



### **Home Secretary's Christmas message to the Police service in England and Wales**

I wanted to take this opportunity to wish all of you in the police service a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Over the last year we have all been reminded of what an important job police officers and staff do. In April, police officers and staff did a magnificent job in helping the public to celebrate the Royal Wedding safely and securely. No less significant is the tireless work you do every day to cut crime and keep communities safe up and down the country.

But the greatest challenge that the police faced this year was undoubtedly the summer riots. I believe police officers and staff responded tremendously to this challenge. When I spoke to officers who had been on the scene of rioting in London and in Manchester, I was struck by the heroism and the selflessness of those officers who put their lives on the line to restore order to Britain's streets.

I know many of you made sacrifices over the summer – your holiday plans were disrupted; you worked double shifts; mutual assistance came from forces across the country; leave was cancelled; some of you even slept on station floors. Alongside those personal hardships, we also saw some truly astonishing acts of bravery – police officers standing up for the innocent and the frightened, taking on the thugs and the looters. More than 300 officers were injured. Every force was affected, whether their area faced rioting or not. And that's the thing about the police - you do your best to protect the public and fight crime come what may. That's why I always say that in Britain we have the finest police in the world.

These are tough times but the police continue to serve the public with distinction. On behalf of the British public, thank you.

I know Christmas and the New Year are a busy time in policing and I know next year will be no quieter. We have the Diamond Jubilee to look forward to and then the once-in-a-lifetime spectacular that will be the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. Many of you across the country will be involved in making sure the Games can be enjoyed safely by all. So with a busy year ahead, I hope you will be able to spend some time with your friends and family over the festive period.

Merry Christmas.

**The Rt Hon. Theresa May MP**