are welcome but we must reiterate the need for further resources. While the £10m funding for support services for victims are a step in the right direction, the NPCC estimates that the Sentencing Act holds an unfunded cost to policing

of £480m in its first year. Significant further local funding and support is needed to ensure that policing is equipped to handle the demands of early releases.

We must also underline the need for action to address the remaining significant challenges:

- **Improving communication with victims** – We urge the government to improve the clarity and timeliness of communication with victims (including those that are not part of the Victim Communication Scheme) to ensure that every victim understands their options, how to access information about their perpetrator's release if they wish, and what support and safeguards are in place.
- **Co-ordinating victim support funding** – We wish to emphasise the need for government funding for victims to create a coherent and joined-up service, in which the new national hotline dovetails with local victim support service provision. As commissioners of local victims support services, we welcome engagement in planning conversations at the earliest possible stage, to help improve understanding of current service provision and design local funding to bolster support where it is needed most.
- **Seeking assurance on victim safeguard measures** – We are keen to work with the government to ensure that policing, probation and other criminal justice agencies are equipped to enforce robust safeguards in place to protect victims. Electronic monitoring (EM) is a particular concern. As EM expands with the presumption that all offenders will be tagged, we are concerned that current issues (highlighted in the recent National Audit Office Report) will persist at a larger scale. Ahead of the scheme's commencement, we need assurance that EM will be executed robustly and effectively, with timely and appropriate responses to breaches.
- **Restorative justice** – We are also particularly keen to explore whether restorative justice may have a specific additional role in helping victims to recover and offenders to rehabilitate. We would welcome an early meeting with you and your team so that we can begin to understand and put in place the support that victims will need to access this.

We hope that this letter is the start of an ongoing conversation on how we can work together to ensure victim safety through this challenging period for all of us.

We would welcome an early conversation and have asked iris.brandon@apccs.police.uk to explore this with your office.

Yours sincerely,



Clare Moody

Joint Lead for the APCC Victims and
Violence Against Women and Girls
(VAWG) portfolio
PCC for Avon and Somerset



Matthew Scott

Joint Lead for the APCC Victims and
Violence Against Women and Girls
(VAWG) portfolio
PCC for Kent