

Home Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: [Policing for the future](#), HC 515

Tuesday 5 June 2018

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[Watch the meeting](#)

Members present: Yvette Cooper (Chair); Rehman Chishti; Stephen Doughty; Kirstene Hair; Tim Loughton; Douglas Ross; Naz Shah; John Woodcock.

Questions 444–527

Witnesses

I: Cressida Dick CBE, QPM, Commissioner, Metropolitan Police; Lynne Owens CBE, QPM, Director General, National Crime Agency; and Chief Constable Sara Thornton CBE, QPM, Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council.

Written evidence from witnesses:

- [Metropolitan Police Service](#)
- [National Crime Agency](#)
- [National Police Chiefs' Council](#)

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Cressida Dick, Lynne Owens and Chief Constable Sara Thornton.

Q444 **Chair:** Can I welcome everybody to the Home Affairs Select Committee session on the future of policing? Can I particularly welcome our witnesses here this morning? It is right on the centenary of the first women's vote to be able to welcome the three of you as the country's most senior police officers to give evidence before us. Can I ask you to just each introduce yourselves, please?

Cressida Dick: My name is Cressida Dick and I am the Commissioner of the Metropolis.

Lynne Owens: My name is Lynne Owens. I am the Director General from the National Crime Agency.

Chief Constable Thornton: My name is Sara Thornton. I chair the National Police Chiefs' Council.

Q445 **Chair:** We have been hearing in our inquiry about the challenges facing police in the future, the changing patterns of crime, ranging from issues around online fraud to mental health to terrorism, and looking at how and whether the police are equipped to respond. Could you each start by telling us an area where you feel confident that the police are equipped to be able to respond to one of those new and changing patterns, and an area where you think we are not yet either resourced or equipped or with the strategies in place to deal with some new, changing pattern of crime? An area you feel most confident about, an area that you feel most worried about. Lynne Owens, do you want to start?

Lynne Owens: Thank you. It is the National Crime Agency's responsibility to lead the fight to cut serious and organised crime, so you would expect my examples to come from that area. We publish annually the "National Strategic Assessment" and that document describes the nature of serious and organised crime changing in terms of scale and complexity. A global Britain, a world with more technology, means that offenders can now commit offences worldwide from the safety of their own homes, wherever they are in the world.

Where do I think we are doing well? Our understanding of the nature of serious and organised crime is better than it has ever been, and that, therefore, allows me to describe to you some areas where we are doing well. As a result of the very, very impressive work by everybody across policing and the National Crime Agency, we are now arresting more offences for child sexual abuse than we ever have done in our history, and we are proud of that progress but it masks a worrying, changing pattern. The changing pattern is this: there has been a 700% increase in image referrals from industry into the National Crime Agency since 2013. While we are keeping up with those referrals, what we are not yet doing



in the way that I think we should is being able to build the capacity and the capability to keep ahead of the curve.

Perhaps I could draw on an operational example to explain that to you. We have recently convicted Matthew Falder. Matthew Falder had at least 300 victims worldwide. He was operating from within the UK, hidden behind the dark web, and I know when the Committee came to visit us at the National Crime Agency we showed the dark web to you. He effectively encrypted his identity, and when he was convicted of 137 offences, from voyeurism right through to kidnap and blackmail, we absolutely were able to identify that he was using that disguise. For me, it is a two-edged coin. On child sexual abuse there has been some amazing progress. We are arresting more people, we are safeguarding more children, but we need to be in a position where we can, as a whole system, not as individual agencies, build capability so that we can understand and discover people like Matthew Falder and get ahead of the curve.

Q446 Chair: When you talk about being able to keep up with the 700% increase, that is obviously about your response to it. In terms of the scale of the crime and the cause of the crime, do you think that reflects a 700% increase in the scale of crime and abuse?

Lynne Owens: I think what it tells us is what we know. There is a lot more that we do not necessarily know. It is why we would like to see investment in a new national assessment centre. In the same way that counter-terrorism has JTAC that makes an assessment of the threat, we think we need an equivalent of that for serious and organised crime.

We think, from a law enforcement perspective, we need to take a different approach to data and sharing data, and fundamentally we think we need a very different relationship with the private sector, with the social media and online companies. At the moment they take all of the profit but they take minimal risk, and we think there are some big asks of industry to prevent offences occurring in the first place.

Cressida Dick: Perhaps, slightly curiously, the first one I would choose in terms of most confident is in fact counter-terrorism. I feel very proud of the service in so many ways, and no doubt we will come back to that later on in terms of the quality of our people, our world-leading capabilities in so many ways. Despite the very considerable threat in relation to terrorism, which has been described recently not least by the Home Secretary and last week by the Director General—I do not need to repeat—I do feel that we have had, as you know, a very powerful cross-Government strategy that we, the police, have been able to work with and as part of for over 10 years in CONTEST. We have a joint understanding of the threat. We have fantastic partnerships. We have some amazing, definitely world-leading capabilities. I do believe that all parties are trying their very level best to do as much as is reasonably possible. Though, of course, we cannot reduce the risks to zero, I feel that we are in as good a place as people could expect us to be. I am sure we will come back to that.



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My second perhaps slightly builds on Lynne's. I am deeply concerned about the exponential rises in digital data and the impact that that is having. I am sure we may talk about disclosure as an example of that. Of course, that gives us lots of opportunities as well, so it is not just the volume, within which there are positives, but for me it is also relevant to this Committee and I think there needs to be a great deal of quick and hard work about the ethical and legal issues that the data age poses to law enforcement.

Q447 **Chair:** Can you give us an example of the kind of thing that is difficult to deal with at the moment?

Cressida Dick: A small example at the moment is facial recognition, and we have this extraordinary technology moving very fast. Artificial intelligence would be another. There are a whole series of things where things are moving extremely fast. The ability of the law to keep up with that and also for those who hold us to account to be able to do that in a meaningful way in the absence of really dynamic ethical discussions and indeed legal frameworks is a real challenge for us. I do not have all the answers or in fact many of the answers to this.

Q448 **Chair:** Is that a concern about a rising and changing pattern of crime or is that a concern about there not being a proper accountability and policy framework to keep up with the techniques you need to use?

Cressida Dick: Both. It is both. When you are dealing with data either within a crime or our own sources of open-source data or whatever it might be, the sheer volume and the complexity and the ethical and legal challenges are enormous. I know you have been dealing with this along the way. I would hope that we would step up as not just a law enforcement community but across the wider police leadership and the Home Office in the future to assist with speeding up the thinking on it, because we keep getting criticised. We are working in a vacuum to some extent.

Chief Constable Thornton: I would agree with Cressida in terms of where I am most confident. It is the response to counter-terrorism. As the experts have said last year, we are dealing with a shift, not a spike, and, thinking about policing across England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, the very benefit and the great strength of it is that it is local, but of course that makes it quite difficult to respond to national and transnational threats. The way in which we have developed the structures for terrorism, the way we have developed capability over the last 13 years, working very closely with the security agencies, is something that we are proud of. This was tested significantly last year with five attacks, and the work that we have done since then, a great openness from Cressida's team and the security service to say, "What could we have done better?" and the work that has been supervised by David Anderson has given us a plan going forward.



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Of course, yesterday we had the Home Secretary announcing the latest version of CONTEST, and I think we would all welcome the focus on Prevent, the focus on sharing more information with other agencies, because the nature of the threat is really quite different than it was three or four years ago. There is very much that local element. The relationship that we have as police officers, as a police service, with local communities is absolutely key to responding to that threat in the future.

In terms of where I am least confident, I think it is linking probably into the comments that both Lynne and Cressida made, but particularly if I think about our response to cyber-dependent crime and cyber-enabled crime. We did some work on a programme that I ran called Specialist Capabilities last year, and we knew that only about a third of forces had a proper capability to deal with cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled.

Our response to that: as our national lead, Chief Constable Pete Goodman has drawn up plans with Lynne's colleagues to build cyber units in forces, locally based but regionally tasked. We got some agreement last year in October as to what these new structures should look like and an emerging view about the skills that are needed, and we have also agreed jointly with the National Crime Agency a bid to the Police Transformation Fund for more skills located in forces but very much regionally co-ordinated as part of the NCA area. It is not that we do not have a plan—we do have some plans—but it is very much work in progress.

Q449 **Chair:** When you talk about that, is that the whole gamut of online-linked crime, or is it just particular serious cyber-attacks, or what range?

Chief Constable Thornton: Talking specifically about in the first instance cyber-dependent crime, so that is when computers are used to attack computers, things like DDoS attacks, malware attacks, but also some cyber-enabled crime, the sorts of frauds and online financial crimes that we get. The focus is on that area.

Of course the reality is, in terms of crime today, virtually every crime has a digital footprint, and I think that is the point that Cressida is making. That is the broad challenge that every police service is facing.

Q450 **Chair:** When we started this inquiry, many of the things that you have talked about, counter-terrorism but also particularly changing patterns of online crime, whether that be abuse of children or online fraud or cyber-crime, those are the things we thought we would spend a lot of our time taking evidence on. Since we started it, we have seen the ongoing increase in serious violent crime. At a time when we have children being killed, being stabbed on our streets—such a massive increase not just in London but around the country—how much do you feel that these changing patterns of crime are also preventing you from being on top of some of the most basic and horrible crimes affecting young people?



Cressida Dick: Clearly, throughout policing history, choices have been made and priorities have been articulated, and for London I can say that from the moment I became Commissioner I made it clear that serious violence I thought was too high and violence was my priority. I defined it broadly but I focused particularly from that moment, over a year ago, on knife and gun-enabled crime as it affected our streets and our young people. As you say, we have seen some horrible, horrible incidents since then. We have also seen some enormous increases in our activity and our understanding of how to tackle the issue and—very welcome—we have seen the Serious Violence Strategy from the Home Office and, for London, the Mayor and other local leaders becoming very involved.

Q451 **Chair:** The Serious Violence Strategy does not really have anything in it though, does it? It is great analysis but is there any particular measure or anything it is going to do?

Cressida Dick: I think it is welcome. This might sound very focused on London, and apologies, but this is a huge issue for London. To go to your first question, yes, of course, if I did not have to be concerned about all those other expanding crimes and other demands and other complexity, which we will no doubt come to later on, I could indeed put even more effort, no doubt, on to the streets of London.

Having made a reasonably good evidence-based case in the autumn, we have received more money by the precept going up and by the Mayor finding money in the business rates. That will go into knife and gun crime, full stop, and that is good.

What I do see coming from the Serious Violence Strategy—but of course it is only a piece of paper at the moment—is the potential for people in health, people in education, people in local authorities, people obviously in children's services and all sorts of groups happening in London rallying around, "What can we do to prevent, to intervene?" and of course from the police point of view primarily, to enforce and uphold the law. That is a good thing. I take your point. Time will tell what it actually amounts to.

Q452 **Chair:** You had, even before the most recent increases, a 50% increase over four years in the stabbing of children and teenagers. In the last month alone we have had a 17 year-old killed in Ipswich, a 15 year-old killed in Wolverhampton, a 15 year-old killed in Sheffield, some of the biggest increases in knife offences on record in the capital. This does not feel like the police are on top of this. Maybe you will say this is not just about policing, but from our point of view this looks like a shocking and really disturbing continuing increase in the stabbings of teenagers.

Chief Constable Thornton: If we start with the background of the Violent Crime Strategy, which clearly says a lot of the issues are outside the responsibility of the police, I think a lot of the emphasis on early intervention and prevention is very welcome. In terms of the police response—you are absolutely right, Chair, that knife crime, firearms crime and homicide are up across the country, more or less—there is a



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policing response. It is about focus on tactical deployment in hotspots. It is about encouraging the appropriate use of stop and search, particularly section 60 powers. It is about the work that we are doing with Lynne's team in terms of the co-ordination of county lines. It is about a whole range of issues to do with knife crime. We have now run Operation Sceptre across all forces three or four times, which means we have a concerted response.

In a whole range of areas there is joined-up national response to violent crime, but I think it is really important to say that we know that the police do not have all the answers to this. This is young people who are losing their lives in our cities and the focus needs to be very much on early intervention, on education, on working with communities. Otherwise, we are failing very marginalised young people in highly deprived communities.

Q453 Chair: Why has it got worse? Commissioner, I think you said it would be naive to say that the reduction in police finances over the last few years, and not just on London but beyond, has not had an impact. I am sure it has had an impact. How far do you see it being around finances? How far do you see it being around other services and other prevention? Why is this happening now?

Cressida Dick: It is hard to tell. It is a very serious issue. However, just to give some context, if you do compare, for example, the homicide rate now, even in London—and we are getting a daily tick of every stabbing that happens, which I am afraid there has probably been a stabbing in London every year¹ since London began. If you compare the homicide rate now, the year before last there were 110, 115. This last year there were 150. When I was a commander in the MPS 12 years ago, it was 250. I can remember investigating the murders of young people at that time. I regret every single one but I do think we need to have some context. This is affecting particular communities. It is not making this whole city unsafe. It is not making young people in general unsafe. It is not dragging most young people into crime. It is a horrible phenomenon and that is why I have literally hundreds of people out on the streets suppressing it, and I am beginning to see some stabilisation and indeed even potential reductions in the stabbings of young people under 25.

A whole series of social issues will have contributed to the changes and the increases, I am sure. I answered a radio interview in which, in effect, I said of course austerity has probably had something to do with this, by which I mean of course the other services as well as the police. It would be naive to suggest that reduced numbers of officers on the street for a whole variety of reasons—I am talking across the country here—including reduced officer numbers overall has had no impact. I am sure it has had an impact, together with a whole series of other things, which I am happy to talk about.

¹ **Correction by witness:** should read 'every day'.



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Q454 **Chair:** In terms of what you think is working to try to stabilise things now, that has involved putting more officers on the street in particular areas, has it?

Cressida Dick: Yes, it has. If I were to give you the example of moped-enabled crime, of which there has been some in the media this morning—two horrible incidents overnight—when I came in as Commissioner in April 2017, moped-enabled crime had been going up like that in the previous year. In fact, like most violent crimes, the start of it was in 2014 but it started to get up like that. For the last several months we have seen a 50% reduction. It is coming down and down and down. We have done that through new tactics, better intelligence, more co-ordination, more focus in targeted hotspots, working with the courts, working with the CPS, getting people locked up, and long-term prevention work as well. We are now applying similar kinds of things to the wider problem of knife and gun crime. That is what we need to do: the whole gamut of police capabilities, together with of course our wider partners.

Q455 **Chair:** You have had to put more people into dealing with that area of crime in order to deal with it?

Cressida Dick: Yes, absolutely. I think the public would expect that. I have had two big step-ups of the number of people on the street, one just after Tanesha in Haringey was killed. We put a whole load more out and we do that all the time and on weekends, and we will throughout the summer. They are stopping and searching huge numbers, more than they were. They are seizing hundreds and hundreds of knives every month, tens of guns, and arresting many, many people. That is the right thing to do at the moment. Of course, it is probably not a long-term solution, as Sara says.

Q456 **Chair:** Just to follow up in terms of these links between the resource issues and these serious crimes, Chief Constable Thornton, you said, back in the autumn when we took evidence from you and I think in advance of the spending review at that time, with officers at 85 levels, crime up 10% on last year and the ever more complex crimes, that the additional pressures were not sustainable and that the current flat cash settlement is no longer enough, but that was what you got, was it not?

Chief Constable Thornton: Absolutely, back in October, I talked about the stress and strain that the service was under. The settlement in December 2017 was better than we expected. You are right in terms of Government grant, but the ability for Police and Crime Commissioners to raise the precept by £1 a month for a band D, which in effect gave £12 a year, virtually every Police and Crime Commissioner has done that. If that is the case, then that has put another £270 million into the system. The Home Office also provided another £130 million across a range of other lines, many, for example, that we can bid to if we spend a lot on operations. We did get more than we expected. However, we did not get what we asked for.



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In terms of investment going forward, we do need to spend more money on technology. We need to develop the skills of our staff and officers. We need to develop capabilities such as cyber and the sorts of sexual offence units that Lynne has been talking about.

One of the things that I am very keen to do and have had extensive conversations about with both my Police and Crime Commissioner colleagues, colleagues in the National Crime Agency, the College of Policing, and, importantly, Ministers and officials in the Home Office, is that, as we think about the next spending review, we need to make a coherent joint case so that the submission that goes from the Home Office to Treasury really does look at not only what we have at the moment and how efficiently we use it—we would argue that in terms of issues such as procurement we have made tremendous savings—but also, if we are going to have policing fit for 2025 in line with “Policing Vision 2025”, where does that investment need to be made? So far, we have broad agreement that that will be the case that we will work together.

Q457 **Chair:** The increase that you have for 2018-19, including the council tax precept being maximised, ends up being what level of increase?

Chief Constable Thornton: It is £450 million in total. £270 million if every Police and Crime Commissioner—

Q458 **Chair:** Do you know what it is in percentage terms?

Chief Constable Thornton: The police grant from central government is something like £7.5 billion, and then you add on about £5 billion in precept. I think the total is about £12 billion.

Q459 **Chair:** What would be really helpful is if maybe you could get the NPCC to just confirm with us what level. The figure I have is that you have had a cash rise, even including the precept, of 2.5%.

Chief Constable Thornton: What I do know is what it means across forces, because the issue about the rise across forces, it says not 2.5% consistently. The top is 3.6%, which I think is Surrey, and the bottom is 1.6%, which I have a feeling is West Midlands but we can give you that data. Very definitely, because of the different levels of relationship between core grant and precept, it is not the same.

Q460 **Chair:** If you have West Midlands on 1.6% and CPI inflation is 2.5% in the 12 months up to February, then you have some forces facing real cuts in their budgets this year.

Chief Constable Thornton: The Chief Constable of the West Midlands feels very strongly about this, as does his Police and Crime Commissioner, and they have been saying so publicly.

Q461 **Chair:** Do you think there is a problem just in terms of the expectations on you as police officers relative to the average flat cash funding that you have?



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Chief Constable Thornton: The stress and strain I spoke about still applies. The settlement in December 2017 was better than we thought it was going to be but, as I have said, it was not sufficient. The important thing going forward is that we need to work closely with Home Office to say not only how we are using what we have at the moment but where would investment in policing enable us to better support our staff and, most importantly, better protect the public?

Lynne Owens: If I could just join in on the funding conversation, the National Crime Agency of course cannot access precepted money through local Police and Crime Commissioners. We had a flat cash settlement. Our core budget is £377 million. We do access other Government grants but they are generally short-term grants for short-term periods of time.

We, like you, are hearing the really significant stretch described from our officers and we are hearing concerns from the public, and we, from within the National Crime Agency, are describing a changing nature of serious and organised crime, which is changing in scale and magnitude. I hope that we could start to have a conversation where we recognise that whether you are talking about counter-terrorism, serious violence that is tragically taking lives, whether you are talking about very valued presence in neighbourhoods or our responses to cybercrime and fraud, which currently are not as good as they need to be, that this needs a whole-system approach. We need to make sure that we have the right level of investment in our local neighbourhood and response teams that are very, very much valued by local communities, and there is a responsibility on us as leaders to evidence to central government that demand pressure.

There then needs to be a conversation about what capabilities we need at regional level and what capabilities should sit at national level. If all the money just gets passported locally to individual Chief Constables and individual Police and Crime Commissioners, then there is a hell of a job for Cress and Sara and I to negotiate with a minimum of 86, more if you add in other partners. My fear about that issue always goes to the lowest common denominator and that will not deal with the threats that we are currently facing.

Q462 **Stephen Doughty:** Given what you have all just said about the choice in priorities and the huge needs that are there—I was dealing with a police officer myself the other night, early hours in the morning, with a serious incident, and she just said to me, “We are just so stretched”, and that is the reality that people we know are facing. Are you surprised, then, that the Treasury could find nearly £500 million, just last year and this year, to deal with Brexit? That would be about 9,000 police officer salaries for a year. Are you surprised that they could find that money for that but not for you, what you need?

Cressida Dick: We are not politicians, and nor are we Treasury experts. I think what we are saying is we cannot—and this is the theme of the Committee, in a way—go on dealing with rising demand and greater



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complexity forever without having to make some hard choices. You make choices either about reducing the scope of the mission or taking more risk about what you do. Of course, if I speak for the MPS, we have made £7 million² worth of efficiencies in the last few years and we are in the middle of the largest change programme the MPS has ever been through, definitely. We have another couple of hundred million to find. I am sure everybody would say there is probably a little bit more efficiency they could squeeze here and there, but what we see is this huge rising expectation and demand that is putting a massive strain on our people, and it cannot go on without hard choices: either, as I say, more money, smaller mission, greater risk appetite.

Q463 **Stephen Doughty:** You get that feedback, clearly, from your own officers, I assume?

Chief Constable Thornton: Absolutely.

Q464 **Stephen Doughty:** Do you get that sense of frustration that they are looking at choices that are being made, they are looking at the reality of the constraints they have on their time and their ability? We have heard it in private and publicly from many officers. What are they telling you?

Chief Constable Thornton: The officers are absolutely clear about the stress and strain that is upon them. If you look at the Police Federation survey, the extent to which people's morale is affected, there is a real concern about their wellbeing and their health. The data and the feedback from our colleagues, from our staff, is very strong. I would agree with Cressida that the issue about how Treasury decides to spend money is a political decision. Where I think we are all clear is that there is an obvious place for investment in policing and we will make that over the course of the next 12 to 18 months. We very much welcome the new Home Secretary's position, when he went to the Police Federation conference and said he thought that more money was needed in the system. We will do everything we can to give him the evidence and the information to stand that up.

Q465 **Stephen Doughty:** Have you had anything to follow up on that? Obviously they were very warm words but we have not seen any substance to it.

Chief Constable Thornton: Ten days ago we wrote jointly with Nick Hurd, the Police Minister, with the Police and Crime Commissioners, with Lynne, with Mike Cunningham from the college, putting a proposition to all our colleagues about joint working. The Police Minister and officials in the Home Office were very, very supportive of that.

Q466 **Stephen Doughty:** You have not had a formal response yet in terms of metrics, in terms of money, or additional resources that might be available in-year or in future years at all?

² **Correction by witness:** should read '£700 million'.



Chief Constable Thornton: No.

Q467 **Stephen Doughty:** No. Just coming back to the issue of knife crime, I particularly want to ask Sara this. I had a young man, 20 years-old, from my own area, just literally a couple of streets away from me, stabbed to death in Liverpool just a few weeks ago. I was called up about another serious murder involving a knife just at the weekend. Two people I know personally have witnessed individuals being stabbed to death in the street in the last three months. What is your sense of what is going on outside of the capital in terms of serious violence involving particularly knives and guns, and how are things spreading outside of what we might have traditionally seen just in London?

Chief Constable Thornton: Over the last two or three years it has been very apparent that a lot of the rises in violent crime—which started off in our big cities and it is not just London, it is also Liverpool, Manchester and Birmingham—are now spreading to most of the county areas. I think the rise in knife crime is pretty much across about 41 out of 43 forces. It is pretty consistent. There has been a growth.

The other issue: when you talked about what is driving the rises in violent crime, there are probably half a dozen things we could point to. One of the issues is the way in which drug markets are developing. The crack cocaine market, the gang engagement in that battle for territory and turf, but also the phenomenon that we refer to as county lines, where dealers are going out from the major urban conurbations, and in many ways oppressing young people, abusing them in the most awful way, to get them to help in the business of drug dealing in local areas. There has been a general movement across the country. Maybe a few years ago some colleagues would say, “We do not have an issue of knife crime in our area”. People are not saying that now.

Stephen Doughty: No, absolutely.

Lynne Owens: Could I just come in on that point? It is why we need to see this as a whole system. The National Crime Agency deploys between 150 and 170 officers every day overseas in our international liaison posts. We have made some really significant seizures of crack cocaine³ off Colombia, off Spain, within the last six months. We are now running the county lines co-ordination centre from within the National Crime Agency, so we know there are 648 active county lines investigations.⁴ There are 1,540 active telephone lines. We need to understand what is happening in local communities. We need to target offenders that are absolutely crossing geographic borders, including those internationally, and we need to recognise that those very vulnerable young people in communities are being used both as victims and then becoming offenders. It needs a whole-system response, which is why I am suggesting to the Committee

³ **Correction by witness:** should read ‘seizures of cocaine’

⁴ **Correction by witness:** should read ‘248 active county lines investigations’.



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that the current structure of funding and governance does not meet a need that is not bounded just in a single geography.

Q468 Stephen Doughty: I very much recognise the picture you are presenting from certain conversations I have had literally just last week about these issues in my own communities. I wondered, though, Sara, given what you have said about cyber-enabled crime, to what extent you see this as part of the picture on particularly the violent crime. I have certainly had young people come and talk to me about the amount of content that is being shared, particularly on Instagram, Facebook, YouTube and elsewhere, almost encouraging both in terms of methods but also this whole thing of calling people out and encouraging them to respond, and sending videos back and forth. What are social media companies doing to deal with this?

Chief Constable Thornton: I think there is general agreement that social media has in some cases glamorised violence, that it has certainly brought likeminded people together, the degree of people following certain gang leaders. Without a doubt, social media is an issue.

Lynne alluded to it earlier: we think there is a significant ask of social media companies, tech companies and platforms in terms of what they can do to help us prevent and to disrupt this sort of activity. Whether it is dealing with terrorism, sexual abuse or violence, they are taking much more responsibility for the material: can it be prefiltered, prescreened, before it is placed online? What is their responsibility in terms of research and development? What is their responsibility in terms of making sure that their platforms are harder to use?

Will Kerr, when he came here, suggested maybe a kitemark so that parents know certain social media platforms are safe. There are a range of initiatives and ideas that have been discussed between the NCA and chiefs and were agreed at council last April, and this is our ask of the tech companies.

Q469 Stephen Doughty: Just one last point on that. Are you worried particularly about closed groups as well and, for example, locked Instagram accounts and others? I have been told of a number where you cannot immediately see the stuff that is being shared, but obviously they allow in certain young people of a certain age, certain background and certain location, and then they are literally, as you said, glamorising or encouraging.

Lynne Owens: This links to Cressida's earlier point about access to data, because one of the things that the National Crime Agency should bring to the party is an ability to use intrusive covert techniques to understand how crime is being fuelled and enabled online. It needs investment, it needs the right powers, and it needs the right public consent, but at its heart, absolutely, we have to stop technology being an enabler of crime. We have a responsibility there, but so do the technical companies.



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Chief Constable Thornton: Just on that, if you think about the internet, there is the clear net at the top where we all do our Google searches. That is a small percentage. Then there is the middle bit, the deep net, where things are behind paywalls or password-protected, and then you have the dark net. On all three levels we need to have a much better response.

Q470 **John Woodcock:** Can I ask you to expand a little on counter-terror? You said it was your greatest success. Particularly in the first instance over Prevent, we have noticed Neil Basu, your new head of counter-terror, has talked about the need to revamp Prevent. What does he mean by that and what will be happening?

Cressida Dick: I am sorry to be pedantic. What I said was in answer to the question, what area am I most confident about? I said in terms of how we have developed what we now have relative to other things.

John Woodcock: Understood.

Cressida Dick: Of course, you are right to say we have had a lot of successes, but also last year an unimaginably ghastly year with the five attacks, not least, of course, London Bridge, which we have just remembered. You will have seen the new version of the CONTEST strategy as of yesterday, and we have been closely involved in advising the Government on that as it relates to us, and we mostly certainly welcome it.

Prevent is one, as you know, of the four Ps. I am on record at least back to 2006 in saying this is the hardest and in many respects the most important aspect of any counter-terrorism strategy to prevent people becoming violent extremists. I cannot speak for Neil but I think what he was saying is that it has been developed over 10 years, it has made progression and progression. During that time, it has of course been highly contested and controversial on occasions and indeed some people have been very concerned about aspects of Prevent. Our view is that Prevent initially was led very much by police people and it has gone through various iterations. It should be something that all people in all our communities see as a positive and good thing and understand more and more about why we are doing what we are doing—whoever the “we” is in this instance—and that everybody is getting behind the need to prevent people from becoming violent extremists. I think what he was saying was that it needed a refresh in terms of its brand and its acceptability to the broadest possible set of communities. Some of the work that has gone into the new strategy I think will help with that.

Q471 **John Woodcock:** Can I just develop on that? When you say you cannot speak for him, obviously you are the Commissioner of the MPS and you are his boss.

Cressida Dick: I am. I just do not remember his exact quote. That is all.

Q472 **John Woodcock:** No, I can understand that, but he very clearly signalled



that he thought there had to be quite substantial change in Prevent. The response you have just given to me, as far as I can unpick it, is less certain on that point, on the need for a proper overhaul.

Cressida Dick: What I am trying to say and what I know he would agree with is that Prevent is, as it were, the show in town. Nobody has come up with anything better. There is an awful lot of very, very good work that has gone on under Prevent in relation to all forms of extremism, not forgetting extreme right-wing, which takes up a big part of it. There have been hundreds of people who have been turned away from violent extremism by their engagement with Channel and other aspects of Prevent, and that is all positive. We all recognise that there are certain parts of some of our communities in which there is suspicion and there is concern. Therefore, we have to work—the big “we”—with people in those communities to help them to feel more confident that they would come forward if they saw somebody they were concerned about, that they would feel confident that they would be helped, effectively, away from violent extremism.

Q473 **John Woodcock:** Commissioner, if you do not mind me saying, you seem to be picking your words rather more carefully than your previous self-assured responses. Is it fair to say that the new Home Secretary potentially takes a different view to the direction that you may have been going to change Prevent?

Cressida Dick: I do not think so, no. That is genuinely not my view.

John Woodcock: That is helpful to know. Thank you.

Cressida Dick: I did speak to Neil last night. He was there at the speech. Genuinely, he welcomes what has been said, definitely.

John Woodcock: Good.

Chief Constable Thornton: Just on that subject, while we were waiting in the yard this morning I bumped into the national lead for Prevent, Chief Constable Simon Cole, who in response to the strategy yesterday had called in all the regional leads. They were going to meet in the yard to think particularly not just about what was in CONTEST yesterday but this idea of Prevent needing to get into rehabilitation more, and what—I think it is the Desistance and Disengagement Programme—will that mean locally? I saw no sense of a lack of support for the Home Secretary’s position yesterday.

Q474 **John Woodcock:** That is useful. Mark Rowley, the outgoing head of counter-terror, has talked about being proud of the successes but said where the big gap remains is in the community engagement, which is the bread and butter of Prevent. Is it really feasible to think that you are going to substantively improve that at the same time as you have the resource pressure, which we have just discussed at length?

Cressida Dick: There are a number of things that have been announced in the new strategy and, as has already been said, many of them, the



majority, come from the reviews that we in policing and the security service did after the attacks last year. One of those, as Sara has said, is about Desist and Disengage, I think it is called. Another is about the local sharing of information that has come from the security service and secret sources, and the efforts that will be made—we are piloting this presently—through other bodies than policing and security services to be able to identify risk, to manage people who have previously been thought to pose a risk, in various different ways. Absolutely that effort will take considerable skill, capability and resource. We are in the early stages of pilots of those. It cannot be done without investment, in my view, and I have consistently said that.

Q475 **John Woodcock:** You have a situation where you are putting more resource, rightly and understandably, into the rise in violent crime and knife crime. You are saying that there is substantially more resource needed to improve the community picture on Prevent. What loses?

Cressida Dick: I should have said earlier, of course, and Sara I think made this point—forgive me if I am wrong there—that we have also had some extra money in counter-terrorism already towards the end of last year—

Q476 **John Woodcock:** But not sufficient level for what is needed.

Cressida Dick: No. Secondly, though, in talking about how powerful I think our capability is in counter-terrorism, I have talked about the very high levels of investment over the years. I am the last person to want to get involved, frankly, in party politics, I really am, but I do think we need to acknowledge that successive Governments have invested a huge amount, ring-fenced, with a lot of strong governance, as Sara said, some really functioning capabilities regionally, from London and internationally in CT policing.

We have, as Andrew Parker has said, a huge amount of work to do to keep up—my words—with the current threat and we are now going to try to get, if you like, upstream from it by doing more work in the Prevent area. We have not been given specific extra funding for that yet and the people that I am most concerned about are those in local authorities and other organisations that will have to play into this effort, where again I do not think we have yet carved out the extra money.

When Sara says we will of course be working co-operatively with the Home Office and others to put a bid in next year, that will absolutely include working with the agencies and Lynne and others on a bid around counter-terrorism. I am certain of that.

Chief Constable Thornton: If I may help there, the bid that we made to Home Office last autumn specifically talked about more resources for neighbourhood policing for this sort of engagement in those communities, in particular to support the pilots in Birmingham, Manchester and London. The difficulty we have about the numbers of neighbourhood police officers



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is, although the numbers have remained reasonably consistent if you look at the most recent Police Foundation report, of course what they are doing has changed enormously. In a lot of force areas, although the numbers look the same, the neighbourhood officers are doing a lot of response work. They are doing a lot of work around mental health. They are doing a lot of work around missing persons. There is undoubtedly a capacity issue in neighbourhood policing. We are all convinced of the importance of these relationships and this engagement in the fight against terrorism. It is Lynne's point about the whole system but it does need some extra investment. We made that case last year and we will continue to make that case.

Lynne Owens: If I could jump in, Cress has led, and has impressively led, a very good whole-system response to counter-terrorism, and that is why it is something that all of us would describe as a success.

At the moment we do not have that same system as it relates to serious and organised crime. We are working closely with the Home Office at the moment on a revised serious and organised crime strategy. My concern is that it could be very easy to see a local investment in neighbourhood policing, a continued investment in counter-terrorism, both things that are very visibly enjoyed by local communities. Visible policing and valued policing and important policing in neighbourhoods, big, significant events, but let us not forget serious and organised crime costs the UK economy at least £24 billion every year. The joint pitch that we will hope to work on with the Home Office into Ministers is, yes, investment in local policing built on a proper demand analysis, yes, investment in counter-terrorism to respond to the significant shift in that threat, but at the same time there has to be a different approach to how we fund and resource our response to serious and organised crime, cybercrime, cyber-enabled crime, fraud, modern slavery and human trafficking, organised immigration crime, child sexual abuse, the importation of firearms—

Q477 **John Woodcock:** Another area that needs significantly more money?

Lynne Owens: Another broad area that is growing in scale is our ability to focus on illicit finance that is moving its way through the UK. At the heart of the ability of the UK to operate as a global Britain, the whole system needs a different approach to funding to make sure that we are as good as we all want us to be.

Q478 **John Woodcock:** Can I ask one final question on county lines? Could I ask you to say a little bit about how you think the picture is changing from the perspective of the receiving communities? There has been a lot of conversation, and I know this would not be your focus, Commissioner, but representing the town of Barrow-in-Furness in south Cumbria, which is increasingly, officers tell me, being targeted not simply by the groups from Liverpool, as was always the case, but now groups from Manchester, young people clearly being leaned on to come up from London. Do we have a grip on this and what needs to change to get better?



Cressida Dick: Can I just say it is absolutely my focus?

John Woodcock: Forgive me.

Cressida Dick: We in the MPS have been extremely concerned about county lines. If you look at the new tactics, the new techniques, the new use of legislation, the new publicity, the new focus, that has come from—

Q479 **John Woodcock:** Forgive me. I was not saying you were not concerned about the issue, but obviously you are looking at it from the perspective of the people who are being—

Cressida Dick: We are deeply alert to the fact that first we are mostly exporting, but by no means only. We also move people between boroughs a great deal, which is a similar kind of phenomenon, and we sometimes import. Secondly, we are deeply aware of the number of our young people who are being exploited and trafficked around the country to engage in this activity, and regularly talking to Chief Constable colleagues—I will hand over to Lynne—who are feeling the impact of London-exported county lines. We reach far and wide. It is not an entirely new phenomenon. I was head of Trident, you may remember we had Trident gangs in Aberdeen and Cardiff, but the young people and the volume and the money that can be made and the violence that goes with it is very much growing now.

Q480 **John Woodcock:** Why is it growing?

Lynne Owens: The first thing to say is, in answer to that direct answer, it is growing because of technology. Mobile phones make it a much easier thing to do. Your Chief Constable spoke with absolute passion at a recent Chief Constables' Council where we talked about this, about the impact on Cumbria and communities of this crime type. This is something that is affecting every single force in the country in some way.

I am sorry to sound like a broken record, but this is why we need to think of it as a system. One of the other reasons that I think this has grown exponentially is because 43 bounded forces, with a statutory responsibility in law to ensure they are running an efficient and effective police force within their geographic boundaries, have not always had the capability to make linkages and understanding of the impact. As Cressida says, the Metropolitan Police Service has been at the forefront of this.

Duncan Ball, one of the deputy assistant commissioners, is the lead, alongside Sue Southern, who is one of my deputy directors, in the establishment of the County Lines Co-ordination Centre. We are now able to see where different police forces are working on the same telephone numbers unbeknown to one another, because the intelligence and the investment in digital data systems across the 43 forces is not in the place that it should be. That is allowing us to make sure that we do not have police force A competing with police force B or indeed gaps in the capability. In our role, we are running a number of investigations ourselves, particularly where we can see upstream supply, and then we



are providing some covert specialist capability to individual police forces and deconflicting all the operations, so we are in a much stronger place today than we ever have been, but the long-term solution is not short-term investments in different co-ordination centres. The County Lines Co-ordination Centre, a modern slavery and human trafficking co-ordination centre, a CSEA co-ordination centre. We would say, "Let's do one system, investment in a national assessment centre within the National Crime Agency. Let's do a system joined-up approach to data".

We do need to take a very different approach to technological spend across the 43 police forces in England and Wales. Only then do you start to have a system that enables us to deal with global, technologically-enabled crimes.

Q481 Douglas Ross: That leads perfectly on to the questions I am going to ask, but could I just quickly go back one point to what Mr Doughty was saying about resources and so on? You all skilfully avoided any political answers. If we do not just look at the pressure as being related to funding—and I think, Chief Constable Thornton, you were suggesting this as well—we have heard evidence that part of the problem is police are now being asked to do things that 10, 20, 30 years ago they were not. It seems to be that the police are the emergency service of choice now, particularly with mental health. How much of an impact does that have on officers' availability to do what the public would deem to be bread and butter policing issues, whereas they are actually dealing with far wider issues?

Cressida Dick: This is very significant. Sara is probably best placed to give the whole overview. I came back into policing a year ago and I was very struck by the increase in demand, for example, as you say, by people with mental health issues in a whole variety of different situations, and the inability on occasion of other services to fulfil the need there, where they are probably better trained and better placed.

The other thing is uncovering not new crime, but crime that was going on before but we did not know about, because now people report better or we can find them more easily. For example, the abuse of children, rape and sexual offences, all going up, at a time when expectations seem to be higher than ever about the standards that the police should achieve. That is another absolutely definite part of the equation.

Chief Constable Thornton: There are three or four different things happening in respect to mental health. I think you have evidence. Whether it is 20% or 40% of operational police time, it is a significant issue, not just about people who are having mental health crises and where we use our powers under section 136 of the Mental Health Act. I think it was 30,000 times a year now that power is being used. Frequently, when people are arrested for criminal offences and it emerges when they are in custody that there are mental health issues, it is a substantial area of work. We have worked very hard to try to avoid taking people to police stations as a place of safety, and I think the figure



is now only about 3% are taken to police stations. It is much better that we take people into a health setting, but frequently the experience is that officers have to remain with somebody while they wait for an assessment, and then frequently, if there is an assessment where detention is appropriate, they have to remain for longer until a bed has been made. It is a much better outcome for the person who is suffering from a mental health crisis but of course it is more demanding on police time.

What is important is we do have a role, but colleagues, our officers and staff know that, as soon as possible, this is a health issue and we need to get people back into the health system, rather than keeping them in the criminal justice system.

The other area that is substantial is the area of missing people. I think the figure is something like 250,000 missing people a year. Some of it is because in the past we probably were not good enough, particularly when children were missing from care. We now spend more effort, more time, because frequently those children can be highly vulnerable, so that is undoubtedly an area that has become more complex and more demanding.

Just in general our role since Lord Laming's review around the importance of safeguarding is not just about child protection, it is about the safeguarding of children, but also the safeguarding of vulnerable adults. That has been an area, working with local authority colleagues, which has grown, but also there has been political focus on issues such as modern slavery—we would very much support that—and issues of female genital mutilation, a whole range of offences that maybe, five or 10 years ago, we were not really dealing with, with a whole range of victims who in different ways are vulnerable to harm. There has been undoubtedly much more of this sort of demand. It is more complex, it is more complicated, and, by and large, it requires partnership response. The difficulty that we often face—and operational officers face this day in, day out—is that if other agencies and other organisations have less resource, if there are less charities in the sector, then officers frequently feel not that they are the agency of last resort but that they are the agency of first resort.

Q482 Douglas Ross: Thank you. Can I go back to your opening remarks, Chief Constable Thornton, about how you said the fact we have all these forces across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is a benefit for the localism but there is obviously a need sometimes for national strategies and so on? Do you agree or disagree with the Police Superintendents' Association that there should be a review of the 43 police model?

Chief Constable Thornton: As I say, it is both the strength and the weakness. The weakness is apparent when you listen to Lynne talking about the challenges she has in dealing with national and transnational crime. It is also a challenge when we are trying to implement technology or implement new ways of working, of change, because it has to be done so many times. Let us not forget the focus on community, the way in



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which local forces can be responsive to local community concerns, is a real strength.

If you did a poll of Chief Constables, I think most would say for operational reasons it would make sense to have a fewer number of larger forces, but of course the issue is not operational. The issue is political. When this was considered over 10 years ago, the difficulties were 99% political, not operational, but what is happening now—and you might be aware—is that the Police and Crime Commissioners and the chiefs of Devon and Cornwall and Dorset are working together on proposals to bring those two forces together. I was speaking to one of the Police and Crime Commissioners a couple of weeks ago. That programme is on course and they are talking about, if all gets agreed and the Home Office agrees, in a couple of years' time, you might get that bottom-up amalgamation of those two forces in the south-west of England.

Whether a review is the right thing, that is a political decision, but operationally we do our very best to work around. The counter-terrorism structures are a very good example of working around the 43 and Scotland and Northern Ireland. We are developing better work-arounds for organised crime, whether that is cyber or child sexual abuse. We are getting better work-arounds for technology. We have "Policing Vision 2025", which we agreed with the Police and Crime Commissioners 18 months ago in November 2016. That sets out where we think police forces need to be in terms of digital policing, where forces—

Douglas Ross: I am going to come on to that in a minute, if I can.

Chief Constable Thornton: What we do is, notwithstanding the fact there are 86 people who want to make decisions and other agencies, we are constantly trying to get people to collaborate, to co-operate in the public interest. We are making progress. Sometimes the progress is glacial. As I say, I go back to my point: it is a political decision, not an operational one.

Lynne Owens: I agree with everything that Sara has just said. My concern is the glacial speed. If you look at the threat from serious organised crime, if you read the "National Strategic Assessment", it is changing at pace. If we can see that we need a very good local policing capacity to be visible, to give reassurance, to provide the intelligence that needs to be supported by cyber capabilities and fraud capabilities and CSA capabilities, if every single one of them has to be negotiated in slow time over months through 86, I am concerned that we are going to get left behind.

Cressida Dick: We would not start here, is what I would say. It is quite a curious configuration, for all the reasons Sara and Lynne have said. It puts a lot of barriers in the way of change and development.



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I should say at this point, and I know I speak for many, many colleagues, Sara has done a fantastic job in the last three years. I went out of policing, came back in, and saw the way in which, by some sort of magic, she has managed to corral and bring together in a consensus both Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to make some much bigger steps than I ever thought we would be able to. On technology as an example, in a fast-moving world, to have these very local programmes, to have the police programmes, the Home Office programmes, to try to bring them all together and get everybody to agree which direction we are going in, in the interests of the public to be effective and save money, it is a very curious starting point.

Q483 Douglas Ross: I am glad you are all keen to speak about technology because I want to quickly come on to that, but, Lynne Owens, you were saying—I do not know if it is a challenge or a benefit—you are making more linkages in terms of county lines and so on. The example you gave about force A looking at a telephone number and force B looking at a telephone number and not knowing about it, and now you do: does that happen all the time now, or will there still be possibilities that a force in the north of England and one in the south of England are looking at the same people but that somehow slips through the net? Are you confident now that the NCA and others are ensuring that there is that proper approach to when two forces are looking at the same people or phones and so on?

Lynne Owens: I can say with some confidence that that is the case when it comes to county lines. I cannot say that with the same confidence for everything because the intelligence systems that individual police forces work from are different and they are not joined up, which is why, when there was a national security capability review this year, we were very keen and it was a conclusion of the review that there ought to be a new national assessment centre built within the National Crime Agency, supported by a new national data exploitation centre sat within the National Crime Agency.

We are already starting to build those things, but they are very small at the moment and they need significant investment. I have just realigned my own budget in a year, effectively, to get to where we have done. In the future, you would hope that they would take all that information and be able to make the assessments that you are asking, because I think the public would be very unforgiving, rightly so, if either there were gaps in our knowledge or overlaps in work because there was not clarity about what intelligence sat where and which organisation was responding. Of course, that does not just apply to the 43 forces in England and Wales. When you look at things like fraud and illicit finance, you include the Serious Fraud Office and the Financial Conduct Authority and the City of London Police and its lead force. It starts to get a very complicated picture.

Q484 Douglas Ross: On IT, you have all alluded to the fact that potentially a



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reduction of forces would allow better IT systems, more working together and a better understanding between forces. In Scotland we have already gone through a process of going from eight regional forces to one, Police Scotland, which is the second largest force in the United Kingdom. A £46 million programme called i6, which was going to transform the way we do IT in policing, got shelved. It was going to save £200 million. It did not. Now, four or five years into a single police force, we are still using the same systems. What have you learned from the problems that we have experienced in Scotland and the fact that, years on from amalgamating all our forces, we still have these problems with IT? In my own area of Murray, which used to be Grampian Police Force, just across the border in Northern Constabulary, at Nairn, the two systems do not work, yet they are two or three miles apart.

Chief Constable Thornton: We learn that there are no simple solutions to this, and if people think there is a simple solution, they have failed to understand the problem.

Q485 **Douglas Ross:** That is an excellent point, because we were promised this. It was a Scottish Government, SNP policy, to create a single police force, and we were promised it on the back of having this streamlined system of IT where everyone would be speaking to each other. Years on, £46 million down the drain, and no further forward.

Chief Constable Thornton: What we are doing is largely in England and Wales. Most investments in technology are made locally, decisions between chiefs and Police and Crime Commissioners. Notwithstanding that, there are three or four things we are doing to try to move to greater consistency and greater coherence.

The first thing is that "Vision 2025", which I mentioned, has two substantial areas of technology change. One is our digital programmes. We have a whole range of programmes that have been funded by the Police Transformation Fund. Some are about digital evidence and digital evidence transfer into the criminal justice system. Some are about better tools and training for digital intelligence and digital evidence. Some are about making sure that in terms of digital contact with the public, we are encouraging all forces to go to the same infrastructure. It is called the single online home. Not that the websites will look the same, but that the engineering behind will be procured jointly. There are a range of programmes there, all police-led.

There are also a range of Home Office programmes. Probably the most relevant in this is the National Law Enforcement Data Programme, which is about replacing the Police National Computer and the Police National Database with one database, which will enable us to share information and intelligence much better across the country.

We also are doing some work with the Police ICT Company about national standards, and probably the most exciting programme—it might not sound exciting—is called the National Enabling Programme. It is again a



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police-led programme, which is saying, instead of us all buying the next version of the Microsoft product that we are going to buy, let us do it together so we can use the same product to make sure we can shift information and communication around the country so that I could easily e-mail Cressida or an officer in another force. There are things like e-mail systems, and identify is not on a force basis. There are a whole range of programmes.

Q486 Douglas Ross: Sorry. We will move on. I am so cynical when I hear this, and I am sorry, but we have “Policing 2026” in Scotland, and it is almost word-for-word verbatim what you have said was going to be this model we were going to use. That was launched in 2016 for the next 10 years, what we are going to do, and a fifth of the way through that, two years on, we have done none of this. It sounds great on paper. A former colleague I believe of the Commissioner’s, Phil Gormley, was the Chief Constable who launched it at the time, and he came from the MPS, and he had all this experience. He said, “This is what we are going to do”, and nothing has happened. It looks great on paper but it never materialises.

Chief Constable Thornton: We have moved beyond paper. I am not in any way underestimating the difficulties, but in terms of the National Enabling Programme that I have just been talking about, we are out to contract on that. We have done pilot work in about half a dozen forces.

Q487 Douglas Ross: We were out to contract on i6. That is why it cost £50 million down the drain because Accenture, the company that was contracted by Police Scotland to do it, failed in the end, and there were problems with the contracts and so on. We have even been at a further advanced stage than you are now describing, and there are still all these problems.

Chief Constable Thornton: I appreciate it is very difficult, but we believe that the work that we have done in terms of “Vision 2025”, getting it agreed with Police and Crime Commissioners, get the Home Office’s support in terms of investment, we have programmes set up, we have senior responsible officers delivering on those programmes, and we have full-time programme directors. We have tried to put everything in place to ensure the very best chance of success.

Cressida Dick: Could I just say also, Lynne probably more than me and Sara, but we talk to colleagues around the world a lot. Nobody has this sorted. We started with structures. Of course, structures are only one thing. There is governance, there is accountability, there are all kinds of other things that need to be thought about politically, as will no doubt have been thought about a great deal in Scotland when you tried to bring things together.

What we have the advantage of in England and Wales is chiefs who have in a sense—I hope this does not sound too clubby—grown up together with the same ethos, the same training, the same standards. We have excellent relationships, and we have created an enormous number of



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really effective ways of working. You would expect it, but my armed officers can go anywhere in the country. My negotiators can go anywhere in the country. They have the same radios. I could go on. This is not true in most places—talk to American colleagues, talk to colleagues in European countries—partly for legal reasons, but also often for cultural reasons.

In the MPS we are trying to bring our big systems together and we are learning as much as we possibly can from Scotland, because most of the big metropolitan forces, including mine, are quite behind on some of these issues. Even bringing systems together within a force is hard, really hard.

Q488 **Douglas Ross:** My final question. Commissioner, we have spoken a lot about counter-terrorism. Do you have any concerns about the possible merger of British Transport Police into Police Scotland with respect to counter-terrorism?

Cressida Dick: I am afraid you are asking the wrong person.

Q489 **Douglas Ross:** The MPS and BTP are the only two counter-terrorism specialists in the country. You must work with BTP.

Cressida Dick: I work with BTP. Every day I speak to somebody in BTP. We have an incredibly close and effective working relationship. We also have a strong relationship with Police Scotland, obviously, in terms of counter-terrorism. I do not have any specific concerns about that.

Q490 **Douglas Ross:** My question to you specifically then: have you looked at all at the risks or the benefits of merging BTP into Police Scotland and how that will effect it? Crime can start in Aberdeen but finish down in London. You have not looked at that at all?

Cressida Dick: I have not, and I will check, but I do not think that we, as in CT policing, have looked at that in terms of should we or shouldn't we. They absolutely are talking about, "If that happens, then what, and how will we work together?" I am very pleased. As I understand it, the notion of the infrastructure policing, notion of BTP merging with other forces, is not on the table at the moment. I think that is sensible for a whole variety of reasons. There obviously are huge—high politics—reasons why people might want to make this move. We in the police will work with whatever we have to work with. I do not think we have done a published risks-benefit analysis of it from a CT point of view.

Q491 **Douglas Ross:** This is something I raised when we visited the NCA, so there are obviously implications for the NCA if we now have two separate forces. Again, IT is a problem, which is why the proposed merger for BTP into Police Scotland has been indefinitely postponed. Do you have any concerns if that were to go ahead?

Lynne Owens: As you heard when you visited us, we have a very good, close operating environment with Police Scotland, and we think Gartcosh



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is a model that we would like to see replicated elsewhere. We think it is very impressive. Whether we engage BTP London and BTP Scotland or whether BTP Scotland is part of Police Scotland, we would make either system work.

Q492 Douglas Ross: Even though they are saying at the moment the problem is that they do not have the IT systems that would allow them to do that? You do not see that as a problem, even though BTP Federation does, BTP officers do? Even the Scottish Government and the Joint Programme Board have accepted all these problems. You do not see that as a problem?

Lynne Owens: I am not saying that I do not see it as a problem. I am saying it is a political decision as to how the structure will be changed, and we will engage with whatever structure is put in place.

Q493 Kirstene Hair: Again, to follow on from the 43-force structure, you mentioned in Mr Ross's questioning that you had followed the Police Scotland merger very closely and indeed you were all relatively positive about that. If you have followed it as closely as you suggest, you will see that we have obviously lost two Chief Constables. The SP is on to its third chief and third chair. We have staff morale at absolute rock bottom. Only one in 10 say that they have a positive experience within Police Scotland. After two years of the merger, 3,000 officers indeed left the forces. We have heard of numerous unthinkable incidents, which I am happy to go into in more detail, and we have had over 200 serious call failures. I just really wanted to know how you believe the 43 forces in England and Wales can improve information-sharing while retaining that local knowledge and local policing, because I still do not think we have got to the crux of that. How you believe that these incidents that we have seen in Scotland, which I am happy to go into, will not happen if there was such a merger to happen south of the border.

Lynne Owens: Shall I start? The first thing to say is for the people of Scotland, all of us want Police Scotland to succeed. It is why I was absolutely delighted to be asked by the current chair of the Scottish Police Authority to be engaged in the process to recruit the next Chief Constable. I think there are some outstanding successes in Police Scotland that we see externally. They were ahead of the curve on the work on child sexual abuse. Some of the work that they have done on domestic violence, some of the work that has been done on violent crime is really impressive in Scotland.

I follow the media so I understand there have been some very difficult issues. I am not in any way trying to minimise them. The importance is that you have to see local uniform policing, whether you call it neighbourhood policing or response policing, as a very specialist capability in its own right. How you construct your local policing resource in a way that is very visible to the local community it serves, especially when the geography is as broad and as widespread as you have in Scotland, and that that feels linked to the centre, whatever you describe



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the centre as. Whether in Scottish terms it is Police Scotland or whether the England and Wales teams will be some sort of regional hub that for me is the key. It is maintaining a very visible, engaged neighbourhood policing, response policing footprint that is visible, known and understood to their local community.

Chief Constable Thornton: It goes back to the point I was making about mergers that, at the end of the day, it is a policy decision. It is a political decision, as it was in Scotland. It strikes me that there are some good things that come from that and some not so good things. The real risk is that you disrupt those local relationships and the degree of engagement, particularly the degree of engagement that local politicians maybe feel that they have, and a thing that is quite a great strength of our current structure.

It also illustrates the fact that just because you put eight forces into one does not solve the technology problem. That is more complicated. On the other hand, I would agree with Lynne that sometimes their response to organised crime, to counter-terrorism, the establishment of places like Gartcosh, and their response quite frankly to violent crime in Glasgow and throughout the area seems a lot more joined up.

I too have been speaking to the Chair of the Scottish Police Authority. What strikes me about Scotland is that you have the advantage of a real sense of joined up across different agencies that is sometimes very difficult to replicate in England and Wales so, like everything, it has some good things and it has some weak things.

The Chief Constable of Scotland is a member of council and over the last three/four/five years we have watched and listened very carefully to what has happened but, as Lynne said, they are out now to recruit a new Chief Constable and all of us hope that the right person is selected because it really matters to the people of Scotland.

Q494 **Kirstene Hair:** I take all these views on board but I don't think it gives much sympathy when you go and look at the incidents. When a call handler in Glasgow didn't know where the A90 was after receiving a call from a pensioner in Aberdeen. You have a death in hospital after a woman, despite calls from the public, spent three days severely injured in her boyfriend's car after a crash before being discovered by emergency services. You have a watchdog find that the murder of a woman could have been prevented if the control room had responded to her properly. Police had to apologise after they indeed told the wrong woman that her brother had died. There is incident after incident. The public morale with the whole merger is extraordinarily low, and I wonder, Commissioner, if you would feel comfortable taking on that responsibility for policing parts of the country, like Yorkshire or Dorset? Would you have enough knowledge of that local area to do so effectively? Because the overwhelming public perception in Scotland is that the reason for these incidents is because the call handlers do not understand the local areas.



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It is a huge problem. It is not just teething issues. There have been huge problems over the last five years. I just feel that that needs to be recognised.

Cressida Dick: First, I cannot imagine, even in anybody's wildest dreams they would think of the Met, which is very large already, expanding beyond its boundaries in any changes that might possibly—and I am sure this is very long-term vision thinking. Any structural change is not likely in the next few years, is it, I would have thought, but nobody would think the Met needs to get bigger and expand further. I am sure of that. The reason I say that is because I can see the degree of change that needs to be gone through to get from here to there.

The Met, of course, has the most diverse set of communities in a concentrated area on the planet. We have to provide a very tailored service to our local people as well as being able to do serious organised crime and counter-terrorism. I am very proud of the Met and we do it very, very, very well I think and we are very in touch with our local communities, in what used to be called the villages of London.

Q495 **Kirstene Hair:** But you have much smaller geographical areas.

Cressida Dick: It is a very small geographic area and of course we have been building and building and building this for a very long time, although obviously London is changing. But in the Met and in every police service we have human beings and things go wrong, and I can completely see—although I do not want to downplay any of those instances—some of those incidents might well hypothetically have happened before the change and people would not have been saying, "Well, this is because of the change" because it would not have happened. Secondly, although I do not spend enough time in Scotland, I can see why, from the public's point of view, it looks like things that have gone wrong are all happening because of the change. I am sure the truth is somewhere probably in between.

As a Chief, yes, to be suddenly told, "Right, now you are in charge of all these places that are very different" would be a challenge. I accept that absolutely.

Chief Constable Thornton: If I can say something about call handling because, although I think that local engagement and local relationships are really, really important, with call handling it is slightly different. I remember when I was Chief of Thames Valley and we moved some of the call handling up to Milton Keynes. The people in the villages and towns of Oxfordshire said, "Nobody in Milton Keynes will know where the corner shop is in my village or my town". Of course the answer was, "Well, nobody can probably know that degree of detail nowadays". The answer is properly supported call handlers with all the technology, the gazetteers, the maps, the drop down menus so that we can use technology to support the human beings in making those decisions.



With call handling it is very difficult to say you could have a structure nowadays where the person who is answering the call will know which high street you are talking about or which shop or which public house. We do have to rely on technology and, as Cressida says, sometimes there are problems and difficulties but in policing it is a high risk business. Those were terrible tragedies but I am not sure it was definitely the technology that caused that problem.

Kirstene Hair: I think I would have to disagree with that argument.

Q496 **Naz Shah:** First of all, can I congratulate you all on being here. This is an historical first to have three female chief leaders, so thank you. It is an honour to be here to be having this conversation with you, so thank you for your leadership.

I have a few questions. If I start with a couple of weeks ago we had the National Police Federation Conference, and during that conference there was talk about having a requirement for police officers to have degrees. My understanding is that during the conference when there was a request for a show of hands, not a single officer supported that call for having degree qualifications as an entry or, indeed, in the first three years. I would like to hear your comments on that.

Chief Constable Thornton: Over the last three or four years working with the College of Policing, we have been trying to answer the question about what skills and expertise do officers in particular—it does apply a bit to staff but let's talk about officers—need to face the challenges of 2025? The approach that the college has developed and has consulted on widely over the last couple of years is that, in terms of entry, officers will either have a degree or will be given the opportunity over the first three years to study for a high level apprenticeship, which is very much in keeping with Government approach to apprenticeships. That means instead of having two years' training, which is a mixture of classroom and practical, it will be three years and people will have a degree qualification at the end of that.

I personally believe that, given the complexity and the difficulties—whether we are talking about disclosure, whether we are talking about understanding PACE, whether we are talking about understanding all the issues around privacy, human rights—to expect people over their first three years, if they do not have a degree, to do that high level apprenticeship is the right thing. It could be very attractive. Instead of going to university and racking up a debt you are working as an apprentice in a police force earning a salary and coming out with a degree.

There are some concerns about it. We need to make sure in terms of diversity it does not put people off, or does not exclude them but I do think that the offer that we would then have to the public is, "Come and join us and over those first three years become a high level apprentice and qualify with a degree", so I am in favour of it.



Q497 **Naz Shah:** Despite the fact that none of your police officers at the Police Federation conference—

Chief Constable Thornton: I understand that that is what happened. The Police Federation sit on the professional committee of the College of Policing. They sit on the board of the College of Policing and these arrangements have been debated and negotiated through those structures. They have had the chance—and I am sure they have responded—and it is now what our independent professional body the college has decided is appropriate.

In terms of Chief Constables, we had a very full discussion again in April about whether colleagues are supportive of this because, of course, quite a few Chiefs have changed since the original Chiefs supported it, but everybody has agreed that the college is moving on. There is no point in one or two people saying they do not agree. We will all support it.

Another reason why Chiefs would support it is because we need some workforce reform, partly to ensure that the workforce is more effective but partly because we have been saying for the last three or four years that pay needs to be reformed. Unless you have a reformed workforce and are much clearer about contribution, it is very difficult to do any pay reform. Our pay review body is expecting detailed proposals from us next year. Certainly the Home Office and the Treasury are expecting detailed proposals, and the suggestion has been made by officials that, if we don't move forward on both workforce reform and pay reform, from the Treasury perspective it does not look like it is a police service that is very committed to modernisation and making the most of what it has. There is a political pressure as well as a pressure that say, "In 2025 or indeed in 2018, do we want to have a workforce of officers that are more qualified and more skilled than they currently are?" and I think the answer is yes because that would better serve the public.

Lynne Owens: If I could just jump in because I think on this issue of apprenticeships there has been a significant misunderstanding, a miscommunication. The College of Policing's original proposal went out to proper consultation. That is rare but it was a genuine consultation and they changed their proposals on the back of the responses to the consultation. The initial proposal was that everybody must have a degree. They heard the very, very strong feedback from the frontline and from colleagues—some of which might be sitting in front of you now—that we thought that would have an impact on diversity. It would have an impact on people coming from the most disadvantaged communities. It would have an impact actually on legitimacy and, as a result, they have now developed something very different. That is a two track approach so that if you have a degree you can join policing. If you don't have a degree you can join policing but you will join policing on an apprenticeship route.

I feel passionate about this because, as you sit there in front of us today, you see three people who came in on different routes. Two people—I wasn't one of them—came through degree programmes. I didn't and I



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think that is one of the great strengths of British policing is that it has always been a meritocracy. I think the proposals, as they are currently constructed, do recognise that but I am avid on social media. I can hear and see and tangibly feel the level of anger at this headline of: every police officer must have a degree. That is not the proposal. The proposal is: there are different entry routes but of course you must always be able to join policing without a degree. It is being called an apprenticeship. That is a modern term for something that did not exist when I joined policing 28 years ago.

Cressida Dick: We all started as street police officers and I think we understand the craft that there is in policing, and the deep expertise that is gained by operational experience. I would always rather have a capable, bright person in my current workforce without a degree than somebody with a degree who is not particularly capable and sometimes not very bright.

I do think that this does allow sensible routes for all and, secondly, will allow people to gain a qualification that they can then use in other places and, rather like nursing, it helps us to make sure that people have the right formal technical expertise and understanding.

Q498 **Naz Shah:** Thank you for that because I think there is that misunderstanding out there.

While talking about diversity, it marks 25 years this year since the death of Stephen Lawrence. I appreciate you have done a lot, certainly in the Met, with regards to diversity. My understanding is that last year the Home Secretary had conversations with the leadership in the police to talk about the protected characteristics, in particular, prioritising risk as a protected characteristic. I would like to understand where your thoughts are on that.

Chief Constable Thornton: May I repeat that, the Home Secretary—

Q499 **Naz Shah:** My understanding is the end of last year the Home Secretary suggested or there was a suggestion that the protected characteristic of risk she be prioritised in policing to up the numbers, diverse workforce, and so on.

Chief Constable Thornton: I am not aware that the Home Secretary asked that of Chiefs but I can do some work to see if we can find a letter or a speech where that was the case.

One of the issues in terms of dealing with diversity, and we have just agreed a new diversity strategy as Chiefs, we try to avoid a debate about which is the most important protective characteristic because there are very strong views on every side. We are committed to all strands. However, what has been agreed at council is that the area where there is most significant gap because of the issues of communities, is the issue of race and, therefore, a lot of the effort that my colleagues, Gareth Wilson the Chief of Suffolk and Ian Hopkins the Chief of Greater Manchester,



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have been putting in is around BAME, recruitment, retention and progression.

I was just looking at the latest figures to March 2017. The number of BAME officers is increasing. Again the pace is somewhat glacial but it is led by places like London and the Met and West Midlands. Now nationally the figure is 6.3% of officers identify as BAME. As you know, the national population figure we normally use is 14%, so there is a long way to go but it is inching up.

One of the things that Chiefs discussed was looking at the forces where they have made some tremendous strides, and I think the Met at one point was up to nearly 30% of new recruits: what have the Met been doing? Have they been a little bit more audacious in terms of what can be done within the current rules? The argument that always comes up is: should we have a process like they had in Northern Ireland when the desire was to change the mix between Protestants and Roman Catholics? Of course, again, that would be a political decision but there would be those that would argue that that would have some attraction. That you would select on merit but you would appoint a representation. There is a big debate about whether that is legal at the moment, so it is very much an issue. I will check to see if the Home Secretary said anything but it has certainly been a live debate in council recently.

Q500 Naz Shah: It might be useful for you to know that I am on the steering group with John Boucher who leads on the Euro agenda for race, religion and belief, looking at this area in particular. One of the concerns—and it was from your representative on the Home Office who suggested at that meeting that race is—the Home Secretary suggested to prioritise race as a protected characteristic. One of the concerns I have with this conversation—if I was to field this back to you—my understanding of what you have just said is on one hand you are saying, “We accept that race is a characteristic where we are not doing so well, so we will give it a bit more of a push” but you are not going as far as saying, “We will prioritise that characteristic”. I would just like to understand why you don’t feel comfortable in actually saying it just as it is, which is, “We are prioritising it”.

Chief Constable Thornton: I was aware that you sit with John Boucher on his group and I am aware that this is a debate. There are people who represent the other protective characteristics who are pushing back equally as hard against this, and I think the way that we have navigated a sensible, practical solution is that all characteristics are equal. But our biggest gap, and the most important issue for communities, is around race and that is why we are putting more effort in. That is why in fact there are two Chiefs involved in it.

Q501 Naz Shah: I am just trying to understand what is the difference between you saying, “This is a characteristic that we need more effort in and we are prioritising it”? What is the difference between those two things? For me, it means the same but just the language. You are being very



guarded in your language. Why?

Chief Constable Thornton: Because, as I say, we have people who are champions of other characteristics who are pushing back, so we are trying to keep everybody on board. We are trying to avoid having a hierarchy of protected characteristics, but we are acknowledging the importance of the police service representing the community that it serves to a much greater extent than it does at the moment.

I am not for one minute saying that that is the one silver bullet that is going to deal with community relations but it has to be part of the mix, which is why those forces where they have the biggest BAME communities, like Birmingham, like London, have made the most effort to get much greater representation.

Q502 **Naz Shah:** Do you feel it has been prioritised enough?

Chief Constable Thornton: We agreed a strategy over the last six months. What we now need to make sure is Chiefs put their shoulders to that strategy and deliver it on the ground.

Cressida Dick: In the Met there has been a huge amount of effort, as you did acknowledge. As Sara said, at the point of entry the average passing out parade that I go to has 28%, something like that, in the last year of black and minority ethnic recruits. Clearly if you compare that with London we are still behind. But that is a massive change, so 13% of the police officers overall and far, far higher among our police staff, our specials and PCSOs as you might expect.

I have come in as the relatively new Commissioner and said, "Right, that is great but we now must up our efforts across the board of diversity, inclusion, quality and engagement with our communities, particularly given the levels of violent crime and the issues around CT, which of course cause huge concerns in a city like London and which has the history that it has of variable relationships between the police and our communities.

People have come to me and said, "Does that mean we are putting race first?" and I have to say, "I am the chair of the board. I am driving this very hard". I am not proud of our percentage of women that are coming in at the moment—and we have done lots of research on that—and we are about to enter 100 years of women in policing in the Met and we are having a huge push on that because I think it is very important.

I put huge effort in across the board and I think we need to. I am very proud of what the Met has done in the last few years. We have been quite innovative. We need to push, push, and push on this, not least and definitely on the race issues of course.

Q503 **Naz Shah:** Thank you. My next question is for Lynne. With the announcement yesterday in terms of the contest and the sharing of information, last year a senior official from the Home Office visited



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Bradford—and I know Bradford has been playing a part in your National Crime Agency at work—how confident are you in terms of the whole idea of sharing information? The word that was used at the time was, “Are you daring to share?” How confident are you that you are sharing information that impacts on organised crime, which no doubt has a relevance to terrorism potentially as well?

Lynne Owens: The first thing to say, as you already know, we have been working very, very closely with West Yorkshire. We have an absolutely outstanding relationship with your Chief Constable, Dee Collins, and indeed with the regional set up at Assistant Chief Constable level.

I am pleased to say that jointly we have run a number of operations that have led to success, such that the violent crime in Bradford and the level of gun crime isn’t at the stage that it was when I first took up this post. That is absolutely all credit to the operational officers from both West Yorkshire and the National Crime Agency that work together.

As an agency, we are committed to sharing information where we can. Unusually, we do have direct access to the secret intelligence from the security services, from GCHQ and from MI6, and communities would always understand that we have to be very careful about that information. But in terms of our understanding of the picture about what is happening very locally and where the drugs or where the firearms or where the traffic people are coming from, we are very up for sharing that and looking at building on our local model.

It is for that reason that we have allocated a director lead, which is the equivalent of a Deputy Chief Constable, to each of the regions to go to the PCC and Chief Constable meeting and share, with absolute candour, the picture as we see it and to hold one another to account.

Q504 **Naz Shah:** Will that be filtering down to councils, local districts and police forces as well?

Lynne Owens: That is absolutely my expectation, and if that isn’t your experience then I would be pleased to hear it.

Q505 **Naz Shah:** Thank you. The BBC “Panorama, Police under Pressure” programme—I am not sure if any of you watched it, but there were some really good examples of policing. It also highlighted the stark reality of how resources are really, really thin. Do you feel there is an environment now where the police have to manage the expectations of victims with regards to certain types of offences? Do you think the Government have given you enough resources you need, given the changing nature of crime? That is to all of you.

Lynne Owens: Could I start? One of the things that I spend a lot of time thinking about is how we expose the changing nature of serious organised crime to communities because, understandably, they will be highly demanding of things that they see. They will be highly demanding



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of a lack of neighbourhood presence. They will be highly demanding of drug dealing on the streets. They will be highly demanding, understandably, around counter-terrorism. But we know there is a lot of activity: your children are more likely to be abused online from within their bedrooms. People are more likely to be able to order drugs from the dark web to be delivered by post. That is a very different, changing nature of crime.

I think, in all my 27 years of policing service, we have managed or worked with the public and victims to manage their expectation. In some instances, our policing service—and I say this from my time as a Chief Constable and when I was working in London—does not meet everyone's needs. Sometimes people would rather engage with us online. Sometimes people would rather engage with us face to face. The challenge is helping local people and local communities understand the totality of the demand that we are facing, and that actually there is a lot of work that sometimes goes on invisibly, which protects them and is as important as visible policing presence, and I think that is a very hard balance to get right.

Chief Constable Thornton: I think that "Panorama" programme illustrated very well the difficulties that a force, particularly, like West Yorkshire is under. The way in which demand has changed but also that focus on safeguarding and protecting people I think was very well illustrated, and the concern that—do you remember there was a shift—they had spent a long time looking for somebody who was missing and it just turned out he had not been answering his phone. I think all of us would say that we do need to look after people who are vulnerable to harm but sometimes officers do get tied up for hours and hours doing that.

Of course, while they are doing that, they are not maybe doing proactive policing: so the level of stop and search, for example, is down substantially. The level of charges and the level of cases going to court are down across the country. I think none of us would want to say we shouldn't be doing that or somebody shouldn't be looking after those who are vulnerable, but it does absorb an awful lot of police time and I think it illustrated the issue very well.

Q506 **Naz Shah:** I have a final question just for you, Cressida. It is something I ask every Chief Constable it concerns and QM. I have just returned again from Pakistan and it is quite an embarrassment, as somebody of Pakistani heritage, that this murder case of Dr Aftab is still not resolved. We still have investigations ongoing, and people have asked me straight up, "Is Aftab Hussain immune to British law and does he get impunity?" It is quite embarrassing. Where are we at with it?

Cressida Dick: In relation to the murder specifically that investigation does continue. You will probably be very well aware that we have put an enormous amount of resource into that. We are absolutely determined that we bring the murderers to justice. There are and have been some very complex issues to resolve because this is a crime, which clearly as



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you have indicated, has some very strong overseas connections. We are working very closely and are working very closely with the Foreign Office and, indeed, with other authorities to try to progress this further. We will do everything in our power to bring the murders to justice.

In relation to the associated and broader points, you will be aware of occasions in which we have taken action and brought files to the CPS. I spent two years in the Foreign Office. I am aware of how concerned some parts of some of our communities—both here and indeed in Pakistan—are about what has happened. We will seek to uphold the law in this country and, in relation to the murder, we absolutely are determined to try to bring people to justice.

Q507 Tim Loughton: Chair, can we come back to child sexual exploitation? It was interesting that in your opening comments it featured quite heavily, and it strikes me there are four areas of challenge. First, there are the historic child sex abuse cases that are still taking up a lot of your resources and certainly a lot of court time. Secondly, there is probably the additional caseloads that have come through because people have been now more emboldened to come forward with allegations, either historical or contemporary of sexual abuse, both children and adults. Thirdly, there is the technological opportunities of abuse through the dark web as we saw at NCA, quite alarming in particular. Fourthly, new versions of sexual exploitation through social media, which you commented on. Is that a fair assessment of the challenge you are up against? Where are those biggest challenges out of those four? What are you playing catch up with or on top of, where do you see the challenge growing in the future and what are you doing to prepare for it? There are quite a lot of questions around that one there.

Lynne Owens: If I may start and I will take them in order. So, starting with historic, we are conducting two very significant, historic inquiries. The first into North Wales care homes. I am absolutely delighted that we had a further conviction last week as a result of the bravery of strong people coming forward. A vice principal convicted of 29 offences, given 22 years in prison. That is a particularly interesting case, of course, because he absconded to Malta and, having absconded to Malta, we were able to use the European Arrest Warrant to bring him back and, therefore, protect the public of Malta as well as the protection of the public in the UK. That inquiry is coming to an end. There are still more cases to go to court.

The most significant, though, is our Operation Stovewood, which is our inquiry into offences in Rotherham. At the initial outset we believe there to be approximately 1,400 victims. That was based on the Jay review. Some very, very impressive work by my officers has led to a number of convictions at Crown Court, but we still have a long, long, long way to go with that inquiry. I was very well supported by Sara because I think the big challenge with these historic inquiries has been that there is just not enough trained support and capability across the whole of the police



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service. We have used up every single bit of the NCA trained capability, and then we went out to mutual aid to forces, and then we and other forces in the country have gone out to retired officers and have brought them back for the inquiry, so there is a real question about skills, capability and gap that I think we need to ask going forward.

We think the peak of historic offending, apart from Stovewood, is starting to plateau. The press and I were talking about this yesterday. But nonetheless, in terms of the National Crime Agency, Stovewood is very significant for us.

Technology is clearly a massive enabler. We do not have enough dark web analytical capability across the whole system currently. It is one of the gaps that I alluded to earlier. We don't need that in 43 forces in England and Wales. That would be absolute madness, but we need to find a way to build that capability, money to follow the build of that capability and for it to sit wherever it needs to, and we do need the tech companies to step into the space that they should be in that I described earlier. Your last point?

Q508 Tim Loughton: Social media, and you made the point earlier about social media companies taking all of the profit, I think was the phrase you used.

Lynne Owens: I think we would describe a scenario where we are still dealing with significant historic matters. We have a huge volume issue that we need technology companies to help us with, and then we have a changing pattern. Currently the UK has many travelling sex offenders who are sitting in their bedrooms in the UK and ordering the livestreaming of abuse in countries like the Philippines.

We have recently convicted an individual who was from the UK but targeted a very poor village in Kenya. Some really good work with the Foreign Commonwealth Office, and a special capability that we built with the Kenyans, meant that they were able to give their live evidence from Kenya to achieve a prosecution in the UK. But it is very, very complex and it is why I started on this point because it is one of the best examples. Modern slavery and human trafficking would be another where international offending can be ordered from the UK and vice versa.

Chief Constable Thornton: In terms of the four points you make, I think they all add up to a great deal more demand on policing, whether it is the non-recent cases, increased confidence of complainants and victims, but also the way in which technology enables offenders to offend in a way that we would not have dreamt of 10 years ago.

In terms of the national response, it is very much led by Lynne's colleagues in the National Crime Agency. But one of the things that we have identified across the board is the lack of skills and the need to skill up our staff, whether they are dealing with local cases or whether they are dealing in the regional units. There are a variety of different College



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of Policing training courses that are now being rolled out. But also some of it is about building capacity.

I mentioned the police transformation fund that—apart from the fact we sometimes get frustrated, it takes forever for the decisions to be agreed—has been a huge boost over the last three years for us to fund capabilities that are needed, but also to fund some of the technology programmes I was talking about earlier on. One of the joint arrangements we have is building regional units where very skilled police officers can go online under cover to catch the really vile offenders who are preying on young people as they use social media platforms. That capability, which we have been developing across the regions, is an important example of how we are not just upskilling everybody but actually investing in those very special skills working closely with the NCA.

Q509 Tim Loughton: Do you think that the social media companies should be contributing to that upskilling?

Chief Constable Thornton: I know through CEOP they do have some sort of role. What we talked about more with the social media companies is the sort of things that I mentioned earlier on about how they make it much harder. What could they do in terms of prefiltering, prescreening? What are they doing to make their platforms safer? What are they doing to reassure parents, maybe with a kitemark, that this something that is safe, that 46 year-old men cannot masquerade as 13 year-old boys? What artificial intelligence and machine learning could they use to identify that sort of behaviour? We have an ask, and I think they do a little bit more directly but Lynne may be better positioned to answer that.

Q510 Tim Loughton: You have an ask but have they responded?

Lynne Owens: We had a very good partnership day a couple of weeks ago now where a number of the technology companies came. I still think it is a work in progress, so what they are very good at is identifying an image and telling us about it. My personal view is that is not enough.

Sara has detailed all the things that we have asked for, but when they tell us about an image we then have to do comms data checks. We have to do an intelligence build around it. They already have all that information and I think they should be giving us an intelligence package that enables us to get to the bottom of identifying who the offender is.

Q511 Tim Loughton: That sounds woefully inadequate to me, as to the contribution you are getting. You quite rightly identified that there is a large amount of profit being made by social media companies. We have had the social media companies in front of us, and I have to say every time they appear in front of us their testimonies are even worse than the previous time. You started off by saying, absolutely rightly, that a huge increase in your work and pressure on your resources is being caused by the opportunities for crime in this area and many other areas—but let's



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concentrate on child sexual exploitation—now presented by commercial companies offering social media platforms that host this sort of stuff. Do you not think that at the very least they should be working not occasionally, not giving you some information on a photo but there should be a genuine partnership in which they put a lot of resource, so that they can work with you to help them prevent it getting on their platforms in the first place and making your job easier for how you root out those people responsible for it? Because at the moment it sounds like a slightly haphazard arrangement and it should be a much stronger partnership with them contributing much more, shouldn't it?

Lynne Owens: With the changing nature of crime there is a genuine need for a completely different relationship with all bits of the private sector, whether that is the banking sector, the insurance sector, the solicitors regulatory firm, or whether it is social media companies. The changing nature of crime means that we need a different relationship with the private sector.

There are great things that come from technology. As well as enabling crime it can also help us detect crime, so I don't want to completely decry them as some sort of enemy because that would be inaccurate and unfair. But I do agree that it needs to be more systemised and more coherent than it currently is and that there is progress we should make on the four asks.

Equally, in the same way I am stressing to the Committee I don't think we should take problem by problem, I don't think we should be doing that with the social media companies either. Whether it is counter-terrorism, whether it is CSEA, whether it is images of violent crime, this needs a different approach to their engagement and their moral, I think, responsibility to prevent crime in the UK.

Q512 **Tim Loughton:** Commissioner?

Cressida Dick: You will be familiar with the Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit, which was founded about eight or nine years ago and had a very transactional relationship initially. You will also be aware that that has now—partly because of technology and willingness—moved on massively in terms of the degree of partnership, the degree of assistance and the degree of automation and different sorts of responsibilities.

It is vital that we do look at it across the three arenas that we have talked about in law enforcement of knife crime, violent crime, child sexual abuse in particular, and also counter-terrorism. It is also vital that we approach the companies in a co-ordinated and coherent way, which we are doing I think. But they could have said in the past that they get asked different things by different people all of the time to try to improve this or that or the other, and we want to work with the Home Office on this also who have convened a group. The last Home Secretary and indeed this Home Secretary seem very eager to do that.



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To cut to your point, though, as the world changes so fast, as they have so much information and technology and I think increasing understanding of their social responsibility, I am absolutely looking forward to the kind of vision that you talk about. That is what I have said to my team. That sounds great. In two years' time I want them to be doing all the stuff that we are currently doing.

Q513 Tim Loughton: My analysis of that then is what you require most of all is not necessarily more regulations. It is not more laws. It is greater capacity and understanding with which an instant gain could be a much greater input and partnership with the technology companies.

Cressida Dick: That is a fair summary.

Q514 Tim Loughton: Two other brief points if I could just mention. Last year I think it was your colleague, the Chief Constable for Norfolk who leads on child exploitation, I think made the suggestion that we should not be charging certain lower level criminals who are accessing child sexually exploitive images online. Do you think that was the right approach to take?

Lynne Owens: I would describe the problem in a slightly different way. I would start from the position that we need to be better at identifying the high harm offenders and taking more assertive and speedier action against them. To do that it might involve us taking a different approach because, at the moment, we are getting swamped by the volume. What that means is that people like Matthew Falder have been able to abuse 300 victims, because actually finding him was harder than finding the person who just uploads their image. All—

Q515 Tim Loughton: I understand that, but the principle is surely that this is all crime. That the low level offenders, however you want to define that, can quite easily turn into the high level offenders if they think there are no consequences from their actions, and people who might not be “brave enough” to go in search of this stuff, if they thought it had effectively been decriminalised will start on what can then become a very slippery slope. These people are looking at images of children who are being abused, at whatever level and whatever country. It still amounts to a crime, so wasn't that actually diluting the seriousness of all child sexual exploitation?

Lynne Owens: We are very clear from the National Crime Agency, with the lead responsibility in these areas, that these are very, very serious offences and that this needs more capability, more capacity to invest in putting more serious offenders before the courts. There is no evidence that policing has taken a backward step from this activity at all. We are arresting more people than ever before. There is a question about what happens with those people when they get to the courts because, although many of them are being convicted, their sentences are very low.

We are in conversation with the Crown Prosecution Service about the use of conditional cautions in this area, which would enable their behaviour to



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be proactively monitored but—be under no illusion—this is very serious offending where we are trying to get ahead of those who are livestreaming abuse for those who are making individuals' lives absolute hell and law enforcement is arresting more people now than we ever have done.

Q516 Tim Loughton: Can I just have a final point, because we have run out of time, on related social media? Last year your colleague the Chief Constable in Durham and I were in a debate in the Durham Union. The debate was all about should we give up some of our privacy in order to improve security, the balance between personal privacy and security. Despite some exceedingly robust performances by the Chief Constable and me on the same side saying, yes, we were emphatically beaten. Despite the fact that just about every student in that debating chamber, simply by looking on various social media platforms of theirs, I could have found out—and did in a few cases—every detail from their sexual preference, their shopping habits, their drinking den of choice and assorted other things, they thought nothing of that information being readily available. But when it comes to: should the police have access to things like this then that it is a definite no, no. Do you think you have a challenge as to how you sell, how you use social media and how politicians use social media to the public at large?

Cressida Dick: We do have a challenge. I agree it is very curious that people are so happy to share massively personal information with private companies and in a way that will then allow other people of all sorts to access masses and masses amounts of information about them. Of course, we cannot generalise. Different groups, particularly different demographic groups, seem to have quite different attitudes to this. But I was heartened, as the Investigatory Powers Bill went through Parliament, by the degree of understanding that was achieved in relation to that and the surveys that showed reasonably high levels of support for the work that needs to be done to keep the country safe and the level of intrusion that will then come from that.

I think we all understand that the public should rightly be concerned about the state and then separately law enforcement's ability to look after their information effectively, for example, and to only act within the law and be proportionate, but I do think we need to explain to people—even more and even better—just what we need to do to do that.

I am sure you were excellent in the debate but we need loads of people saying this, all of the time. When the consequences are thought about on both sides, rationally, in understanding what is going to be done and what the benefit of that would be and what the risk is, I think most people would be much more trusting than some people appear to be at the moment. But we have to work at the wider confidence issues as well, don't we? The public in general have very high levels of confidence in their police but they do have some concerns about the idea of big brother, and that is not just about the police. That is the state as well.



Chief Constable Thornton: There are inconsistencies, I would agree, in terms of what people share with companies and what they would want the state to know, but I do think some of the issues about Facebook and Cambridge Analytics over the last six months have made people a little bit more concerned.

It is really important that the state does not get out of step with public views on this. As Cressida says, we have to be careful that sometimes the loudest voices are not those who represent the general public. But I am quite clear that, in terms of us maintaining the support of the public, and their having confidence in the tools and tactics that we use, we need to have these debates. We need to have the right sort of legal framework, and of course that is a challenge because the technology is moving forward so quickly. Things like facial recognition, we rely on some very minor bits of the law for our framework and is that the sort of thing that Parliament should be deliberating on more so that we can ensure that the public do have a say on the sorts of things that we are doing?

Q517 Rehman Chishti: Can I start off with looking at knife crime? A jury at Maidstone Crown Court today is deliberating in relation to a tragic death in my constituency, Kyle Yule, a 17 year-old who was stabbed by other teenagers. One of the most difficult things a Member of Parliament or anyone has to do is then to sit with the relatives—and in this case the mother of the young teenager—who want justice for their child but also who want to ensure that everything that can be done is being done to ensure that this doesn't happen to others.

In relation to Medway, and my constituents in Gillingham and Rainham, that area has never historically had gang crime. We are in close proximity to London. Transport links are very speedy now, with high speed and other connectivity, and a lot of what happens in London affects areas like Medway. I think one of your colleagues mentioned areas in Manchester where, if there are incidents there, other neighbouring areas in close proximity will be affected. Can you clarify and confirm the collaboration that you have with Kent police, which has been rated outstanding on three inspections now? That everything that can be done is being done to ensure that the problems that are coming in from London are being effectively dealt with in that joint collaboration?

Cressida Dick: I join you in abhorring the murder and the murders. Secondly, it is an awful thing and something that I, as a professional police officer, may have had to do more of over a longer period. But over the last few months, I have had many mothers and many grieving families and been to funerals, and I completely see that people want on the first hand, "Justice, please" and on the second hand—I mean people are different of course—usually, "What are you doing? We must all stop people carrying knives. We must protect our young people". That is the next sort of thing they want. We do work very closely with, in your example, Kent police, as Lynne has said earlier, where we are talking about county lines, which may or not be in the Medway instance. There is a huge amount, a burgeoning kind of co-ordination going on.



I will undertake to go back and have another look at how our cross-border—because it is cross-border—work is working with Kent. I should do that. They come to our various tasking meetings. We have joint meetings on all sorts of things that we have in common, like travelling burglars and that kind of thing. In particular, we are sharing our learning and our intelligence in relation to knife crime and drug dealing where we know it is affecting other parts of the country, particularly including Kent.

Q518 Rehman Chishti: Yes. Commissioner, can I just say that I have no doubt at all about your commitment and your passion to do everything you can on this issue? I am grateful for that and the officers that you have. You now have in your remit one of my former area commanders in Medway working for the Met, so I know you have some brilliant officers who are doing everything they can on this.

Can I move over to the issue of counter-terrorism, if I may? We heard earlier the point about resources and funding. Would I be right in saying—and just looking at the statement yesterday by the Home Secretary—that in the 2015 spending review £2 billion a year was allocated to policing to deal with counter-terrorism? Linked to that this year, a further £50 million has been given to terrorism policing and is due to go up to £750 million pounds. Just to get that into context, is that statement on funding made by the Home Secretary yesterday accurate?

Cressida Dick: I certainly recognise the second two and I have no reason to doubt the first, assuming the Home Secretary said that, but I do not have that right at my fingertips. I could check of course but I am sure that will be right.

Q519 Rehman Chishti: Just linked to that, having read the speech given by the MI5 Director General, Mr Parker, in Berlin, he said 12 further terrorist attacks were thwarted since the tragic and horrific incidents that we saw in 2017. For clarification, with an eye on Brexit, some say there may be issues about intelligence sharing once we leave Brexit. For clarity, are you able to share the information on those 12 incidents that were thwarted, was that in relation to intelligence from within the United Kingdom or was that in relation to intelligence by our counterparts in the Middle East or whether it is from the United States or whether it is from Europe or whether it is from counterparts like the trade envoy for Pakistan or whether it is from Pakistan? Are you able to just clarify if you are in a position to say, those 12 incidents that were thwarted, were they in relation to our own intelligence or intelligence by other countries?

Cressida Dick: If you look at the five ghastly attacks, you will have seen—and Andrew talks about this—there is the sheer variety of history, background and manifestation and indeed, to some extent, tactics used. That is what we are now dealing with and within the 12 there is a huge variety as well.

We rely on a daily basis on intelligence sharing and operational work together and learning with all sorts of countries around the world, of



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course, most particularly the United States of America. I have 50-odd officers working in other countries around the world.

I cannot tell you—and it probably would not be appropriate for me since some of them are still coming to court and even then it might not be—where precisely the original intelligence comes from, if there was such a thing. Some of course relate to people who are entirely British born and bred, radicalised perhaps on line and affected by other British people, but others undoubtedly have links with various parts of the world. We work very, very closely with our colleagues in all of the European Union countries.

Q520 Rehman Chishti: Just linked to that—and I totally get the point that you cannot comment on the 12, whether it was intelligence from within or elsewhere because those are matters which are currently being looked at, but grateful that it is intelligence sharing around the world, which helps keep our country safe—the next point that Mr Parker went on to say is that the increase in threat is linked to an upshift in Daesh's murderous ideology. In relation to what we are doing as a country to help address the challenge of individuals being sucked into that poisoned ideology, we have had about 800 who went to Syria and Iraq to fight with Daesh and the threat there is immense. So, although Daesh may be militarily defeated, you have to defeat the idea, the ideology and the appeal, what are we doing on that?

Cressida Dick: You do and I think Andrew talked and always talks about the threat from home, overseas and online and we have to work in all the arenas. Of course, it is not just the police or indeed just the police and MI5, despite the fact that we probably have, as I say, great skill, resource and abilities and the best working relationship of any in the world. A lot of the work on the counter narrative and the things that might pull somebody into understanding, believing and liking that ideology are not to do with the police at all. They are better done by other people, whether that is in terms of foreign policy sometimes or in terms of education and universities and discussions there.

But this is a part of the Prevent programmes, which of course is part of the context as we have said and has been given an extra boost yesterday. It is vitally important and I think that is why the Home Secretary, and indeed Andrew, would say this is not just about people fighting and coming back at all. It is about the ideology and, therefore, that is why we say probably this tempo of work, which is very high for our people in keeping the public safe, will continue for at least two years.

Q521 Rehman Chishti: Just clarification on that, you had a brilliant former Assistant Commissioner, Mark Rowley, who dealt with counter extremism and counter-terrorism, and he said that it is often members of the individual's own community that help identify individuals subject to radicalisation extremism, and it is communities on the frontline that help defeat extremism. He was absolutely right then and I think those words are absolutely right now.



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Coming on to that, in terms of Prevent—and you said about revamping prevent—you know and I know that when Prevent came into play it came into play before we had a problem with Daesh. Daesh came after that, so in terms of Prevent and revamping how are you going to do that to address that new challenge?

Cressida Dick: The first point is communities defeat terrorism is a phrase even from further back, in terms of the threat we used to be dealing with in terms of Republican Irish terrorism. It is absolutely true. We completely believe that, all of us, and we have seen I believe a considerable change. I have been involved in this since 2001. I have seen a considerable change in our communities in terms of people's desire to assist, the information we get, the volume, the type, people tipping us off, mothers sometimes telling us, "I am worried about Fred" or even, "Fred looks to me to be on the way to go and do something".

We have to keep working at that and that is about much more than just Prevent. For example, in policing terms, as we have said, that is about having good local relationships. It is about having good community engagement, people understanding who we are, what we stand for and that we can be trusted. We know how to get information from the streets, Bexley Heath into Thames House and potentially overseas properly, carefully and quickly.

As I say, Prevent is just a part of it but Prevent itself has had some fantastic results, including in the post-Daesh area, and absolutely recognises the pernicious ideology, the extraordinary communication ability that Daesh has used. They are consummate communicators, as horrible, terrifying terrorist groups go, compared with any that we have been working against. We do need to recognise that and work with others, including, of course, the internet companies and the tech companies, to deal with it.

Q522 **Rehman Chishti:** I have nephews who are 17, 15 and 9 and I do not want them to be sucked in, because anyone can be sucked into this poison narrative, and I fully support what Prevent does, what it set out to do. When you talk about revamping, however, considering it is an ongoing model, when you talk to communities, you should take into account the concerns they may have, and where those concerns are because you have to build trust and confidence. Half the problem is that we do not explain to communities how it works. Therefore, it is about engaging and listening, because we do all want to do the same thing, keeping our children and our country safe, and this goes a long way towards that.

Just a couple more questions on this. The approximately 3,000 individuals of interest to the police in relation to extremism: the threat we have from extremism, some is from Daesh, some is identified as from Al-Qaeda and some is from violent far-right extremism. Are you able to say what percentage of that 3,000 is what?



Cressida Dick: The approximately 3,000 figure comes from the Security Service—it is the Minister for Security who said it but it is a Security Service figure—and it does relate to the non-far-right threat, as I understand it. I cannot give you the exact numbers. What I can tell you is that as well as the 12 plots that were disrupted, which the Security Service talks about, last year we also disrupted four extreme right-wing threats. Although the nature and scale of the threats is very different, it is something we take extremely seriously. You will be aware that during the time that this Committee has been sitting in this format, there has been proscription of an extreme right-wing group and indeed we have some arrests made and trials coming forward in relation to extreme right-wing activity at the moment, which are going to be very high profile, I am sure. This is something we take extremely seriously. I cannot, and probably would not, divide out between Daesh and Al-Qaeda. It is a bit more complicated than that, anyway.

Secondly, the extreme right-wing volume is not something we would normally talk about in terms of the numbers of individuals.

Q523 **Rehman Chishti:** I totally get what you say but the reason it is important is so that people out there can understand that the problem we have with extremism is with all forms of extremism, the far right and those inspired with Daesh or Al-Qaeda.

A question for Chief Constable Thornton on your point about data transfer and the issue with data and the police. I used to prosecute and defend cases. One of the things that any civil society should be proud of is the administration of justice. We have seen many cases come to court where individuals have been acquitted or cases have been thrown out where officers have not disclosed data that has led to the undermining of the trial. Nowadays, when you are looking at rape cases, and allegations, there is a lot of stuff on one's mobile phone that needs to be looked at. Some is unused material but some that needs to be looked at quite clearly is not being disclosed, or the officers are not looking at it in the way they need to be looking at it. I am taking into account what has happened and it is all in the public domain. Is that down to the fact that the officers do not understand disclosure? Is it down to incompetence? Or is it down to the fact that you do not have sufficient resources?

Chief Constable Thornton: Let me start by saying that the issue of disclosure and the threat that poses to the criminal justice system is something that none of us underestimates at all.

As you will be aware, the issue of disclosure, going back to the Cubbon law and the Criminal Procedure and Investigation Act 1996, has always been difficult. New arrangements were made in about 2011 for organised crime, counter terrorism and fraud cases, because those were the cases where traditionally there was a massive volume, not just of evidence, as you say, but of unused material that had been gathered over the course of the investigation. What of course has happened in the last five to 10 years, particularly for rapes and serious sexual offences, is that the



amount of data has grown exponentially because of all the digital material that we all have and particularly if the complainant and the offender are known to each other, there will be a huge amount of material. We take it very seriously. We have been working since the inspection report last year with the Crown Prosecution Service on improving practice and we jointly published an improvement plan in January of this year.

We are doing a range of different things, including some new College of Policing training—dedicated, specific training on disclosure. The training tended to be in a detective constable's course or a detective sergeant's course. We now have bespoke training. We have also been commissioning work on technology because although the Court of Appeal said in 2015 that it is quite all right, quite appropriate, to use search terms, we think we could go beyond using search terms, using more advanced searches, machine learning, to look into material because if you are talking about sexual offences, it is quite tricky to know what search terms you are looking for if the issue is one of consent.

There is a range of practical things. One of the things we have piloted, primarily with the CPS but for all officers dealing with rape and sexual offences cases, is what we call a disclosure management document. At the beginning, say, "What do we think the defence case is?" and then, "What have we done in terms of inquiring into people's use of social media platforms, what is on their phone, what might be on the Cloud, what searches have we done, what have we looked at?" Of course, these documents are quite extensive. If that is done properly with the investigating officer, then there is a much better earlier discussion, with the prosecutor, about what material might be relevant in the light of the defence statement. There are particular practical things, which have been used for serious cases for quite a few years, that we are now bringing into rape and serious sexual assault cases.

One of those things is about skills, one is about systems and processes; another is about mindset. My colleague, the Chief of Surrey, is on record saying that sometimes disclosure was seen as something you did at the end of the investigation as an administrative task; actually it has to be in the mindset of the investigator from the word go. That requirement that we have to record, retain and reveal needs to be up front and centre. There is a range of activity going on and I assure you that none of us takes it anything other than seriously.

Q524 Rehman Chishti: It is an ongoing process. I am trying to be as fair as I can. Do you have adequate resources?

Chief Constable Thornton: In order to do this properly in the short term, forces have had to move more investigators into these areas.

I mentioned this earlier. I was looking at the figures for sexual offences receipts in the courts and in Crown Court workload in general. If you look over the last 18 months to two years, those numbers are going down.



What I do not know is whether it is because there are so many cases caught in the system, because they are just taking much longer, or is it because different decisions are being taken about whether to indict or not. I do think there is cause for concern—it is resource intensive and we are shifting people—but I am concerned about how many cases might be caught in the system

Cressida Dick: I want to say that these are good people, doing their best, in very difficult circumstances. None of us had a mobile phone when the CPIA, the relevant act, came in. Every 18 months we see a doubling of data that we have to deal with. It is partly because we are examining so many more devices. As Sara says, that is partly because of lifestyle changes but also because we are dealing with a greater proportion of offences in which the particular relationship is such a crucial thing.

The volumes: I know you know this, but they are utterly staggering. Not just on a relationship thing necessarily, but in the counter-terrorism investigations, on average we take 10 terabytes of data; it could be 30. The British Library has 150 million items in it and that is 32 terabytes, so that gives you a picture of the volume. Our people are genuinely doing their best and I think they are struggling. Our serious crime teams, our homicide teams, our fraud teams, deal with sometimes very high volumes and are mostly able to do it very well both in terms of resourcing and their skills. I know the Director of Public Prosecutions is giving evidence to a different Committee today and she will probably say that. Where we are struggling, to some extent, in the Metropolitan Police, has been with the Crown Court daily business of rapes, serious sexual offences, child sexual abuse, domestic violence, human trafficking, slavery, where the relationship is absolutely crucial. I do know the Metropolitan Police has been absolutely in the eye of the storm of this and we have taken it very seriously. As Sara has said, we have had to move resources in to do the reviews and make sure that all our sexual offences cases are trial ready and the disclosure is correct, and that will continue.

Q525 **Rehman Chishti:** A final point on that, trying to be as fair as one can. With regard to the pressure on resources, working with the Director of Public Prosecutions, how much extra resource do you need? At the end of the day, a false allegation destroys lives, a conviction destroys lives, and you want to make sure—it is the pinnacle of any society—that individuals get justice. Therefore, when looking at resources and ensuring justice is done, to ensure that everything that can be done should be done to find those resources, to ensure that justice is done and you get the resources—I know this is asking off the hoof, but if you cannot do it now, if you can write to the Committee afterwards and say what the are resources that you need to address this issue, we would be very grateful.

Chief Constable Thornton: We will try to put something together in writing for you. All I can say at this point is that all Chiefs have had to make different decisions to make sure this work is being done properly,



in line with the action plan that we talked about. I do not have any national figures. We will see what we can do.

Of course, one of the problems is that this is happening on top of the fact that, as Chiefs reported to the inspectorate earlier this year, we are 17% down on the number of detectives we would like in an ideal world. We are trying to push resources into an area where we are already short but we will see what we can do for you in terms of the numbers.

Cressida Dick: One very short answer from me.

You will again be familiar with this. In what was thought to be a reasonably straightforward case, at a moment in the trial there was a question about what was on one Facebook account. We called in 18 officers and did 200 hours work over that weekend. That is not unusual, just to be able to respond and that was through no failing of the police or the prosecution at all; it was something the witness said that made the judge think we had better do it. That is just one example, and Lynne could give countless examples, of the sheer number of hours—and we would be happy to follow up, I am sure—in the particular types of cases we are talking about, that are now going into achieving what you say, which is obviously that no innocent person must be convicted through a failure of disclosure.

Q526 **Chair:** We have asked a wide-ranging list of questions and taken a lot of your time, which reflects the wide range of issues we wanted to cover and we are very grateful for that.

One final question: I was very struck, listening to all the evidence you have given, that you have hardly ever mentioned the words “Home Office”. I am interested in what you see as being the Home Office’s role in the future of policing. You have talked a lot about police-led work and so on. Where does the Home Office fit it?

Chief Constable Thornton: I hope I have mentioned the Home Office a couple of times, and also the Home Secretary, but one of the issues that all three of us would probably agree on, and have discussed, is the fact that the recent focus has been on the local. Most police identity is local, accountability is local, most budgets are local, but it does beg the question about what is the role of the centre and how do the various pieces at the centre—which includes the Home Office but also includes my own organisation, the National Crime Agency, and the College of Policing—work together. Ten years ago there was a National Policing Board. All we have now is the Police Reform and Transformation Board, which does bring the parties together but is a bit of a workaround. In some areas, we find ourselves saying, “I think the Secretary of State could have more of a role”, for example in looking over the forensic marketplace, in thinking about where we are going on digital technology. There have been signs from this Minister for Policing of beginning to move into that space, or at least to be beginning to think about it.



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Lynne Owens: I concur with Sara. Earlier I described a system that has an approach to counter-terrorism that is very centralised and devolved at the same time. We do not see the same for serious and organised crime or around forensic delivery bases or technology. At the moment we are in a space where effectively the operational leaders of the service are trying to negotiate delivery models and I believe there is a big role for the Home Office in that space.

Cressida Dick: I would agree with both of those comments, not to repeat them. I do think we are seeing, encouragingly, more—and I would like to see a lot more—of the Home Office having an overview, a central understanding, a desire to get things not short term, particularly funding and that kind of thing, but longer term, and more coherent, and alongside that, to have genuine trust and confidence in us as police forces and police leaders to be able to do our job and to be able to speak up for us on occasion, or influence others to speak up for us. It sometimes feels as if there is not much central push; it is, “Get on with it and good luck” and at the same time it has sometimes felt a bit parent-child. We are in this together for our public and we would love to work evermore closely with the Home Office so that they feel even more confidence in us and they can project that to others.

An area we have not talked about, but that I know is of interest to you, is developing our leaders and, in particular, finding the next generation of Chief Constables. There is a set of issues to discuss there, and I won’t, but one of them is that the Home Office could have an important role in that. They need to do a review, together with the rest of us, of how we much-improve the situation of volume of high quality candidates for the future Chief Constable roles. That is an example.

Q527 **Chair:** The new Home Secretary said he wants a new approach, wants to work with policing. We have had a discussion about resources. Apart from resources, if you had a one-sentence final answer to give to the Home Secretary, what is the one thing you would ask the new Home Secretary to do?

Cressida Dick: Support us publicly; support my people. Obviously, criticise us when we need criticism, obviously hold us to account in the areas he has that job to do, but support us. My people need to be well led, well equipped—they do need to be well resourced—and they need to have a public that feels confident because they should be, and they need to be given the benefit of the doubt when things go wrong and not have a finger of blame pointed. In saying that, I am not criticising any previous Home Secretary. I just think that is a movement we all need to engage in.

Lynne Owens: I would say build on the comments from the Police Federation conference, understand the totality of the threat—it is too easy to be drawn or swayed about what is most important at any particular time—and resource it appropriately.



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Chief Constable Thornton: I echo the points about support. What was said at the Police Federation conference was really appreciated by people right across the service.

What I would specifically want the Home Secretary to do is to develop the role of the Home Office in providing that framework and architecture for law enforcement, security and policing.

Chair: Thank you very much. We have very much appreciated your time and all your evidence this morning.