

Transport Committee

Oral evidence: [Work of the British Transport Police](#),
HC 520

Wednesday 6 July 2022

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Huw Merriman (Chair); Mr Ben Bradshaw; Ruth Cadbury; Chris Loder; Grahame Morris; Gavin Newlands.

Questions 1–90

Witnesses

[I](#): Chief Constable Lucy D’Orsi, British Transport Police; and Steff Sharp, Chief of Staff, British Transport Police.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi and Steff Sharp.

Q1 **Chair:** This is the Transport Committee's one-off evidence session with the British Transport police. I ask our witnesses to introduce themselves for the record.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Good morning to everyone. I am Lucy D'Orsi, chief constable of British Transport police.

Steff Sharp: Good morning. I am Steff Sharp, chief of staff at British Transport police.

Q2 **Chair:** Good morning to you both. Thank you very much for being with us. We occasionally have one-off evidence sessions with Government agencies—bodies that we scrutinise. We have not had the opportunity to look at British Transport police for some time.

You are both very welcome. We are very keen for you to give us as much evidence and information as you can and an insight into your work, to bring us up to speed.

Chief constable, by way of an opener, may I ask you to set out how the British Transport police operates and your role as chief constable?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I am delighted to be here. I have been the chief constable for British Transport police for about 15 months now. I would like to start by saying that I am enormously proud to lead the force and am thoroughly enjoying being there. Like most of my colleagues, I am very optimistic about the future, which is really important.

BTP is the only national police force. It covers England, Scotland and Wales. In many respects, it is also a specialist police force, with a very proud history. Originally, it covered canals, ports and the railways. Over time, as transport has evolved, we have focused very much on the railways.

I walked into a force that cares deeply about the railway and the people—travelling passengers. It also cares very much about the employees who work on the railway and making sure that they are safe while they are at work.

It works very hard to minimise disruption to passengers. I have walked into a force that I feel wants to get better significantly for the future. As transportation evolves, it wants to make sure that it is restructuring itself to make sure that it can keep passengers safe as they travel, whether it be for work or domestically.

One thing that I have found a little bit different is that we are very focused on suicide prevention, safeguarding, minimising disruption and violence against women and girls. The work that the force does around



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suicide prevention, which I am sure we will touch on at some point, is pretty outstanding as far as I am concerned. It works very collaboratively with the industry.

To give you some context on the size of the force, we have a revenue budget of £347 million, which is around 1.6% of UK expenditure on the railway. I have 5,281 full-time staff, of whom about 3,330 are police officers. Of those police officers, 10.7% are from an ethnic minority group and 21% are women. The representation of women on the force is among the lowest the country. As the first female chief constable of British Transport police, I feel very strongly that that needs to improve.

We also employ police community safety officers. We have about 300 PCSOs, 1,600 staff and, importantly, 275 specials. We are very attractive to volunteers. They enjoy coming to work with us. They contribute about 1,000 hours every year to police the railways, which we really value as part of the BTP family.

On the challenges of working as a national police force, covering England, Scotland and Wales, we work across 43 policing jurisdictions, which makes us very different from Home Office forces, and 333 local authorities. We also work with the 28 rail operators, as well as TfL and Network Rail. Of course, a lot of our vulnerability work means that we work across all the 134 local safeguarding panels across all the different local authorities.

Contextually, we cover the biggest geographical area of any police force, covering 20,000 miles of track and 2,500 stations. There are about 100,000 CCTV cameras across the railway jurisdiction. That is really positive. One of the areas for development for the future is that at the moment we have access to only about 40,000 of those cameras. As we see the movement towards GBR opportunities for the future, that is definitely an opportunity for us to work together to keep the travelling passenger safe.

On disruption, one of the things that I felt with BTP when I came in is that it looks at some of the disruption that is caused very much through the lens of industry. I would say that my officers have quite a commercial conscience around disruption, balancing the need quickly to deal with the disruption with making sure—particularly if, tragically, it involves suicide—that we are respecting the deceased and the family.

On average, with a non-suspicious death on the railway, we reopen the railway within about 97 minutes, which is, I think, very unique to BTP. That is not necessarily the same conscience that I see existing elsewhere across policing.

We tend to look at crimes per million passenger journeys. We should be very proud in the UK that, largely, we have a very safe railway. We have 29.3 crimes per million passenger journeys, so the probability of your being a victim of crime on the railway is very low.



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We have a strong focus, working in partnership with the industry, on problem-solving plans, not just around safeguarding and suicide prevention but around crime.

Can I take us on to suicide for a moment? Suicide is something BTP cares about deeply. My officers deal with a significant amount of trauma, and repeat trauma. Five per cent. of the suicides in the UK are suicides where people die on the railway. If you average that statistic, we average about a suicide or an attempted suicide a day, although I do not like to talk about it as statistics. Last year, we had 275 suicides and 91 attempted suicides. A statistic I care about a lot—and I know that my colleagues care about—is that last year we made just under 2,500 life-saving interventions.

That sets BTP apart. It is quite unique to us. In a way, it is a bit of a hidden gem that exists within the force. What does that mean? For every life lost on the railway, we know that we have made eight life-saving interventions.

We also work a lot with charities and, as I have mentioned, with local authorities. In the last year, we made thousands of referrals to child and adult social care. We all know that, ever since the railways were invented, vulnerable people have gravitated to the railways, because historically they have always been seen as a safe place.

We work very closely with the Railway Children charity. In the last year, we made over 2,500 referrals to the Railway Children as a charitable body to support young people. Over the last two years, including figures for Scotland, we made 3,000 mental health detentions over a two-year period. That is a challenge for us. With some of the challenges that the NHS is facing, we see a lot of officer time sitting with very vulnerable people who have been detailed under the Mental Health Act. It takes a long time for them to get an outcome through the NHS system.

We work very closely with industry, as I have mentioned. One of the things we are very much focused on is demonstrating how we generate value as a police force in the security and safety that we offer. One thing that we know is that every pound of delay to the railway industry costs the UK just over £3. A delay is a significant commercial factor, whether that be through trespass or through some of the suicides that we face.

When I came into the force, I wanted to employ an economist to start to look at the value, because it is industry money. We are totally funded by the industry, with a few additional grants. We know that, for every pound that we spend, we generate about £160-worth of value, if we take it to a commercial level.

I would sum all that up by saying that we are very proud to police the railways, not least because we know that we are funded by them. That makes us very different from Home Office police forces. We are very proud of the uniqueness that we have in British Transport police.



I can talk about our budget, if it would be helpful. We have two significant stakeholders in the £347 million that we have. We have £77.3 million that comes from Transport for London for us to police the underground. Network Rail funds us to £109 million. A small amount—5%—comes from enhanced police service agreements. That caters for demand that is beyond what we classify as core policing. If an operator wanted to buy an additionality, we would work with it to see whether that was appropriate, and then they could seek to fund that.

One per cent. of our budget comes from the Home Office, which funds our county lines team. You may be aware of that. We had some early statistics that showed that organised crime groups were exploiting the railway to move drugs around the country. In order to try to disrupt organised crime groups, BTP is a partner with a number of Home Office forces. It was estimated that around 44% of drugs were being moved around by the railway, from a county lines perspective. We are very proud of the county lines work.

Q3 Chair: Chief constable, I will stop you there. I said to members of the Committee that I would take until 9.45 am, but I have asked only one question. Your summary is excellent and takes all the members into the areas they are going to look at. I will touch on what they will be.

After me, we will look at the strategy—roles and responsibilities and how they operate—and the structure. Then we will look at the crime side, which you have touched on, and antisocial behaviour. We also want to look at sexual harassment and the work that you are doing to combat that, the work with vulnerable people you have touched on, trespass and recruitment.

Members, may I take a few more minutes, otherwise I will not get anything else in? Chief constable, I want to focus on what you have just said. We are going to talk about crime. Are you able to give us an indication of whether crime levels have increased or decreased within your transport areas over the last few years?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: With Covid, it is quite difficult to do comparables, so one of the things I tried to think about was how I could summarise where we were. If we compare the year-on-year performance, we have seen a 35% reduction in crime, but that is with fewer passengers. Although we have seen a reduction in acquisitive crime— theft of pedal cycles and passenger property—we did not see a reduction in violence and robbery-type offences during Covid, so our demand level was relatively static.

If we compare it with pre-pandemic levels, at the moment we have a reduction in crime of about 3%. That is against a backdrop of really pushing for victims of sexual offending on the railway to come forward and report. In terms of growth areas, we have seen a significant increase in sexual offending on the railway. Obviously, the offending is not a positive, but the fact that victims are coming forward to report that crime



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is really important. It helps us to understand where these offences are taking place so that we can have very target-focused policing that is in the right places to try to reduce that risk. Even with that increase, we are still showing a reduction in crime of about 3% compared with pre-Covid levels.

Q4 Chair: As you said, you have been in post for less than two years. If you could pick out one strength you have been really impressed by and one development area that you feel has been a weakness that needs to be addressed within your force, what would each of those be?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: I would put the strengths into a couple of categories. The strength of the force with its focus on understanding the industry is outstanding. It really understands the needs of the industry, but it makes sure that it balances that with core policing functions. In my view, its focus on safeguarding is absolutely outstanding. When I talk about safeguarding, I mean vulnerable adults, vulnerable children and those with mental ill health who are gravitating towards the railway. It is very humbling, and I am very proud of what they do in that area.

Q5 Chair: Can you list an area that needs improvement? Every area has them, as we know.

Chief Constable D’Orsi: Of course. With two years of lockdown, there has been an increase in mental ill health. We are seeing a growth in that area. We always want to do more. For me, the integration, working with some of the charities and across all the different local authorities, is something the force should be very proud of.

The work that it has done on county lines is linked to that. Again, I think that that is a strength. It has not sought to criminalise young people who are being exploited by organised crime groups to move drugs around the country. We treat those very much as victims and seek to prosecute the organised crime groups for modern-day slavery. We have had 27 charges of modern-day slavery and two convictions so far. That is a real reflection of how the force understands vulnerability and puts it at the heart of what it is doing.

For me, an area for development is that the force has tried to do a lot itself. In my previous role, I was in counter-terrorism policing for four and a half years. One thing that has struck me is that security across rail could be better. It could be more integrated and co-ordinated and would probably benefit from having a single guiding mind around security.

In my previous role, I was involved in giving evidence at the Manchester Arena inquiry. For me, some of the learning that has come out of the Manchester Arena inquiry about situations where you have multiple people trying to deliver security and safety in a single location is very transferable to rail.

Q6 Chair: Can I touch on that? I was going to ask you whether there is a danger that you end up doing more than just policing—that the



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organisation asks you to do too much or that, traditionally, you have. Are you saying that security operatives who are employed by the train operators would be better employed if they worked under your umbrella?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I think that there is an opportunity under GBR. GBR is a really critical point for us to find an opportunity to do this better. I think that it could be done in a more effective and efficient way and more cheaply.

There is an estimation that floats around. People suggest that there is about £1 billion a year spent on security. The accuracy of that is yet to be finalised. For me, it does not make sense to have operators with their security guards. You have Network Rail with security. You have multiple people. At the commercial centres, you have the retailers with their security. You have so many people delivering security.

I feel that we should be more courageous and that there should be a dare to share of information and intelligence and a single guiding mind. I would feel more comfortable if that existed in a future state. We have had some early conversations with the Department for Transport around some of the opportunities. I recognise that, rightly, it is not the first priority under the GBR reform, but I do not think that it should be too far behind. My view is that retrofitting security is always going to be expensive.

Q7 **Chair:** There is an opportunity there.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: There is an opportunity.

Q8 **Chair:** I have two final questions. May I ask you to be brief? Who do you report to? Who scrutinises your own performance?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: We have a police authority. I am employed by the police authority. It is the governing body. If you think about police and crime commissioners in Home Office forces, predating them was a police authority. British Transport police still has a police authority. The appointment of members, the chair and the chief executive is by the Secretary of State.

Q9 **Chair:** The Secretary of State for Transport?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes. That is where our scrutiny comes from. We are different in the fact that we are not a Home Office force and come under the Department for Transport, which I think is good. It is a great opportunity.

The police authority works out our budget, in effect. It does a lot of the negotiations with the rail operators and owns the charging model. I have operational independence as the chief constable. The authority has a number of statutory responsibilities.

Q10 **Chair:** Does the power to allocate funding from your budget rest largely with you, or is it set in conjunction with others?



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Chief Constable D’Orsi: I receive the £347 million. We work very closely with the police authority to develop our medium-term financial plan, which allocates where the money will go, against our strategy and policing plan so that we can make the right choices.

Chair: You mentioned the word “strategy”. That is the section that I will hand over to Grahame Morris to cover. Thank you for the evidence that you have given so far. It is really helpful.

- Q11 **Grahame Morris:** Good morning, chief constable. Thanks very much for your opening statements. You have covered an awful lot of ground. Thanks for submitting the written evidence—the policing plan and so on. That is also very helpful.

You have covered the first question that I was going to ask, which was about accountability to the police authority board. What evidence do you have that the travelling public are satisfied with the priorities that you have set in consultation with the board?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: We do a lot of consultation to develop the strategy and the policing plan. We had an external survey with the public. Obviously, generating significant response to that is always difficult. People can feel a bit surveyed out. We also have the Rail Delivery Group, which represents the voice of the passenger. We pull together all this information to understand what matters to the passenger.

- Q12 **Grahame Morris:** You mentioned that it was a rare occurrence to have crime on the railway, compared with society more generally. I have been travelling on the railways for over 30 years and have been the victim of luggage theft. How do you determine whether the public are satisfied with your performance in addressing the crimes and priorities that you have set out?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: There are two bits of surveying the public. I am a commuter every day. There is asking the commuter or leisure commuter what their view is. There is also understanding from victims what their level of satisfaction with the investigation is. There are two bits of how we understand our satisfaction.

We know that, statistically, confidence in BTP and safety on the railway has been high. That has changed during Covid. The bit I am wrestling with a little is that when people talk about safety it can be a bit of a catch-all word. Is that your personal safety, your safety when travelling on a train or, during the pandemic, your safety from a Covid perspective? We have seen that reduce. It is absolutely my ambition and commitment, and that of the force, to see that improve.

We get very good feedback in relation to investigations, particularly our high-harm investigations. We have a very high satisfaction level with people who are victims of rape or serious sexual offending and some of the more violent crimes that, unfortunately, we see on occasions.



You mentioned theft of passenger property and your luggage. Not all trains have CCTV cameras on them. I would like to see a future state where we design that in, in the same way as we design burglar alarms into houses. It would be nice to have a minimum standard. One thing we have been pushing is for those on the train to wear body-worn cameras. We are seeing an increase in that at the moment, which has been fantastic from the industry. That is certainly helping us to create the hostile environment that I consider to be needed for people intent on criminality.

- Q13 **Grahame Morris:** I might say that the intercity train I was travelling on had extensive CCTV. It did not help, I am afraid. They did not apprehend the individual.

You have touched on the next question that I was going to ask. The BTP policing plan says that it is your intention to “Tackle those crimes and incidents that most impact on the confidence of those who work and travel” on the railways. You mentioned high-impact crime—assaults and so on. How do you determine those crimes and incidents? For example, would they include cable theft last Sunday on the east coast main line? Is that within your purview? Everyone was concerned about that because of the massive disruption on the network—at least, on the east coast main line.

Chief Constable D’Orsi: Cable theft matters a lot to us as a force because it has a direct impact on disruption. The price of copper is at a 45-year high at this moment in time. Particularly with the cost of living, we know that we will potentially see an increase in that sort of crime. It is in a particular location. I may ask Steff to talk about some of the work that we are doing on that. It is a confidence issue for passengers because it causes significant disruption, but there are some key points around metal theft that it would be helpful for us to share.

- Q14 **Grahame Morris:** My colleague Chris Loder is going to come back to that. I just gave it as an example.

I am very conscious of time, but can I ask you about the impact of the pandemic? You said that there was a 35% reduction, broadly, because there were fewer passengers travelling, less crime and so on. What impact has the pandemic had on British Transport police’s role and responsibilities? Are those changes likely to be temporary, or are some of them likely to be permanent?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: During the pandemic, we were heavily involved in working our way through understanding the legislation. One of the things I am really proud of the force for is that it had to navigate through three sets of legislation, with Wales, Scotland and England. Again, that makes us very different from other people.

During the pandemic, we made about 150,000 interventions with people around the rules, particularly around masks. We gave 6% of those people a direction to leave. There were some prosecutions in terms of fixed-



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penalty notices, so there was an awful lot. I was not there for most of it, but there was a lot of activity by the force, working in conjunction with industry.

You will probably remember that there was a four-stage process. We were different from the Home Office forces in that we were looking for the industry to work with us to engage, explain and encourage, before we moved on to enforcement.

As you would expect, we saw a reduction in acquisitive crime—the theft of passenger property. If there is a reduction in people, there is therefore a reduction in that work. I would say that our overarching demand was not significantly reduced.

With fewer people, the ability of officers and PCSOs to spot vulnerable people was much higher during the pandemic, so we definitely saw an increase in our work around vulnerability.

For us as a force, like everybody, one of the impacts was working in a different way. How did we step up the technology to enable our corporate services to work differently—to work from home? We have realised that one of the opportunities is that, as a national force, we do not need to have an HQ function that specifically draws everybody into London. We are now looking to recruit people on a much wider national basis, with a blend of homeworking as well. We certainly want to use that as part of our recruitment to make us more appealing. I would say that that is a strong legacy.

- Q15 **Grahame Morris:** Can I ask you about British Transport police as a national rather than a regional force? You mentioned the number of staff— 5,281, with 3,330 officers—and the fact that you have to cover 20,000 miles of track and work with many regional police forces. You mentioned the work that you do with the safeguarding boards in local authorities. Is that a disadvantage or an advantage? Is the additional workload and bureaucracy an onerous task? Do you have any comment to make on that as regards both regional police forces and local authorities?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: It is always complicated if you have more people to deal with. In a way, the Police Scotland model is a real positive. It is one national police force, working with a police force that delivers for one country, so there is an absolute positive for us. You can see the simplicity of that.

The challenge is that, if you have a young person who goes missing from Leeds and ends up in London, you potentially have to deal with a lot of people. I think that the force deals with it very well. We are represented on a number of national bodies—with the local authorities, on some of their national committees. Certainly, the work that we do is valued. I would always like to minimise the number of contacts that you have to have, but it is not an insurmountable issue to work around.



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We have a very strong relationship with the Home Office police forces and work in collaboration with them. Sometimes we will support them with resources and sometimes they will support us. Of course, BTP has a footprint at every big event that takes places across Great Britain. We can look at events such as COP26 recently or the G7. It does not matter where it is—BTP is part of that operation and part of the command team.

Q16 Grahame Morris: There is women's football at Old Trafford tonight.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes.

Q17 Grahame Morris: I want to ask about the strategic plan going forward from this year up to 2027. In the strategic plan you state that the transport police "need space to think disruptively to try new things and to be courageous in their approach." What does that mean?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: We need to be bold. We need to think about technology a little bit more. We do not want to be a police force where our impact and value are defined by the number of police officers that we employ.

What does that mean? If we look at disruption—a trespasser by the track—at the moment we will be deploying officers. They will have to walk along the track, or we might deploy one of our specialist dogs to go along the track. A future state for me is that we launch and fly a drone down. We beam it into a control room and Network Rail and ourselves make a decision about whether the railway can reopen. It feels like disruptive thinking. It feels like progress for the future.

We know at the moment, where we are testing some of this, a drone deployment probably reduces the cost of a disruption by £150,000.

I also think about how we use data in a different way. I would like to see a greater dare to share of data between industry and ourselves, and backwards. The example I probably give for this is that, if somebody was to tap on the underground with an Oyster card, and tap out six hours later, we know that is anomalous behaviour. We should use data to tell us that this is anomalous.

My view is that they are potentially lost or vulnerable. They are potentially a pickpocket or a predatory sex offender. Instead of hoping that we see this person, either through the rail TfL staff or ourselves, we should be using data in a more intuitive way. I would like to see us flexing our budget to support the development of technology to be a blend of physical security—the presence of police officers is always reassuring to the public—and digital security to create a hostile environment for criminals.

Q18 Grahame Morris: I am going to run out of time for my questions on strategy and strategic issues. Could you touch on your relationship with Network Rail and the changes that are in the pipeline to Great British Railways? Can you say something about your relationship with the train



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operating companies, the TOCs?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, I can. Thank you. I am sure, like everybody, the opportunities for GBR seem like a real positive for the future.

In terms of Network Rail, I speak to Andrew Haines very regularly. We do have people in my leadership team who are embedded within Network Rail and work with Network Rail. We also have individuals who work in the Department for Transport. We are very keen to have a presence in the different areas.

We also have conversations with the transition team for Great British Railway so that we can see opportunities for the future. We have been pushing for how we can test this concept of integrated security. We are working with all of the industry. We have five pilot sites where we are looking to test a more integrated security approach.

I regularly meet the managing directors and various different people from the rail industry. It is a very complex environment to come into without a background in rail, but I have been made to feel very welcome by the rail industry. My view is that everybody does see GBR as an opportunity to think about security through a different lens.

At a lower level, a number of our people will work directly with the operators. We have joint teams as well. We are embedded in some of the rail operational centres and work jointly together.

Q19 **Grahame Morris:** Thank you. I will just finish with this. I can see the advantages of ending fragmentation, more integrated working and the relationships that you are developing. The police inspectorate's recommendations on the way British Transport police work with the train operating companies suggested that British Transport police should find better ways to work with the rail industry strategically and improve information sharing.

You have already touched on that because you said that sharing data is key to improving performance. The report also said that there was a gap of mutual understanding between British Transport police's functions and the rail industry's priorities.

Was that prior to your appointment, and do you feel that that has now been adequately addressed?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, the report was prior to my appointment. I do think I came into an organisation that definitely needed to think more strategically about its relationship with rail and, rather than solving today's problem, think about what the future opportunities were going to be.

I am very supported by the police authority in order to set that direction of travel. I have a relationship with the industry, but so does the police authority. It is an area that I have definitely had a focus on. I think that



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was probably a fair reflection, but there is definitely an appetite to do more. GBR is definitely providing us with that opportunity.

Q20 **Chair:** Chief Constable, I do not know whether you want to bring Ms Sharp in on anything that has been touched on so far, or whether you will do so as you go along. You are most welcome.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Metal theft would be useful to talk to, but I do not know if you are going to ask a question on that.

Chair: Chris Loder may well move on to that section.

Q21 **Chris Loder:** Good morning, chief constable and Steff. We are very pleased that you are able to join us today. I have a couple of very brief questions to finish off on the budget.

You talked about your £347 million budget. You have told us so far that you get £109 million from Network Rail; £77 million from TfL; and 1% of your budget from the Home Office, which I think is £34 million. That equals £210 million. There is a gap between that and £347 million. Could you tell us where that remaining £137 million is?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Seventy-one per cent. of the budget comes from police service agreements and the train operating companies. Network Rail was £109 million. Twenty-two per cent. comes from TfL, which is the £77.3 million; 5% is from enhanced police service agreements, which is additionality from the Home Office; and the other 1% comes from other incomes and grants.

Q22 **Chris Loder:** So, 71% is from TOCs, basically.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, 71%.

Q23 **Chris Loder:** How does that drive your priorities in respect of crime?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: There is a unique balance to be struck. We are unique, as I said, in being funded by the rail operators. We do have joint priorities with them, so we know that disruption matters significantly to the operating companies. A large percentage of that is within the gift of the companies, but obviously from our perspective trespass is an issue, so we prioritise trespass. We obviously prioritise safeguarding from a suicide because we know that has a disruptive impact on the railways.

Of course, cable theft comes into that. It is our more middle division—the Pennines and south tend to be where our cable theft issues are at the moment.

Violence to their employees is something that we know is a priority for them, and it is very much a priority for us as well. Any employer would care about their people.

I do have to balance it. Of course, there are other crimes that affect passengers but do not necessarily affect the smooth running of the railway. That is where the violence against women and girls comes in.



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- Q24 **Chris Loder:** There is disruption, trespass, suicide prevention, cable theft and violence to employees. You would say those are up there in terms of your core priorities. What is the relationship between those priorities and the budget? Is there a connection?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: In terms of, do we spend X percentage on Y?

- Q25 **Chris Loder:** Yes. Is there a relationship, or do you have £347 million and decide to spend it?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Obviously, we have to allocate things. If we take it from the top, we do have a responsibility around countering the threat from terrorism. A percentage of the budget will go towards that. If we were to put all our specialist functions together, at the moment it is about £27 million-worth of the budget. You start to take chunks off.

Our model at the moment is that we cross over five divisions—three divisions, one being Scotland, the other being Wales and the middle of the country, and then London and the south coast. There are meetings at a local level to set the priorities. They are joint meetings, with shared outcomes and shared priorities.

- Q26 **Chris Loder:** I am going to stop you because we need to crack on. Could you tell me, briefly, where human trafficking and county lines feature in your priorities?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: That is entirely funded by the Home Office. We have £4.4 million—

- Q27 **Chris Loder:** Let me clarify that. Do you mean to say that, of your whole budget of £347 million, the 1% that the Home Office contributes, which is £34 million, is basically spent on combating county lines?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: County lines-specific funding is funded by the Home Office. Obviously, routine policing is always going to be a disrupter for county lines. Stopping vulnerable people and engaging with vulnerable people is part of our core business, whether that is people for sexual exploitation, modern day slavery or drugs. That is at the heart of what BTP delivers as part of its overall budget.

- Q28 **Chris Loder:** Capturing the priorities that you set out, county lines prevention and human trafficking do not feature in them. I am just wondering how they feature in the work that you do. Is it basically as a result of the other work that you do, other than the 1% for county lines?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Recently, there was an example where on one of the main rail lines staff had noticed that somebody was always travelling north on particular days with Scottish £20 notes. That was fed into the intelligence system, an operation was set up and several kilos of cannabis were recovered. That is the sort of business-as-usual work that takes place.



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The county lines work is part of a national piece of work which is led under the policing Minister. A number of forces—Merseyside, West Midlands, the Met and BTP—have been allocated additional funding specifically to look at disrupting county lines. It is about turning off the telephones that are supplying the drugs.

Q29 **Chris Loder:** How do you prioritise that across the country?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: Intelligence is how we prioritise that.

Q30 **Chris Loder:** I have ample intelligence to offer you from Dorset and Somerset, yet I cannot recall the last time that British Transport police came anywhere west of Basingstoke. I say that to you as a former employee of the railway for 20 years. I am also not sure, other than once, which was after an intervention by some colleagues, that we were able to get attention on Weymouth in Dorset.

How do you receive those representations in order to prioritise? If I was looking at it from my perspective, there is probably a bit of a disconnect in those areas that contribute to your force but do not get the service they might expect.

Chief Constable D’Orsi: We use what is called MoRiLE, which looks at our threat enhancer. We have to look at intelligence holistically and prioritise the greatest harm against the resourcing that is available. Last summer, when people were not travelling, we recognised that drugs were likely to be going towards seaside towns. We stepped up an operation last summer. That is what the intelligence was telling us that we needed to do, and we set that up.

Although some places may well be the receiver of drugs, turning it off from the point of departure is where we need to be. We work with the National Crime Agency very closely and the Met police to look at the intelligence profile, which is saying where the drugs are coming from so that we can turn that tap off.

Obviously, in some locations having a county line operation—for example, running out of Paddington—will stop drugs ending up in Wales. It is the art of—

Q31 **Chris Loder:** It should do, should it not, but the reality, as you probably well know, is that it does not always do it, particularly when you have big suburban interchanges like Clapham Junction and other places?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: Yes, and that is where we will focus. We do focus on the interchanges. That is what we have been looking at.

The other thing I would say is that more and more intelligence is what we are looking for. In my previous world I used to say, “communities defeat terrorism.” I do think that passengers can defeat a lot of this criminality.

Q32 **Chris Loder:** I will need a further conversation with you to share much more intelligence in the south-west. I would be very pleased to come and



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see you about that, but it is probably not for today.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Please, yes.

- Q33 **Chris Loder:** Could you help me specifically with the KPIs that the BTPA will measure you against in terms of performance relating to the crimes and the priorities that you have set out? Is there a measure that particularly addresses your county lines successes—and, indeed, human trafficking and some of the other priorities that you have set out?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes. With the county lines, though, there is a very strong accountability through into the Home Office because they are funding that. The policing Minister chairs a board in relation to that, and there are other boards that sit underneath it.

I will probably ask Steff to talk to our KPIs, but we have a huge matrix of KPIs that the police authority do hold us accountable to.

- Q34 **Chris Loder:** I am conscious that we are up against the clock. Rather than talk through them, would you be so kind as to send them to the Committee so that we might be able to look at them at a later date? That would be very kind.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, of course.

- Q35 **Ruth Cadbury:** Could I come in on that? We have some statistics on recorded crime, but do you keep statistics of successful prosecutions?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: We do.

Ruth Cadbury: It would be useful to be able to compare that with other police forces. I am sorry, Chris.

Chris Loder: That is quite all right, Ruth. I am always very happy to have an intervention from you.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: We could send those into the Committee.

Chair: That would be much appreciated.

- Q36 **Chris Loder:** I have not really heard much about the safeguarding on rail scheme. Could you tell us how that features in your work, please?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I think this is a great scheme which needs to be pushed further. I would start by saying that. I am going to ask Steff—

- Q37 **Chris Loder:** Tell us what it is.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: —to talk to that, if that is okay.

Steff Sharp: The national scheme, the safeguarding on rail scheme, aims to improve the industry's understanding and response to vulnerable people. It is really important to us. It is a DFT scheme that is delivered in partnership with us and with operators.



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We are engaging with all operators. Currently, one is fully accredited. It is an accreditation that we assess in BTP, and that is live for 12 months from the start of it. It is really around the senior leadership, commitment to vulnerability and how we communicate or how the operator communicates around safeguarding issues, the response to vulnerability, the staff recruitment roles and their responsibilities and how well they understand them, and the extent to which they train their own people on recognising the signs of vulnerability.

We have one operator accredited at the moment. It is not station-based. It is—

Q38 **Chris Loder:** Can you tell us which operator that is?

Steff Sharp: It is GWR.

Q39 **Chris Loder:** How much of your finances go to this scheme as it stands at the moment?

Steff Sharp: I think that would be tricky to work out. We have the designing out crime unit, which manages this scheme for us among other things.

Q40 **Chris Loder:** Thank you. In terms of the broader antisocial behaviour, “antisocial behaviour” is quite an encompassing term. Could you say a little bit about the steps you are taking on that specifically? I am very conscious of the fact that the police inspectorate report said that the BTP could do more on that front. Could you bear that in mind when you answer the question?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: Antisocial behaviour is about 18% of all the incidents that are reported to us. Like everybody, we share the ambition to have tranquil stations. We have seen a rise in antisocial behaviour as people have come out of the pandemic—and some areas more significantly than others perhaps if you look at it on a percentage basis. A lot of that is around problem solving at a local level. If we look at some of the incidents we have had in Wales, we have seen some really strong partnership working with the local force, with the local authorities and with the rail operators.

Some of this is because of things that have ceased elsewhere in the community, and people have gravitated towards the train station. We have localised antisocial behaviour. I am very confident that a lot of joint problem solving takes place. It does require other agencies to work with us in relation to that.

Of course, we do have some which is football related. BTP obviously move thousands of people around the country during the football season. Unfortunately, we have not seen a step up in improvement of behaviour by travelling football fans. Most of them are largely very good when they are travelling, but we are certainly working with the Rail Delivery Group



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at the moment to think about how we can approach the new season differently.

Again, one of the things that we are looking for is how we can have a scheme which encourages fans to buy a ticket in advance so that we use the data to understand which fans are on which trains. At the moment they will not, because if the match time changes they cannot change their ticket.

Q41 Chris Loder: Thank you. Did you say that you think antisocial behaviour has gone up since lockdown?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes. We have had an increase in Wales. That is probably one of our areas where we have seen a significant increase.

Steff Sharp: And in Scotland.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: And Scotland, where we have seen an increase in antisocial behaviour. We do have our top 10 locations. We know our railway stations which are the top 10, which would not come as a surprise to you.

Q42 Chris Loder: Are there any in England that you care to share?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I can tell you a few of them: Leeds; Birmingham; London Bridge; Glasgow Central; Manchester; Waterloo; and East Croydon. Those are some of them.

Q43 Chris Loder: Waterloo?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, but arguably that is where there are large volumes of people travelling through at those locations. Also, those locations tend to have shops, restaurants, cafes and bars. They are more of a commercial centre as well as being—

Q44 Chris Loder: They are also, of course, the stations with the largest footfall.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes.

Q45 Chris Loder: Do you consider the number of crimes you can see or can connect with the footfall and look at the average?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, we do look at that. That all feeds into telling us where we are best placed to put our officers to minimise antisocial behaviour.

Q46 Chris Loder: I am about to wrap up, but I am conscious that we were going to have a very brief word about cable theft and metal theft. I have not forgotten that.

Steff, I think you were going to share some insights. Is that correct

Steff Sharp: Yes. What would you like to know?



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Q47 **Chris Loder:** My understanding is that cable theft particularly has decreased in recent years. It is much less of an issue than it was, say, five or 10 years ago. Is that accurate? If not, could you tell us to what extent it causes considerable difficulty?

Steff Sharp: I would say that probably was accurate until the past few months. Metal theft was probably at its worst in 2012. The BTP, with Government funding, created a taskforce to get together and problem-solve it. In 2013, the Scrap Metal Dealers Act came in and effectively made it illegal to take cash for scrap. Over the years, a combination of that, legislation and the falling price of metal saw it drop.

Q48 **Chris Loder:** Metal prices have now gone up.

Steff Sharp: They have. Copper is now at a 45-year high, which is directly affecting cable theft. It reduced by 23.6% during Covid, but the gap narrowed to a 9% reduction last year compared to pre-Covid levels. This year already we have seen the levels of cable theft increase to pre-Covid levels. We are starting to see it pick up as the price of metal and copper is the highest it has been.

We have similar issues with catalytic converters and some of the rare metals in those. If it is made of metal, it is worth something at the moment. It is something we have an eye on because of the impact that it has, especially with live cable and the impact of that on disruption.

Q49 **Chris Loder:** Chair, I will hand back to you. Finally, I would like to say to the Chief Constable that I should be delighted to meet you and talk about county lines.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I will make that offer to anyone else. If you would like to come out on one of the operations with us, you would be more than welcome.

Q50 **Chair:** I will jump in before handing over to Ben, and then to Ruth.

Are you satisfied with the sentencing levels for metal theft? Do you feel that enough of the cases that you have investigated are being prosecuted and leading to satisfactory sentences?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I would probably like to write to you in further detail on this. One of the things I am not sure is covered in the legislation is where it disrupts the national infrastructure, which is what we are talking about with rail. I am not sure whether the sentencing is reflective of that. The answer is that I do not know. I would like to take that away and have a look at it.

Q51 **Chair:** I would really appreciate that. We are always after thoughtful suggestions.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: There are definitely some loopholes in the legislation. I can write to you on that point and let you know what that is.



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To give you the context, we in BTP are responsible for a third of the disruptions that happen nationally for organised crime groups around this particular issue. We are working very hard. One of my assistant chief constables is the national lead for metal theft across policing. I do think we could definitely share our thoughts around loopholes and perhaps the sentencing associated with this.

Chair: That would be great. Thank you so much for that.

Q52 **Mr Bradshaw:** Is it possible for you to say what excessive alcohol consumption contributes to antisocial behaviour on the railway?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I do not have the specific figure. It is large. It is the significant factor. We will see our antisocial behaviour towards the end of the evening. That is definitely as people are coming back to trains to go home. It is a significant amount.

At the moment we are looking around football. We are working with Home Office forces and the national lead for football to understand whether it is still predominantly alcohol or whether we are seeing the drugs that are related to it. You will have seen some of the discussions around that. Alcohol is the largest percentage in terms of its impact.

Q53 **Mr Bradshaw:** I believe that alcohol has been banned on the tube in London for some years. Would you welcome that—or, at least, alcohol-free carriages on the train—so that people who find the presence of boorish groups of drunk people intimidating have somewhere peaceful, quiet and safe to sit?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I personally prefer the behaviour to be appropriate. I would sooner police the behaviour and work with the companies to make acceptable behaviour and a consequence—

Q54 **Mr Bradshaw:** It is difficult though, is it not, on a busy train where groups of people are getting drunk?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: It is. I would like to see more reporting from the public and from the operators around antisocial behaviour. I think sometimes we accept things that are simply unacceptable. We have our 61016 texting number, which I hope—

Chair: “See it, Say it, Sort it”.

Mr Bradshaw: We have all heard that one before.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I hope everybody has heard it.

Chair: It is very good because it sticks in the mind.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I suppose my feeling on it is to encourage people to report. We cannot be everywhere all of the time. That is just simply not possible. But if people commit offences, the reality is that it does not stop us bringing prosecutions afterwards. As we heard, some carriages have CCTV. Some of the behaviour towards some of the train



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staff—I was on one of the Avanti trains and there was a guy who works out of Birmingham, who was Asian, and he said that racial abuse is just part of his job. I said that that was just completely unacceptable. It does not have to be. Wearing a body-worn camera and capturing that evidence, we will bring people to justice for these offences.

People ask me the same question about whether we should have female-only carriages. My view is no, we should have appropriate behaviour and consequences for bad behaviour.

Q55 Mr Bradshaw: You have not made any representations to the train operating companies about the idea of alcohol-free carriages.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: No. What I would like is to have better data sharing so that we can understand, particularly on football. I would like us to have a relationship with the fans, the Premier League and the operators which enables people to be able to flex their tickets. If there is a change in kick-off time, they could just flex their ticket. At the moment they do not, so we just have walk-ups and it is impossible then to get the intelligence about which trains people are on.

Q56 Ruth Cadbury: Thank you; it is good to meet you both.

Reports of sexual harassment on the rail network in the last calendar year were much higher than pre-pandemic levels. Why do you think that is? If it is more than just higher rates of reporting, what are you doing to combat it?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: This was always a tricky one. When I started as the chief constable I read a lot of data that told us of significant under-reporting of sexual offences. There are lots of different suggestions, but roughly it is 75% to 80% under-reporting of sexual offending. I suspect, probably, most women in this room over their life could reflect on an incident that has happened on a train that they have never reported, and equally a bystander did not report either.

I did not want to be a chief constable that shied away from having an increase in recorded crime because, doing that, we maintain the status quo, which I did not want to have. I do genuinely see a significant increase in people reporting. We have pushed a lot on our media campaigns to encourage people to report. It is not just a problem for women to solve, who are predominantly the victims. This is asking bystanders to report behaviour that they know is unacceptable.

A lot of people in their lives have got out of a train carriage and moved to a different one because they were a bit uncomfortable. We are saying that we would like them to report that.

At the moment I have nothing to say that we have suddenly got lots more predatory sex offenders on the railway. What we have seen is a 45% increase in sexual offences in comparison to the previous year. At



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the moment, I feel I can be confident that that is just confidence in reporting. I would like it to be higher.

Q57 Ruth Cadbury: In 2021 you started recording incidents of unwanted sexual behaviour. I assume that is not harassment. What have you learnt from this so far?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: There are a couple of bits of learning. I think people were quite uncomfortable when we started to say that we wanted to record this. Some of the posters went up about pressing, touching and staring. We know that people do that. We have people who are predatory and get on board a train or the underground specifically to do this sort of behaviour.

We have learnt a number of things. We will now take reports from people without them having to disclose who they are. We know that people often question themselves. We are saying, "We just want to know. Let us be the judge. Let us look at it." You can report anonymously to us now. We have our 61016 contact. We launched an app on Monday. That is another way for people to report it. For me, there is a lot of confidence that needs to be grown.

What I have learnt is that we still generally have people who under-report, particularly bystanders and people who see it. The power of making a safer place on the railway and a hostile environment for predatory sex offenders is them believing anybody is going to report them for that behaviour.

Q58 Ruth Cadbury: Ms Sharp, do you want to add anything?

Steff Sharp: Just to cover the app and the campaign that we have at the moment—the Speak Up, Interrupt campaign to change people's behaviour. If people see something that does not sit right with them, they are not sure what to do. They do not always feel it is appropriate to report it. Even if you just walk over to someone, offer them your seat and say, "Don't mind me," or ask a question and interrupt that behaviour. Anything we can do to get passengers to come together as a travelling community would be really important.

The incidence of unwanted sexual behaviour increased by 177% this last performance year, which we believe is due to the real push on reporting and asking people to trust us with that.

Q59 Ruth Cadbury: You launched a public information campaign in October on sexual harassment on the transport network in London. Is that what you have just been talking about, or is that a different one?

Steff Sharp: The Speak Up, Interrupt campaign is this week.

Q60 Ruth Cadbury: Oh, Speak Up, Interrupt is this week. Maybe you announced it in London and launched it this week. How do you measure the success of campaigns like this? It is rolling out nationally now, is it?



Steff Sharp: Yes. The campaign is designed to focus on the lower level of sexual offences—we do not like to refer to it as that—and unwanted sexual behaviour. It is evidence of how we have been pushing that to encourage the reporting at the lower end of that spectrum.

Sexual offences—crime sexual offences—reduced by 7.4% last year, so we are seeing an increase in unwanted sexual behaviour on the incident side. We monitor it through our performance meetings to understand what impact it has been having on crime and incidents, and if there are any variations in that across the UK as well. We get feedback from partners on those campaigns.

Chief Constable D’Orsi: I just wanted to correct one point. The Rail Delivery Group think that it is 96% under-reporting, so that gives the scale of it.

Interestingly, one of the things that we found is that our social media channels discuss this in a different way. We were one of the first forces to go on to TikTok. I know you sometimes wonder whether there is a benefit or disbenefit of that, but interestingly we have had some influencers who have been victims of sexual offending on the railway and who have then amplified our message. We had one which I think reached approximately 4 million people just because of their interaction. They had had a positive experience with BTP as a victim.

I do genuinely believe that that is how we will change people’s view. This is about people’s confidence in reporting, but it goes right the way through from engaging with policing to the judicial system. Of course, with some of the sexual offences stuff at the moment we are seeing some delays in the post-pandemic environment just in terms of the court system—with magistrates, less so, but obviously a little bit more with the Crown court.

Q61 **Ruth Cadbury:** I have one last thing on public messaging. It is good that victims are speaking up. The majority of victims are women, but not exclusively. Is the public messaging also engaging with men to encourage them to report incidents they witness, whether it is on other men or on women?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: I would say yes. We cannot lump all of this with the victim and say that the victim needs to do X, Y or Z. The bystander in the majority of cases is as much men as it is women. They are as intolerant of this behaviour as are women. I think the strength of any campaign is around the bystander as much as it is to be supportive to a victim.

I would like to see more messaging on trains. We compete for the advertising space on trains, whereas I think there needs to be a clear reminder to people. It is not just the announcement of 61016. If you are sitting in a carriage and you are feeling isolated, for whatever reason,



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and you want some support, does it feel that you can look around and know exactly what you need to do? I do think that that could be stronger.

Q62 **Ruth Cadbury:** Is the messaging just on trains or is it around stations as well?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: We compete for advertisement space at stations. At the end of the day, we do not get it free.

Q63 **Ruth Cadbury:** The incidents will happen at both.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: That is right, yes. I would like to see more at the stations as well as on the trains, particularly if you are sitting in a commercial area in some of these stations. As a travelling passenger, I do not think the messaging is as strong as it could be. I would like to see more advertisements, but that is not within my gift.

Q64 **Ruth Cadbury:** You say that you compete. Are you competing with the other public service operators on space, or with the rail companies for their commercial space?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: It is their commercial advertisements. They sell the space for advertisements.

Q65 **Ruth Cadbury:** But they are also advertising themselves for their services.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, of course.

Q66 **Ruth Cadbury:** Are you trying to get a bit more action on that advertising space?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes. We may well touch on it, but also to recruit as well. I would like to travel on the underground and see that I could have a career as a police officer in BTP, but I do not have that at the moment.

Ruth Cadbury: We are over time, so back to you Chair.

Q67 **Chair:** Very briefly, what is your advice to bystanders who may be on trains and witnessing antisocial, abusive, loutish behaviour or, indeed, someone being picked on? Is the advice to intervene? I must admit that I always do, but is that the wrong thing to do? Would that escalate the situation?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: It depends who you are and how confident you feel, or anything about yourself as an individual. I always say to people that it is their choice to intervene or not. Some people feel that they can and some people feel that they cannot.

If you feel that you cannot, or either way, I would want people to contact us, and 61016 is a great way to contact us. Obviously, if it is an emergency, I would expect people to have the confidence, please, to ring 999. There is obviously the 101 system. For us, 61016 is a very quick way of getting directly in touch with British Transport police.



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We do see people intervene. I give chief constable commendations to the public who have intervened and stopped situations escalating. They have helped us bring people to justice, which is important.

Steff Sharp: We want people to do something. That is the important point. Do not do nothing in that situation, whether it is wandering over and having a conversation, whether it is reporting it to us or whether it is intervening. It has to be the judgment of the individual, but just please do something.

Q68 **Chair:** If someone goes through via 61016 and you do not have any officers nearby—this is Chris's point in his area—can they then pass that on to the local police force, or do those police force members not have any jurisdiction to intervene?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: No, of course, they do, in the same way that sometimes Home Office forces will ask us to pick up some stuff if we are the nearest person to something. It will absolutely depend on the type of call that it is, but policing is connected nationally. We can make sure, depending on what the incident is, that there is an appropriate response to it.

Chair: Thank you. That is very reassuring.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I have always felt, with communities and the public, that where we ask people to do something and then they do something we need to make sure that we share a "thank you" for doing that, and, "This is what the outcome is." Steff's point is absolutely right. We just want people to do something.

Chair: Gavin Newlands will take us through the area around vulnerable people.

Q69 **Gavin Newlands:** Thank you, Chair. I will add a very brief supplementary to the crime section before I start. Maybe you have already worked with White Ribbon UK in terms of male bystanders. That is a group that I do a lot of work with.

In terms of violence, usually against girls, the issue I want to talk about is the perpetrators being girls, which is unusual. In the west of Scotland we have had an issue with young girls attacking young girls. It has been reported in the press in Scotland and it was part of a report to the Scottish Railway Policing Committee. It is a relatively new set-up. Is that still an ongoing issue? I should declare an interest as I have a 12-year-old and a 15-year-old daughter, and we live beside a train station.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: That was picked up on quite quickly. Again, we worked with Police Scotland on that. I am not aware that it is still an issue. I was reassured that we had put a lot of resources in to deal with that. I can certainly write back to the Committee and let you know the outcome.

Q70 **Gavin Newlands:** Thank you for that. In terms of vulnerable people and



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suicides, you said earlier that there were 247 suicides and 1,800 attempted suicides. Could you tell us a bit more about what you are doing to try and reduce suicides on the railway?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Last year, sadly, we had 275 suicides and 91 attempted suicides. There were 2,419 life-saving interventions. Everyone is debriefed. It sounds very formulaic, but we look at whether or not there is any learning. Of course, the coronial process will also look, particularly around suicides, at what the learning is on the prevention of future deaths. Every one of those will have a review and we will make recommendations around them. They are done jointly with the industry.

In terms of life-saving interventions, we are looking at opportunities. We work collaboratively with Network Rail. We certainly like to focus on looking at precursor behaviour to suicide. Some of this is quite challenging. If you take the London underground, somebody, sadly, will arrive at the underground and probably die by suicide within about five minutes of arriving. At a rail station people will be around for about 12 minutes.

We have the opportunity to look at precursor behaviour and think about how we can get an early intervention, whether that be police officers, PCSOs or rail staff. We are looking at some technology to look at precursor behaviour. I am a firm believer that you can use artificial intelligence to look for anomalous behaviour. Arguably, the benefit of a rail station is that people usually pretty much behave in the same way. For those of us who commute, you can see the same people doing the same thing every morning.

We are looking at some data from mobile phones. It is not about individuals. It is about the mobile phone, and is the mobile phone behaving in a way that is unusual, and is that potentially precursor behaviour? We will have a pilot in place very soon which will then have targeted interventions with people who are behaving differently to how we would expect everyone to behave at a station.

Certainly, the recommendations from the debriefs are really important. We also have a team that looks at frequent presenters at rail stations. I think there are social workers or mental health practitioners who work within our specialist team. They have a caseload of people that we engage with to look at how we can support them and change the future for them and work differently and in a protective way. We have had some really good results from that in terms of a reduction in people presenting at train stations in a state of crisis.

Q71 **Gavin Newlands:** I do not think anybody expects you to be able to eradicate this. If somebody is intent on doing it, it is going to be very difficult in most situations to stop them. You certainly cannot have an officer on every platform.

How common is it for somebody in a CCTV control room to spot some of



that precursor behaviour but be unable to do anything about it because there are no officers on location, or they cannot reach anybody on the station staff? How common is that?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: I am not aware of how common it is. We can have a look at that. I am sure we would have the data somewhere. One of the interesting points is that a third of the people who present in crisis have previously presented. Certainly, what we do see is that officers, PCSOs and rail staff will be aware of some of those people because they tend to present at the same place.

I am not aware of how effective CCTV operators are per se. Coming back to the question I had earlier about the future, it is really around how we can use technology almost to identify that precursor behaviour. As you say, it is then about who responds to that which is the challenge.

This is a large part of BTP’s work. I think it is what makes it quite special as a police force. It cares very much about these people. I have hundreds of examples of where interventions by officers and PCSOs have changed somebody’s life.

Q72 **Gavin Newlands:** The inspectorate suggested that you identify hotspots and focus your preventive work there. What progress have you made on that?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: We do have hotspots. Obviously, I am not going to share where they are. Again, this is about a multi-agency problem-solving approach. You have the physical infrastructure investment that might need to go around it, with things that we know are good, preventive measures. Then, also, there are the frequency of patrols at those locations, which is another factor, and some of the training material that we do with the industry.

During Covid, we ran an interactive exercise—a Hydra exercise—that looked at some of these issues. We have not been able to run them through Covid, but that is just restarting. That has industry representatives, and we work on that together.

Q73 **Gavin Newlands:** Before I move on to trespass incidents, when we talk about suicide we hear a lot, rightly, about the impact on drivers. I was reading the other day about a driver who during a 23-year career had had eight suicides happen, which was horrendous. Obviously, your officers will deal with some horrendous and traumatic scenes. What support do you offer?

Chief Constable D’Orsi: Thank you for recognising that. Before I came into BTP, I as a Home Office officer probably had not appreciated the amount of trauma that BTP officers can be exposed to. Of course, dying by suicide on the railway is a very violent way of taking one’s own life. We have a higher percentage of men in that area. The wellbeing of our officers is really important to me and to the force as a whole. We have a lot of occupational health services.



We are challenged at the moment. It is a very competitive environment to secure occupational health nurses. We are a public sector body trying to compete with private sector salaries. That is really challenging for us at the moment. We have to do a lot of different thinking about how we make sure that we do have the people to deliver the service that we want to be delivered to our officers.

We are looking at how we identify people that have been exposed to repeat trauma. It is the same as your example of the rail driver. You could have officers that have dealt with at least that, if not more, over the course of their career. Junior officers come in and do their training. On their first day out on patrol they could be dealing with a suicide.

We are looking at the potential of how we can fast-track people into the system, in terms of getting counselling. Certainly, we are stepping up the investment that we are making from our overall budget. We need to invest more money.

I do think that BTP has a very good offer to its people, but it can always be better. As much as around fatalities and fatality management, we have also seen an increase in assaults on officers.

Q74 **Gavin Newlands:** There was a decrease in trespass in 2021. Has that continued into the past year? Obviously, the pandemic affected the number of passengers on the railway, but did it affect the pattern of trespass? Obviously, there were children not at school and at home during the day. Was there a difference?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: To give you the context, trespass is actually 64% of all of our disruption incidents. It is the significant driver for disruption.

We are just about to launch another campaign with Network Rail around trespass. We are supported by the family of Harrison Ballantyne, an 11-year-old young boy who died trespassing in a freight depot in the midlands. His parents are very keen to work with us and Network Rail to spread the risk of trespassing.

We have also brought in some virtual reality simulators, which are being rolled out at community events and into schools. I participated in it myself. It is very hard-hitting and very real. It does expose the risks of trespass.

Unfortunately, people will trespass for a multitude of reasons such as a short cut or, equally potentially, to get the latest footage to put on a social media feed somewhere, which is the difficulty. It is very seasonal as well. Warm weather and people not being in school are the drivers for the peaks and troughs that we see.

I think it is probably difficult to say what we expect to be the base level. That is quite difficult because it depends on a lot of things that are taking place.



Q75 Gavin Newlands: Is the new project that is about to be rolled out replacing the You Vs. Train campaign? I met Chief Inspector David Lacey at my local train station and along with a couple of colleagues we spoke about that and many other things that you guys have to deal with. We spoke about You Vs. Train. A local football team put out so much stuff on their social media about how effective You Vs. Train has been with the kids. They have hundreds of kids that they deal with, and obviously it has been very effective.

How do you measure the efficacy of these programmes? I understand that it is difficult.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, it is really difficult. Any life saved as a result of that is a positive. It is really good to hear the positive feedback from You Vs. Train. All these campaigns are complementary. We could say the benefit is a reduction in trespass, but that in itself is not necessarily the only determining factor. Sadly, some of the fatalities are as a result of trespass. Do you think there is a way, Steff?

Steff Sharp: It is really difficult. It has been even more difficult, I would say, probably over the past two or three years because of the significant fluctuation in demand and the way our crime profile has changed over the pandemic.

We measure the impact of trespass. Last year, we had a reduction of 11% in the minutes lost due to trespass, but it is just seeking feedback from wherever possible, keeping an eye on it and monitoring performance and demand, and adapting to that and feeding in any intelligence. Metal theft is a big part of the disruption as well.

We have dedicated disruption teams. They do a lot of outreach work and link with the industry at the regional operating centres.

I think we layer it as best we can, and we monitor to see if there is any impact. No, we do not have a neat way of understanding the impact of a specific campaign, as you would expect.

Gavin Newlands: Thank you. For the record, I should point out that Renfrewshire football club will be annoyed because I did not mention them in that respect. Thank you, Chair.

Chair: It is now in *Hansard*.

Our final section is on recruitment. I will hand over to Ben Bradshaw.

Q76 Mr Bradshaw: Briefly on suicides, you, Lucy, said that 5% of overall suicides in the UK took place on the railways. Is that a stable figure? Is it rising or falling? Has it changed in recent years?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: In the 15 months I have been there it has always been stable. I could let you know if that is stable. Certainly when you look back at historical data—and I hate to talk about an average on such a difficult topic—it is usually averaging one a day.



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Q77 Mr Bradshaw: Are there any targets to reduce it as a proportion of overall suicides?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: I would love it to be zero for rail. That is obviously what we would all aspire to. That is what all my colleagues would aspire to do. We work very closely with Network Rail. They are a really fantastic stakeholder in this space. We have our budget, but this is an area where people are always, if there is more money that can be spent to do this, willing to try to find it.

Q78 Mr Bradshaw: On diversity, the figures you gave earlier were 20% for women and 10% for BAME staff. How does that compare with the overall police service? Is it about the same, better or worse?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: That was the figure for officers specifically, but the 10.7% ethnic minority for officers is higher than most Home Office forces. The 21.8% for women is pretty much at the bottom. It is one of the lowest. Some forces are in the 30% to 35% category for women.

We are definitely making progress. We have had a small increase, but we are pushing very hard on this. We changed a lot of our policies recently, with flexible working, part-time working and looking at how we can offer somebody to come in for training but they can do it part time.

Interestingly, I have a 19% vacancy factor around detectives at the moment, which is a challenge. That is a national trend in vacancy gap. We have just run a direct entry detective recruitment programme and 51% of the applicants were women. That has been really interesting. I think round about 30% of the applicants were from an ethnic minority group. That really bucks the trend of normal recruitment and of what we see.

I suppose you have to take from that that there are probably some things about the role. Joining policing in a normal route is on the frontline. Potentially, that might not be the type of work that you want to deal with. Certainly, the applicants for the direct entry detective are reflective of the demography of society.

Q79 Mr Bradshaw: Are there any particular challenges you face that normal Home Office police services do not face in attracting women? You mentioned flexibility of working hours. Are there any others?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: My experience of 15 months of the rail environment is that it is not particularly rich with—

Q80 Mr Bradshaw: Macho?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes. It is not rich with women. It does not have a high diversity of women within rail. If you are attracted to the railway, or if you are trying to recruit from the railway, we are not tapping into a pool that has a high representation of women.



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Coming back to my point about a future state, what would be nice to see is that you could join the railway or work in security. We are working with the SIA, which is one of the national institutes around security. Could we have a pathway that takes you from security guard in rail right the way through to being a police officer or a detective? For me, that would be an ambition.

My broader challenge with recruitment at the moment is that we are not part of the Home Office 20,000 uplift for policing. If you click, "I want to be a police officer," and you go online, BTP is not an option because it is a national recruitment campaign for Home Office forces. I am competing against that.

You will have seen that the Met offered a £5,000 onboarding, so I am competing against that. At this moment in time we are definitely looking at our pay structures to make sure that they are competitive. Unfortunately, you do not get free travel as a police officer in British Transport police. Some of the Home Office forces do offer that, but you do not get concessionary travel as a BTP officer. That is something we are working through with the police authority and we have raised it with the Department for Transport.

I would like a levelling up. This is their jurisdiction. They know what they are doing when they are on the railway, on and off duty.

Q81 Mr Bradshaw: The transport police do not get free travel but the regular police do.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: In some parts. In the Metropolitan police it is concessionary travel, so they pay an amount per month and then they get up to 70 miles. Some of the other forces have negotiated with some of the rail operators. Certainly, new recruits coming into BTP do not get that, no.

Q82 Mr Bradshaw: You happen to be the lead as well for the national police race action plan. How are things going in trying to reduce the impact of police activity falling disproportionately on BAME people?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Thank you. I am not the overarching lead. I am the lead for the police use of powers. It is the powers which are felt most heavily by, particularly, the black community, which is what the plan is focused on. There are a number of areas that I am specifically looking at in relation to that.

I am also the national lead for taser. At the moment there is disproportionality in terms of taser use. You are significantly more likely to have taser use—that is not a firing but a range of things—as a black male.

We have commissioned an independent piece of work. I have an independent panel chaired by Junior Smart. He is chairing that panel with



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some eminent academics. We have commissioned a lot of work to try to understand what leads to the disproportionality.

The other areas I am looking at are the use of force and section 163 of the Road Traffic Act, which is an officer's power to stop a vehicle. That is felt to be very disproportionate by the black community. Getting data on that is very difficult. Equally, comparing it to anything is difficult. A lot of the Department for Transport's data is not broken down by ethnicity, so we do need to understand that in greater depth.

In terms of how it is progressing, I see it as exceptionally positive that there is a plan. There is great scrutiny and accountability around the plan. I am optimistic that we will understand, certainly, the impact of the powers. If we need to change any of the approach or indeed the legislation, then we will make those recommendations. Thank you for asking.

Q83 Chair: Briefly, on the lack of concessionary travel for British Transport police officers, surely you would want the officers on the trains, and to encourage them to be, because while they are not on duty they are still obviously skilled and able to assist. It seems short-sighted not to grant that.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: It is. We will work hard to work that through. I suppose if I look at it from an industry perspective, there is potentially a revenue loss because if those officers are travelling they are not going to be paying for it. But there is a benefit in having officers that understand the byelaws and the operating environment on the trains.

We know from a piece of work which the Rail Delivery Group did—and I can write to you on this matter—that in about 70% of your decision making, travel comes into consideration as to which police force you would pick. Of course, at the moment you are not getting that in BTP. If you are able to get that in a Home Office force, then arguably there is some levelling up that needs to be done in the actual offer that is made to our officers.

I have a 10% vacancy factor at the moment. I think that would really help to address that point.

Q84 Chair: Now that all the receipts from rail go the Government and the Government then pay operators to run the rail, surely it would be much easier to change it so that the concessionary fares could be given to your officers.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes. Would it be helpful if I wrote to you on this?

Q85 Chair: It would be because, if Members agree, it is something that we would be keen to look at.

I was going to ask you another point. You said that the British Transport



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police is not part of the 20,000 new recruits into the police operations across the country.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes.

Q86 **Chair:** Therefore, you are then not part of the recruitment website side of things as well.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes.

Q87 **Chair:** Were you previously? If one were to go back a few years, before the 20,000, and say, "I want to become a police officer," would it have listed British Transport police as an option, or have you always been left off?

Chief Constable D'Orsi: They have only just brought in the single portal.

Q88 **Chair:** I see. Everyone did it locally before.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Yes, it was done on a more localised basis. We obviously push our campaigns, and we are fighting for the space on the internet to say, "Come and work for us." What I am proud of with BTP is that the people who work for BTP are probably the greatest advocates of "Come and work for BTP", but that is not going to deal with the amount of people that we need to recruit.

Steff Sharp: We just need people to know who we are. At the moment, if you google that you want to join the police you are almost signposted out of that. It is not coming up as an option. We are really a competitor with all the other forces that have this national signposting mechanism and these huge campaigns. Just getting the message out there on who we are, what we do and why we are special is really important to us.

Chair: The national careers portal should list all career options, which should include your force as much as it would Sussex police, for example. That is noted as well. The last word to Chris.

Q89 **Chris Loder:** I have two brief things. I suspect your recruitment issue is because in the main you are competing with considerable urban forces. If you cared to consider moving some of your bases further out, such as Dorset or elsewhere—

Chair: Another plug for Dorset.

Chris Loder: —I think you will find recruitment to be much easier.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: You will be pleased to know that I was in Dorset on Saturday.

Chair: Other counties are also available.

Q90 **Chris Loder:** Finally, my understanding is that the Metropolitan police offer their officers, on presentation of their warrant card, a 70-mile free travel radius around London. I am not sure of the agreement between



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the Metropolitan police and the Rail Delivery Group to achieve that, but I cannot think that that would be insurmountable. I think you will find a great deal of political support in this place to enable that to happen. I just wanted to share that with you in case you were not aware of it.

Chief Constable D'Orsi: Thank you. I was a beneficiary of that scheme in my old role, obviously. We will definitely work it through. I think it would be helpful for me to share the current situation with you. Any support you could give would be great.

Chair: Chief constable and Ms Sharp, hopefully you feel that you are among friends in wanting to push at the same point. We would really encourage you to write—at our suggestion so it makes it easier for you to do so—with some of your ideas and where you would like to see change. We will then discuss as Members how we can help push those for you as well.

I finish by thanking you both very much. Our best wishes to all the officers and staff in the force. You all do an amazing job in difficult times. We are very grateful to you both, and to them as well. Thank you.