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The Rt Hon Andrew Burnham MP
10 Downing Street
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Dear Prime Minister,

Potential Early Release of PC Andrew Harper's killers

Like so many members of the public, serving police officers and, of course, Andrew Harper's family I was appalled to read the article in today's *Daily Telegraph* suggesting that two of Andrew Harper's killers would be released early under the Sentencing Act 2026.

I have already written to your new Lord Chancellor urging him to consider emergency legislation to address this case. The actions of Henry Long, Albert Bowes and Jessie Cole rightly shocked the nation at the time of Andrew's killing. The news that two of them will be released early due to the Government's Sentencing Act will call into question the whole approach to delivering justice in our country.

Following Andrew's killing we saw the passing of Harper's Law, which was supported by many of your current ministers. As a result, if Henry Long, Albert Bowes and Jessie Cole committed the same offence now, they would be subject to a mandatory life sentence; yet thanks to legislation passed in recent months by this Government, Albert Bowers and Jessie Cole are set to be released early.

This case highlights the broader issues with the Sentencing Act 2026. Blanket early releases for vast swathes of the prison population, and an increase in the threshold for a custodial sentence, mean that many criminals will simply never face proper punishment.

It is reported in the press that you have already shown a willingness to review the legislation, and I would urge you to take this early opportunity to ensure justice in this case and to make changes to the Sentencing Act 2026. The Government should act swiftly to bring emergency legislation at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Barber
PCC for Thames Valley