

This House Believes That All Police Officers Should Carry Guns

Fact: At present, only 6,500 police out of 150,000 in the UK are trained to use firearms.

Fact: In 2005, the police accidentally shot and killed an innocent Brazilian man in a Tube station, thinking he was a terrorist.

Fact: Often, armed police are sent to a scene to negotiate surrender with a criminal suspect. They are often able to negotiate with them and don't need to fire their weapons.

Fact: The London Riots in 2012 began after armed police shot a man called Mark Duggan. The police say he was also carrying a gun, but his family dispute this.

Fact: Other countries that do not arm all police include Ireland, Australia and Singapore. In most parts of the USA, all police carry guns.

- Is arming the police necessary? Is there a big problem with armed criminals, or do the UK's gun laws mean that most criminals aren't armed?
- Will this make situations more dangerous? If the police carry guns, are criminals more likely to as well?
- Is there a risk that the police will shoot the wrong people? Will innocent people die as a result?
- At the moment, the police have specialist firearms units that they can call on if criminals are armed. Is this good enough?
- Will it help tackle gang crime, where criminals are often armed?
- Given that police have to put themselves in danger all the time, isn't it only fair that we allow them to carry guns to defend themselves?
- Are there risks involved in having more guns? What if police officers lose their guns, have them stolen, or decide they want to misuse them?
- What message does it send about the police if they carry lethal weapons?
- Will people be less likely to approach the police if they are armed?