# Metropolitan Police considers arming frontline officers amid rising violence and recruitment crisis



A clandestine review within the Metropolitan Police has recommended arming frontline officers with semi-automatic pistols to better defend themselves amidst a rising tide of violent threats, including knife attacks. This proposal comes after the tragic stabbing of two officers in Leicester Square in 2022, where they faced a man who led them on a relentless chase, overcoming batons, Tasers, and pepper spray. Such incidents starkly highlight the urgent need for a fundamental shift in policing tactics—one that prioritizes officer safety over misguided adherence to outdated principles.

Traditionally, UK policing has relied on the doctrine of "policing by consent," which opposes the routine arming of front-line officers. But as criminal activities become increasingly brazen, this approach is proving woefully inadequate. Officers are increasingly vulnerable, with current measures—batons, pepper spray, and Tasers—falling short in the face of escalating violence. Despite the deployment of over 6,400 Tasers and ongoing efforts to bolster officer equipment, these measures are no substitute for the right to carry firearms, which many argue is essential for their protection and for public safety.

The Metropolitan Police’s official stance, guided by the College of Policing, remains opposed to widespread arming, citing concerns about eroding public trust. However, such concerns are increasingly obsolete in the face of a criminal environment where gangs are turning to imitation firearms—fake guns and 3D-printed weapons—that pose a serious threat to officers and civilians alike. Without the means to counter these threats effectively, police are left dangerously exposed.

Alarmingly, the force is facing a recruitment crisis within its firearms unit, with only six applicants for roles that once attracted hundreds. This dismal number exposes plummeting morale and a reluctance among officers to carry firearms due to the stigma and legal ambiguities that surround such weaponry. Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's calls for clearer legal protections only serve to highlight the widening gap between policy and the real-world dangers police face.

Supporters of proactive policing argue that arming officers would restore a sense of security rather than diminish legitimacy. From a pragmatic perspective, the safety of officers and the public should be paramount. The time for rhetoric about "policing by consent" has long passed; instead, the focus must shift to ensuring officers can defend themselves against increasingly violent and unpredictable criminals.

In a city besieged by surging criminal violence and a policing force hamstrung by political correctness, it is clear that the current approach is delusional. The only way to regain control and protect our communities is to empower officers with the tools they need—firearms included. Anything less is a failure of leadership, risking further tragedy and chaos in the capital.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/2108519/all-frontline-police-officers-should> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/25/met-police-crisis-as-recruitment-for-firearms-unit-plunges/> - Scotland Yard's firearms unit is facing a severe recruitment crisis, with only six officers applying for recent posts. Traditionally, these positions attracted between 150 and 250 applicants, but declining morale has led to a significant drop in interest. This situation underscores the challenges in maintaining an adequately staffed firearms unit within the Metropolitan Police.
3. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/09/25/rishi-sunak-armed-policy-legal-powers-home-office-review/> - Prime Minister Rishi Sunak has called for greater clarity regarding the legal powers of armed police officers. He emphasized the importance of ensuring that these officers have certainty about their actions, especially when making split-second decisions involving the use of deadly force. This statement follows concerns over the legal protections available to firearms officers.
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2023/11/16/police-spike-imitation-firearms-guns-nca/> - There has been a significant increase in the use of imitation firearms by criminals, with offences involving such weapons rising by 13% to 2,130 in the year leading up to March. This trend is attributed to successful efforts in suppressing the use of conventional firearms, leading criminals to seek alternative weapons, including 3D-printed firearms.
5. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/06/20/tasers-issued-almost-2000-london-police-officers-knife-crime/> - In response to a surge in knife crime, the Metropolitan Police has equipped an additional 1,867 frontline officers with Tasers, bringing the total number trained to over 6,400. This decision aims to enhance officer safety and provide a non-lethal option to subdue suspects, thereby reducing the risk of injury to both officers and the public.
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/politics/2019/07/10/frontline-police-should-have-tasers-says-home-office-review/> - A Home Office review has recommended that all frontline police officers be issued with Tasers to combat rising violence and knife crime. The review found that officers felt the need for Tasers to protect themselves, especially as more are deployed on lone patrols. Several police forces are already implementing this recommendation.
7. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/04/30/met-police-federation-more-tasers-hainault-sword-attack/> - Following the Hainault sword attack, the Metropolitan Police Federation has renewed its call for every officer who wants a Taser to be equipped with one. The incident, where two officers were wounded by a sword-wielding assailant, highlighted the need for frontline officers to have access to non-lethal weapons to protect themselves and the public.