

## Britain needs return to 'common sense policing'

Britain needs to return to “common sense policing” and end the obsession with hitting performance targets, the new head of the Superintendents Association has said.



Chief Superintendent Irene Curtis said there is still too much focus on meeting targets Photo: David Cheskin/PA

By Martin Evans, Crime Correspondent

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Chief Superintendent Irene Curtis, who is the first female to head up the organisation, warned there was still too much emphasis on detection and arrest rates, which she said was leading to “dysfunctional behaviour” in policing.

Chief Supt Curtis, who begins her new role today, said: “The use of numerical targets in performance management is embedded in the police psyche.

“Policing should not be a competition. It should be collaborative and in the best interests of the public we serve.”

She said despite assurances from the Government that central targets would be removed the culture still endured.

She said it had created a “generation of people who are great at chasing targets but do not always

recognise that doing the right thing is the best thing for the public”.

“I’m proposing a return to common sense policing which focuses on doing the right thing for victims and the public.”

She added: “There is an urgent need to develop a more trusting performance management culture in the service. It’s important that forces have measures to help them to understand how they are performing, but they should not be dominated by targets.”

“What is required is the evidence-based deployment of resources rather than arbitrary numerical targets.

“I strongly believe that such an approach is essential to reduce demand and thus create further capacity for the diminishing resources available for policing as a consequence of this and the next Comprehensive Spending Review. We need to minimise the impact of these cuts on our ability to reduce crime and protect the public.”