



House of Commons
Committee of Public Accounts

The Police Uplift Programme

Fifteenth Report of Session 2022–23

*Report, together with formal minutes relating
to the report*

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 18 July 2022*

The Committee of Public Accounts

The Committee of Public Accounts is appointed by the House of Commons to examine “the accounts showing the appropriation of the sums granted by Parliament to meet the public expenditure, and of such other accounts laid before Parliament as the committee may think fit” (Standing Order No. 148).

Current membership

[Dame Meg Hillier MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op), Hackney South and Shoreditch*) (Chair)

[Shaun Bailey MP](#) (*Conservative, West Bromwich West*)

[Olivia Blake MP](#) (*Labour, Sheffield, Hallam*)

[Dan Carden MP](#) (*Labour, Liverpool, Walton*)

[Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown MP](#) (*Conservative, The Cotswolds*)

[Rt Hon Mark Francois MP](#) (*Conservative, Rayleigh and Wickford*)

[Mr Louie French MP](#) (*Conservative, Old Bexley and Sidcup*)

[Peter Grant MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Glenrothes*)

[Kate Green MP](#) (*Labour, Stretford and Urmston*)

[Antony Higginbotham MP](#) (*Conservative, Burnley*)

[Craig Mackinlay MP](#) (*Conservative, Thanet*)

[Sarah Olney MP](#) (*Liberal Democrat, Richmond Park*)

[Angela Richardson MP](#) (*Conservative, Guildford*)

[Nick Smith MP](#) (*Labour, Blaenau Gwent*)

[Helen Whately MP](#) (*Conservative, Faversham and Mid Kent*)

[James Wild MP](#) (*Conservative, North West Norfolk*)

Powers

Powers of the Committee of Public Accounts are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No. 148. These are available on the Internet via www.parliament.uk.

Publication

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2021. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at <https://www.parliament.uk/site-information/copyright-parliament/>.

Committee reports are published on the [Committee's website](#) and in print by Order of the House.

Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Jessica Bridges-Palmer (Media Officer), Ameet Chudasama (Committee Operations Manager), Richard Cooke (Clerk), Rose Leach (Committee Operations Officer), Heather Nathoo (Chair Liaison), Ben Rayner (Second Clerk).

Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Committee of Public Accounts, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 5776; the Committee's email address is pubaccom@parliament.uk.

You can follow the Committee on Twitter using [@CommonsPAC](#).

Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	4
Conclusions and recommendations	5
1 Progress of the Police Uplift Programme	8
Management of the programme	8
Progress to date	9
Diversity in policing	9
Impact of the Programme on training reforms	10
2 Learning lessons	12
Learning from the programme	12
Wider lessons from the Programme	12
3 Future challenges	14
Meeting final year targets	14
Capacity and capability of policing	15
Securing outcomes	15
Formal minutes	17
Witnesses	18
Published written evidence	18
List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament	19

Summary

The Police Uplift Programme provides a welcome example of the Home Office (the Department) delivering a major police-centred programme which looks to be on track to meet its final target. Recruitment began in September 2019 and the Department has so far met the targets set for the Programme, with 13,500 additional officers recruited by the end of March 2022. The Programme presents an opportunity to learn lessons that could benefit both the Department and wider government.

While the Programme is on track to succeed, the Department faces a challenging final year. It must recruit an additional 6,500 officers by March 2023, at a time when the labour market is changing and public trust and confidence in policing has been damaged in some areas. There is a pressing need to reform aspects of police culture and make forces more representative of the communities they serve, taking best practice lessons where they exist. The recent Strategic Review of Policing concluded that the Programme was having a negligible impact on workforce diversity; while the Department does not believe that to be the case, it does acknowledge that it would have wanted the Programme to have had a greater impact on diversity.

The government promised that the additional 20,000 officers would help to cut crime, get criminals off the street and keep people safe. But to date the Department has focused on getting people through the door and has not set out how it will measure the impact the new officers will have. The way officers have been assigned to forces is also out of date by at least 7 years. This will result in some police forces, such as Surrey police, having more officers by March 2023 compared to 2010, with others remaining below previous peak strength. Forces will need to manage the consequences of this mismatch when the Department finally reviews its approach to funding the police.

Finally, the additional investigative capacity developed by the new officers may lead to a substantial increase in the number of criminal prosecutions brought before the courts, which, as set out in our Forty-Third Report (Reducing the backlog in criminal courts) of the previous Session, are already facing a huge backlog of cases. The Department and the wider criminal justice system do not yet seem to fully understand the extent of this impact and the attendant risk.

Introduction

In mid-2019 the Department created the Police Uplift Programme (the Programme) to deliver the government's manifesto pledge to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers by March 2023. To deliver the Programme, the Department, in conjunction with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing (CoP), created a joint team comprised of staff from each organisation and police forces. Police forces began recruiting the additional officers in September 2019, with the first new officers commencing training a month later. The Department has committed £3.6 billion over the three years of the Programme (2019–20 to 2023) to recruit the 20,000 additional officers by 31 March 2023. Over the next 10 years, the Programme is expected to cost £18.5 billion, which includes costs to the wider criminal justice system.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. **The Department has so far successfully met its objectives for the Programme.** Forces have recruited 13,500 additional officers against the target of 12,000 by the end of March 2022. Fundamental to this achievement has been the Programme's tightly defined objectives and high degree of collaboration across the Home Office and policing bodies. The Programme is being managed by a joint team made up of staff drawn from across these bodies. The makeup of the programme team has remained stable, which has not always been the case on other Departmental programmes we have examined. The Department recognises the potential for other major programmes - both in the Home Office and government more widely - to learn from the Programme. It has also committed to identifying what lessons it can learn about how police forces recruit, train and deploy police officers.

Recommendation: *The Department should systematically capture and disseminate lessons from what has worked with this programme to benefit its major programme portfolio and policing more widely. It should summarise and publish these lessons by April 2023 to support learning across government.*

2. **The Programme has demonstrated the value of standardising recruitment practices across police forces.** Our work has repeatedly highlighted the importance of collaboration between police forces and consistency in their approaches in improving value for money. The creation of the Programme has helped converge standards and approaches relating to recruitment and training across the 43 police forces in England and Wales. This included the adoption of a single online assessment process and a standardised vetting process to improve the consistency of decision making. This standardisation is welcome, and hints at what might be possible beyond the scope of the Programme.

Recommendation: *The Department and the NPCC should identify and pursue other opportunities for standardisation across policing (for example procurement and IT) to achieve better value for money while respecting operational autonomy. It should outline in its Treasury Minute response which other areas of policing have the potential to benefit from a more joined up approach across forces, and how and by when this could be achieved.*

3. **We are not yet convinced that the new training routes introduced by the College of Policing best meet the needs of police forces.** The College of Policing introduced the Police Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF) in 2016 and initially planned for the new approach to be fully in place by December 2019. In part due to the unprecedented number of new police officers under the Programme, the transition has now extended to April 2023. The PEQF requires new officers to either hold or to earn a degree as they train. Most forces have already begun using the PEQF. However, views among stakeholders differ about whether it is necessary or desirable for all police officers to hold or work towards qualification at, or equivalent to, a degree-level, and whether this requirement could exclude or deter some from joining the police, irrespective of the route taken to achieve that qualification.

Recommendation: *The College of Policing should review the impact of the Police Education and Qualifications Framework to ensure it meets the needs of both new police officers and their forces. It should outline when it will publish the results of this assessment in the Treasury Minute response.*

4. **We are concerned that the distribution of new officers may not give police forces what they need to respond to the demands they face.** The Department has set recruitment targets for each police force based on the Police Allocation Formula (the Formula). But it was already significantly out of date when we last examined it in 2018. We are disappointed that four years later the Department has failed to act. The Department asserts that, in the absence of an alternative, it is confident that this was the right approach to allocate new recruits to forces but recognises that it nonetheless needs to update the Formula. Using this formula will also result in some police forces having a greater number of police headcount than previous highpoints, and other forces continuing to be smaller even after the uplift. The Metropolitan Police, for example, is expected to be 11 per cent higher on headcount when compared to 2010 at the end of the programme whilst West Midlands Police will be 7 per cent smaller. The Department has committed to working with forces to manage the implications of any imbalances or gaps when it eventually revises the Formula but this could result in some forces having to reduce officer numbers to ‘right size’ based on the new formula, whilst other forces continue to recruit. More broadly, the recruitment of 20,000 additional new police officers will focus on entry level officers rather than those with specialist skills and experience.

Recommendation: *The Department should set out, as part of its Treasury Minute response, by when it will revise the funding formula and how it will support forces in transitioning to their funding allocation under the new approach.*

5. **Despite their successes so far, the Department and its partners face a challenging final year to deliver the remainder of the Programme.** We are encouraged that the Programme met and exceeded its second-year target of recruiting 12,000 additional officers. To achieve the 20,000 extra officers promised, it still needs to recruit a further 6,500 before 31 March 2023. As the world emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic and the economy recovers, the employment market is becoming increasingly competitive. Furthermore, the debate about public trust and confidence in policing in places like London has put the Department in a more difficult position than before. There is a tension between recruiting more officers quickly and supporting police forces as they diversify their workforce. The Department has not set targets for the Programme for the recruitment of officers from ethnic minority groups or ensuring that forces are representative of the communities they serve, instead leaving this to individual forces to manage. The recent Strategic Review of Policing concluded that the Programme was having a negligible impact on workforce diversity; while the Department does not believe that to be the case, it does acknowledge that it would have wanted the Programme to have had a greater impact on diversity

Recommendation: *The Department and its partners should assist forces in monitoring their workforce by including within each statistical release on progress a table setting out the diversity of individual police forces compared to that of their local populations.*

- *The Department should also respond to the Home Affairs Select Committee report ‘The McPherson report: twenty-two years on’, particularly the recommendations relating to targets for the recruitment and retention of officers from ethnic minority groups and staff and ensuring that police forces are representative of the communities they serve.*

6. **Government has not yet set out what impact the Programme will have on forces’ ability to tackle crime, the public’s trust in policing or the wider Criminal Justice System.** The success of the Programme to date is in part due to its tight focus on recruiting 20,000 additional officers. But the public, whose taxes will ultimately fund the £18.5 billion cost of the officers over the next 10 years, will expect to see the promised reductions in crime and improved public safety. The Department estimates that the new officers will help prevent around 505,000 crimes from 2024–25. But an additional 729,000 cases could also enter the criminal justice system as a result of the new officers and result in more convictions. Maximising the impact of the new officers will depend on the resilience and effectiveness of the Criminal Justice System as a whole. The backlog of cases in criminal courts has already increased significantly due to the Covid-19 pandemic and is expected to remain high without significant change. The arrival of 20,000 additional officers will further increase pressure on criminal courts, which are already facing backlogs, as we have reported previously

Recommendation: *The Department should:*

- *By April 2023, develop a framework to evaluate the medium to long-term impact of the Programme, so that it can demonstrate that the objectives to reduce crime and improve public confidence in policing have been achieved; and*
- *In its Treasury Minute response, set out how it is working with partners in the Criminal Justice System to provide regular and ongoing analysis on the downstream impacts of the new officers to support better planning and demand management.*

1 Progress of the Police Uplift Programme

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Home Office (the Department) about the Police Uplift Programme (the Programme).¹

2. The Home Office (the Department) has overall responsibility for policing in England and Wales and provides central government funding to the 43 police forces which have operational autonomy, with oversight and accountability provided by locally elected Police and Crime Commissioners or Mayoral Authorities. The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) coordinates national policy development, while the College of Policing is the professional body for policing, and sets and reviews police professional standards and training requirements.²

3. In 2019, the Department assessed that the combination of increasing crime and a fall in the number of police officers due to pressure on funding meant that policing was overstretched. Recognising this, in mid-2019 the government made a manifesto pledge to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers. To meet this target while allowing for resignations and retirements, forces will need to recruit 50,000 officers over the three years.³

4. The Department estimated the additional officers would cost £18.5 billion over 10 years. This includes £11 billion on salaries and associated costs and equipment for the additional officers and £7.5 billion of costs to the wider criminal justice system. To date, it has agreed funding of £3.6 billion for the first three years of the Programme. Most of the funding for the first three years is to support police forces to recruit and train the new officers, for the extra 5,500 civilian staff recruited by the Programme to date and for infrastructure, including estates, digital equipment, uniforms and vehicles.⁴

Management of the programme

5. The Department set up the Police Uplift Programme to oversee the recruitment of the 20,000 additional officers. To implement the Programme, the Department worked with its partners in policing. It created a programme team comprised of staff from the Department, the NPCC and the College of Policing, with a senior police officer acting as programme director.⁵

6. The Department set up the Programme very quickly, with preparations beginning in mid-2019 and recruitment commencing in September of that year. The Department has set clear targets for the Programme - the recruitment of 6,000 officers in both 2020–21 and 2021–22 and the final 8,000 in 2022–23. It also has an objective to improve the diversity of police forces so they are more representative of the communities they serve.⁶ The Department told us that Ministers had decided not to set specific targets around

1 C&AG's report, *The Police Uplift Programme*, Session 2021–22, HC1147, 25 March 2022

2 Q25, C&AG's report, para 1.2, footnote 10

3 C&AG's report, paras 1.6, 1.11, 2.3

4 Q23; C&AG's report, para 1.15

5 C&AG's report, paras 1.4, 2.2–2.3

6 C&AG's report, paras 2.3, 2.11, 2.16

diversity, leaving individual forces and their elected Police and Crime Commissioners to set the priority, although our sister committee, the Home Affairs Select Committee, has previously recommended these.⁷

Progress to date

7. As of March 2022, the Programme was on track to deliver the planned number of additional officers. By the end of its first year (2020–21) the Programme had helped police forces to recruit 8,762 police officers, against a target of 6,000. The Programme benefited from commencing recruitment six months prior to the start of 2020–21, meaning that the first ‘year’ of recruitment was in fact 18 months long.⁸ Police forces maintained this performance during the second year. By the end of March 2022, forces had recruited 13,576 new officers (against a cumulative target of 12,000 over the first two years).⁹ This means that the Programme will need to recruit around 6,500 additional officers in the final year to meet its overall target.

Diversity in policing

8. Diversity in policing is slowly improving, but it has continued along the same trend for the past ten years. Prior to the launch of the Programme in September 2019, almost 32% of police officers were female, and by December 2021 this had increased to 34%.¹⁰ The Department told us that 36.9% of all officers recruited in 2019–20 were female but that this had increased to 42.4% for those recruited between April 2020 and December 2021 as a result of the Programme’s efforts. It explained that in Lancashire, the proportion of officers recruited who were female had exceeded 50%. The Department told us that it had visited the area to see what learning it could identify for other forces. It explained that Lancashire had an excellent outreach approach with short, targeted bursts of recruitment.¹¹

9. Policing in England and Wales has struggled with increasing ethnic diversity within its ranks. Based on the 2011 census some 14% of the population of England and Wales are from ethnic minority groups, but in 2019 only 6.9% of serving police officers were from these backgrounds.¹² The Department told us that, while there were no targets for ethnic minority recruitment, since the Programme began, the proportion of new recruits from these groups had increased from 10.3% of new recruits to almost 13%. It explained that, as a result, 8% of all police officers who reported their ethnicity were from ethnic minority groups. However, it also admitted that female and ethnic minority candidates are most likely to withdraw from the process.¹³ Again, there are examples of some forces doing particularly well with West Midlands Police seeing 19.4 per cent of all new recruits being from an ethnic minority background.

7 Q45; Home Affairs Select Committee, *The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on*, HC 139, 30 July 2021, para 2.16–2.17

8 C&AG’s Report, paras 2.11, 2.13

9 Home Office, *Police officer uplift, England and Wales, quarterly update to 31 March 2022*, published 27 April 2022.

10 C&AG’s Report, Figure 9

11 Qq 52,53, 57

12 Home Affairs Select Committee, *The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on*, HC 139, 30 July 2021, para 123 and Figure 3.

13 Qq 54, 57; C&AG’s report, Figure 10

10. The National Audit Office reported that the vetting process used during recruitment had a disproportionate effect on ethnic minority applicants. Applicants of Asian and Black heritage had lower pass rates than those of White heritage and were more likely to succeed in an appeal.¹⁴ The Department told us there were a lot of different issues that can play into vetting and why outcomes are as they are. For example, it explained that in the case of Asian females under 26 years old there were a disproportionate number of failures relating to third party associations within the wider family. The Department told us that it had put in place training for vetting managers and those in charge of appeals, and have put in place data standard so it can compare forces.¹⁵

11. In July 2021, the Home Affairs Select Committee reported that it was extremely disappointing that 22 years after the publication of the Macpherson report the police service is still a very long way from being representative of the diverse communities it serves. It said that despite commitments made over many years police forces across the country have failed to do enough to increase recruitment, retention and promotion of ethnic minority groups for decades. It reported that at the current rate of progress it will take another 20 years for police forces to be properly representative of the communities they serve. It recommended that the government agrees minimum targets for the recruitment of ethnic minority groups with each constabulary reflecting the respective composition of its local population, in order to achieve at least 14% of officers nationally by 2030.¹⁶ At the time of our evidence session, the Department had not yet responded to our sister Committee's report. The Department committed to responding formally to the points in the report.¹⁷

12. The recent Strategic Review of Policing also concluded that the Programme was 'having a negligible impact on workforce diversity'.¹⁸ We asked the Department if it was disappointed that the comment had been made. The Department told us that it did not believe this was still the case, and that while it would have wanted the Programme to have had a greater impact, it disagreed that its impact had been negligible.¹⁹

Impact of the Programme on training reforms

13. The government's decision to recruit an unprecedented number of new police officers over a relatively short period of time impacted on the implementation of a fundamental reform of how police officers are trained and developed. From 2016 onwards, police forces began to adopt the new Police Education and Qualifications Framework (PEQF), as mandated by the College of Policing. This new approach requires prospective police officers to either hold a qualification equivalent to a university degree or to earn an equivalent qualification through study during their first three years of service.²⁰

14. The PEQF was originally supposed to fully replace the existing training route (the Initial Police Learning and Development Programme – IPLDP) by December 2019. In

14 C&AG's report, Figure 10

15 Q 47

16 Home Affairs Select Committee, *The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on*, HC 139, 30 July 2021, paras 213, 216.

17 Qq 59–60

18 The Police Foundation, *A New Mode Of Protection: Redesigning policing and public safety for the 21st century*, March 2022, p99

19 Qq 56–57

20 C&AG's report, para 3.9, Figure 13

2016 the College of Policing had acknowledged the IPLDP route did not provide all the knowledge and skills that new officers needed, including in critical areas such as integrity, ethics and dealing with vulnerability. However, the College of Policing delayed phasing out the IPLDP route until April 2023 because some police forces were unable to fully transition to PEQF in time. The National Audit Office reported that 40% of officers recruited in the first 12 months of the Programme had joined the police through the old route. The Department told us that most police forces had already transitioned to the new recruitment approach, but a few forces were offering both routes and one force was only offering the old route.²¹

15. We asked the Department if it still believed that a ‘degree only’ route was the right approach to police recruitment, given the operational impact of taking officers away for college learning. We noted that stakeholders had suggested that such a one size fits all approach might discourage some candidates, such as those from a military background, for who alternative approaches might work better, and whether it was willing to consider other options.²² The Department told us that police chiefs were fully signed up to the PEQF, and that it had a specific project looking at how to take into account the existing skills of candidates from a military background in order to reduce their training period when joining the police. The Department said that survey evidence from 3,500 new officers indicated that they felt better prepared for their role as police officers as a result of the PEQF approach compared to the old system, though this does not answer the question of whether some people were put off applying in the first place. We questioned whether the approach to training requirements for new officers was working for police forces. In response, the Department told us that this was necessary to ensure new officers learned the necessary theory and then had the opportunity to reinforce this with operational practice under the supervision of more experienced officers. It explained that its approach was “not about spending a lot of time in the classroom [or] writing theoretical essays” but about providing relevant on-the-job training.²³

16. The NAO reported that experienced police tutor constables (who supervise new officers for periods of their training) had shared concerns about the extra effort this role required in addition to their normal duties, and this was echoed by staff from police training teams. The National Audit Office’s survey of chief constables also highlighted tutor constable ‘burn-out’ as an issue. We asked the Department about the risk that more experienced officers were being overly burdened by the need to act as tutors for the high volume of new recruits and to fill the gaps created when they were studying in college. We asked whether it understood the perspective of the more experienced officers and if the extra pressures on tutor officers was having an adverse impact on retention. The Programme Director told us that there was no evidence that this had a significant impact on officer retention, and that the police had the lowest level of voluntary resignations in the public sector, averaging some 7,000 officers per year. The Department also told us that it was looking at the experience of tutors, and was investing in developing front-line supervision and training to make sure tutors and supervisors are best able to assist new officers.²⁴

21 Q 29; C&AG’s Report, para 3.9

22 Qq 25, 30

23 Qq 25–27

24 Qq 28, 41; C&AG’s Report para 3.5

2 Learning lessons

Learning from the programme

17. We previously found that poor cooperation between the Department and police forces has contributed to a failure to achieve value-for-money for taxpayers. In our December 2021 report into the National Law Enforcement Data Service, we concluded that working effectively with the police was critical to the delivery of NLEDS and other technology programmes. But we were concerned that it was not yet clear that the Department’s new approach would resolve longstanding challenges in delivering national programmes for local forces. As part of our report, we found that the Department had failed to establish a joint vision with police until two years into the programme. As costs increased and the programme failed to deliver any meaningful capability in its first four years, police users lost confidence in the Home Office’s ability to deliver NLEDS and other technology programmes.²⁵

18. In contrast, in March 2022 the National Audit Office concluded that the Police Uplift Programme was on track to deliver value for money within its narrowly defined objective of recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers over three years. It reported that the tightly scoped objectives had helped to maintain a focus on delivery, and the Programme also benefited from strong support from police forces for recruiting 20,000 additional police officers.²⁶ We asked the Department what factors had contributed to the programme’s success to date, and what lessons could be taken from it. The Department recognised that in some respects this had been an easier programme to deliver than some of its other programmes, but told us that there were several factors that it needed to capture from this programme and include in future. It explained that the first of these was the way in which the three partners involved in the Programme - the Home Office, the National Police Chiefs’ Council and the College of Policing – had worked together.²⁷

19. The Department told us that the second lesson was that the Programme had benefited from a high degree of stability within its programme team, with very little staff turnover since the Programme began. Finally, the Department told us that the success to date of the Programme was also due to its “clarity of mission” and that it had been given a narrow scope – the recruitment of 20,000 new officers over three years.²⁸ The Department told us that it was committed to learning the lessons from the Programme and implementing them elsewhere. It explained that it had shared the NAO’s report with the Senior Responsible Owners of all the Department’s other major programmes and asked them to consider what they could learn from the Programme’s example. It also committed to setting up a team to sustain some of the successes achieved by the Programme.²⁹

Wider lessons from the Programme

20. The NAO report highlighted a number of changes to police recruitment that the Programme has facilitated. These include a more standardised approach to recruitment

25 Committee of Public Accounts, *The National Law Enforcement Data Programme*, Twenty-Ninth Report of Session 2021–22, 8 December 2021

26 C&AG’s report, paras 7, 15

27 Q 18

28 Q 18; C&AG’s report para 2.8

29 Q 70

applications and assessment, greater engagement between the Department, national and local policing, and increasing commonality in workforce data.³⁰ Introducing these changes has brought about improvements to the way police recruitment works in England and Wales. For example, the more standardised approach to applications enables the Department and national policing bodies to draw upon more consistent data about the volume and characteristics of applications nationally; The Department also told us that the use of a standardised online assessment process had helped the Department to “ensure the professionalisation of assessors, consistency of assessors and consistency of the process”. Further, the availability of more consistent data allows the Department and national policing bodies to identify and address issues in police recruitment and workforce planning at a national level.³¹

21. We asked the Department how it was confident that these changes in approach, particularly the online assessment process, were ensuring police forces were recruiting the right people and avoiding the recurrence of historic issues. The Department told us that the majority of forces hold virtual interviews as part of the online assessment process, and that this process was superior to the previous approach. It told us it was confident that the new process had maintained standards in recruitment, while ensuring that these standards were consistently applied.³²

22. Our predecessor Committee highlighted the issues arising from a lack of standardisation and cooperation between the 43 police forces in England and Wales. In the 2013 report on Police Procurement, it noted that despite some efforts by police forces to collaborate with each other, there remained an unacceptable variation in police forces’ approaches to procurement. We recommended that: “The Department should determine where the greatest benefits can be achieved through either standardisation or national procurement approaches and set a clear timeframe for forces to come to agreement on these. Where forces fail to reach an agreement, the Department should be prepared to enforce standard specifications”.³³ In response, the Department accepted our recommendation and committed to identifying and engaging with forces on areas where a national procurement approach or standard specifications could be appropriate and help it achieve savings.³⁴

23. We also heard evidence on the potential wider lessons which could be derived from this programme, including learning that could inform how police forces recruit, train and deploy other personnel. The National Police Chiefs Council told us that lessons from the Programme had been used to review the recruitment processes used by all 43 police forces for Police Community Support Officers. This had enabled the programme to develop standardised recruitment messages to use in local force advertising campaigns, as well as building up standardised recruitment data and processes.³⁵

30 C&AG’s report, Figure 11; para 3.3; Q32–33

31 Q 32; C&AG’s report, Figure 11

32 Qq 32–33

33 Public Accounts Committee - Twenty-First Report, *Police Procurement*, HC 115, Session 2013–14, 17 September 2013 paras 2, 5

34 HM Treasury, *Treasury Minutes – Government responses on the Second, the Sixth, the Thirteenth and Fourteenth, the Seventeenth to the Nineteenth, the Twenty First, the Twenty Second and the Twenty Fourth Reports from the Committee of Public Accounts, Session 2013–14*, Cm 8744, November 2013

35 Q 84

3 Future challenges

Meeting final year targets

24. At the end of March 2022, the Department was ahead of its second-year target of 12,000 additional officers, having recruited some 13,500. This means that in the Programme’s final year police forces will have to recruit a further 6,500 additional officers to meet the 20,000 target.³⁶

25. The Department told us that it expected the recruitment of the remaining officers to be more challenging than the preceding two years. Firstly, it explained that the final year of the Programme required a greater number of officers to be recruited than in the preceding two. The Department set the Programme a target of 8,000 officers for its final year, compared to 6,000 in each of 2020–21 and 2021–22, although it has been helped by gaining an extra 1,500 by the end of year two. Secondly, it told us that the employment market had changed, with “shifts in the number of vacancies in various different sectors”. Finally, it recognised that the debate around public trust and confidence in policing had made recruitment more difficult than before.³⁷

26. These challenges were particularly evident in relation to the Metropolitan Police Service, which has faced a number of recent high-profile incidents involving serving police officers. In his evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee in April 2022, the Acting Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service stated that he was less confident than before that the force would reach its final year target, partly because the job market was more challenging and because of the higher salaries being offered by some organisations.³⁸ The Department told us that it believed officer pay remained competitive within the public sector, with a starting range of pay for a new officer between £23,000 and £24,000 and rising to almost £40,000 when a police officer was fully competent after six years’ service. It confirmed however that the Metropolitan Police Service was receiving only half the number of applications it needed to achieve its final year target, though applications for detective roles were “very healthy”. The Department told us it was working with the force to improve this and identify how it could better attract applicants.³⁹

27. We asked the Department whether it was concerned about retaining new officers. The Department acknowledged that if increasing numbers of officers left the service, this would in turn increase the number of new officers the Programme would need to recruit. The Department told us that it was losing around 9% of new officers, which was in line with its planning assumption that around 1 in 10 new officers would leave in the first two years of their service. This compared to an overall police officer voluntary resignation rate of 2% per year.⁴⁰

36 Home Office, *Police officer uplift, England and Wales, quarterly update to 31 March 2022*

37 Qq 19, 34

38 Q 33; Home Affairs Committee Oral evidence: Work of the Metropolitan Police Service, HC 1240, 20 April 2022, Q 2, 16, 23

39 Qq 35, 37; Home Affairs Committee Oral evidence: Work of the Metropolitan Police Service, HC 1240, 20 April 2022 Q24

40 Qq 39–40

Capacity and capability of policing

28. The Department based the allocation of the 20,000 additional officers between police forces on the long-outdated Police Allocation Formula.⁴¹ Our predecessor Committee noted that this formula was obsolete and in 2018 recommended that “The Department must urgently commit to reviewing the funding formula, and after consultation, deploy a new funding formula as soon as practicable”.⁴² The Department has yet to do so, although it is currently working on a replacement, which it expects to be in place before the next general election.⁴³

29. The Department recognised that the Formula was out of date but told us that, as there was no credible alternative available, it was confident that it was appropriate to use the existing formula to allocate the 20,000 officers.⁴⁴ The National Audit Office, however, reported that because the Department has used the outdated formula to allocate officers to forces, it was likely the distribution of additional officers did not align to current or future policing needs. Police forces expressed concerns to the NAO about their ability to maintain a balanced workforce within likely future funding settlements.⁴⁵ We challenged the Department on whether the use of the Formula reflected what police forces needed given the NAO’s finding that it did not give the Department a force-by-force picture of policing or the pressures being faced. The Department told us that Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners had agreed the approach and that it was as fair as it could have been. We asked if, once the new funding approach was in place, it showed that some police forces needed additional resource, whether this would be addressed. The Department told us that if this arose it would work with forces to ensure gaps were closed.⁴⁶

30. We asked whether the Programme was about more ‘bobbies on the beat’ rather than tackling the more complex areas of crime that are growing, such as serious sexual offences and fraud. The Department told us that the Programme would not have a direct and immediate impact on such issues, as it was focused on recruiting officers at the entry level whereas crimes such as rape required more experienced officers. The Department told us that some new officers who were recruited directly as detectives would have more impact on these crimes sooner, but that the majority would take time to gain experience.⁴⁷

Securing outcomes

31. The National Audit Office reported that to demonstrate value for money in the longer term, the Department must show that the investment in additional officers has better enabled police forces to reduce crime and increase public confidence in policing. To date, the Department’s management of the Programme has largely focused on inputs (funding and officers recruited) and activity (supporting recruitment and office training) and the Department had not yet set out how it would evaluate the Programme’s impact on crime.⁴⁸ We asked the Department about the expected impact of the Programme and the difference

41 Q 85

42 Committee of Public Accounts, *Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales*, HC 1513, Sixty-Seventh Report of Session 2017–19, 7 November 2018, para 6

43 Q 85, C&AG’s report, para 1.12

44 Q 85

45 C&AG’s report, para 3.7

46 Qq 87, 89

47 Qq 75–77, 79

48 C&AG’s report, paras 13, 3.10 and 3.11

it would make to policing and to the public. The Department acknowledged that the Programme was narrowly scoped and focussed on inputs - recruiting an additional 20,000 police officers. We therefore asked the Department how it would judge the Programme in terms of outputs and outcomes and when taxpayers would begin to see benefits from the investment. The Department told us it was difficult to draw a direct link between extra police officers and reductions in crime as there are many variables involved and the '[link] is not very specific'.⁴⁹

32. We challenged the Department on this issue, noting that it had calculated that as a result of the Programme some additional 500,000 crimes prevented annually from 2024–25. We also noted that the Department was claiming the Programme would achieve some £4.7 billion in benefits over a decade.⁵⁰ The Department told us that this area was an inexact science and these assumptions had since been reduced, partly because of the complexity of determining causality between police officer numbers and the level of crime. It said it was seeking to improve the evidence base, and was working with the Ministry of Justice to develop better modelling over the coming year. This should enable the Department to establish some correlation between additional police officers and changes in crime outcomes, but it would be harder to demonstrate causality.⁵¹

33. In our March 2022 report on reducing the backlog in criminal courts, we reported there were 59,928 Crown Court cases awaiting trial in September 2021, increasing from 33,290 cases since March 2019 (an increase of 80%). We concluded that the government was unlikely to succeed in addressing the unacceptable delays victims, witnesses and defendants faced in having cases heard. We found that victims of rape and serious sexual offences faced delays which compounded their suffering and led to too many cases collapsing. We were also unconvinced that the prison system would be able to cope with the likely increase in prisoners given the planned increase in police officers and the government's efforts to reduce the criminal case backlog.⁵² We asked the Department about its analysis of the impact of the Programme on the wider criminal justice system, specifically the potential for it to add a further 729,000 cases to a courts system struggling to manage a significant backlog of cases. The Department told us that it was working closely with the Ministry of Justice on this matter. It explained that the criminal justice system had received a funding increase in the recent Spending Review to deal with some of the consequences of the increase in police officer numbers.⁵³

49 Qq 61–62

50 Qq 65, 90, C&AG's Report, Figure 16

51 Qq 62–64

52 Committee of Public Accounts, *Reducing the backlog in criminal courts*, HC 643, Forty-Third Report of Session 2021–22, 9 March 2022, paras 1–4

53 Q 91; C&AG's Report paras 3.14–3.15

Formal minutes

Monday 18 July 2022

Members present:

Dame Meg Hillier

Olivia Blake

Dan Carden

Mr Mark Francois

Craig Mackinlay

Sarah Olney

Nick Smith

The Police Uplift Programme

Draft Report (*The Police Uplift Programme*), proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 33 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Introduction agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the fifteenth of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available, in accordance with the provisions of Standing Order No. 134.

Adjournment

Adjourned till Wednesday 20 July at 1.00pm

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 25 April 2022

Matthew Rycroft CBE, Permanent Secretary, Home Office; **Rachel Watson**, Policing Director and SRO for the Police Uplift Programme, Home Office; **Deputy Chief Constable Janette McCormick**, Director, Police Uplift Programme, National Police Chiefs' Council

[Q1-101](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

PUP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

- 1 Social Market Foundation ([PUP0002](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2022–23

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy Annual Report and Accounts 2020–21	HC 59
2nd	Lessons from implementing IR35 reforms	HC 60
3rd	The future of the Advanced Gas-cooled Reactors	HC 118
4th	Use of evaluation and modelling in government	HC 254
5th	Local economic growth	HC 252
6th	Department of Health and Social Care 2020–21 Annual Report and Accounts	HC 253
7th	Armoured Vehicles: the Ajax programme	HC 259
8th	Financial sustainability of the higher education sector in England	HC 257
9th	Child Maintenance	HC 255
10th	Restoration and Renewal of Parliament	HC 49
11th	The rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine programme in England	HC 258
12th	Management of PPE contracts	HC 260
13th	Secure training centres and secure schools	HC 30
14th	Investigation into the British Steel Pension Scheme	HC 251
1st Special Report	Sixth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 50

Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Low emission cars	HC 186
2nd	BBC strategic financial management	HC 187
3rd	COVID-19: Support for children's education	HC 240
4th	COVID-19: Local government finance	HC 239
5th	COVID-19: Government Support for Charities	HC 250
6th	Public Sector Pensions	HC 289
7th	Adult Social Care Markets	HC 252
8th	COVID 19: Culture Recovery Fund	HC 340
9th	Fraud and Error	HC 253

Number	Title	Reference
10th	Overview of the English rail system	HC 170
11th	Local auditor reporting on local government in England	HC 171
12th	COVID 19: Cost Tracker Update	HC 173
13th	Initial lessons from the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic	HC 175
14th	Windrush Compensation Scheme	HC 174
15th	DWP Employment support	HC 177
16th	Principles of effective regulation	HC 176
17th	High Speed 2: Progress at Summer 2021	HC 329
18th	Government's delivery through arm's-length bodies	HC 181
19th	Protecting consumers from unsafe products	HC 180
20th	Optimising the defence estate	HC 179
21st	School Funding	HC 183
22nd	Improving the performance of major defence equipment contracts	HC 185
23rd	Test and Trace update	HC 182
24th	Crossrail: A progress update	HC 184
25th	The Department for Work and Pensions' Accounts 2020–21 – Fraud and error in the benefits system	HC 633
26th	Lessons from Greensill Capital: accreditation to business support schemes	HC 169
27th	Green Homes Grant Voucher Scheme	HC 635
28th	Efficiency in government	HC 636
29th	The National Law Enforcement Data Programme	HC 638
30th	Challenges in implementing digital change	HC 637
31st	Environmental Land Management Scheme	HC 639
32nd	Delivering gigabitcapable broadband	HC 743
33rd	Underpayments of the State Pension	HC 654
34th	Local Government Finance System: Overview and Challenges	HC 646
35th	The pharmacy early payment and salary advance schemes in the NHS	HC 745
36th	EU Exit: UK Border post transition	HC 746
37th	HMRC Performance in 2020–21	HC 641
38th	COVID-19 cost tracker update	HC 640
39th	DWP Employment Support: Kickstart Scheme	HC 655
40th	Excess votes 2020–21: Serious Fraud Office	HC 1099
41st	Achieving Net Zero: Follow up	HC 642
42nd	Financial sustainability of schools in England	HC 650

Number	Title	Reference
43rd	Reducing the backlog in criminal courts	HC 643
44th	NHS backlogs and waiting times in England	HC 747
45th	Progress with trade negotiations	HC 993
46th	Government preparedness for the COVID-19 pandemic: lessons for government on risk	HC 952
47th	Academies Sector Annual Report and Accounts 2019/20	HC 994
48th	HMRC's management of tax debt	HC 953
49th	Regulation of private renting	HC 996
50th	Bounce Back Loans Scheme: Follow-up	HC 951
51st	Improving outcomes for women in the criminal justice system	HC 997
52nd	Ministry of Defence Equipment Plan 2021–31	HC 1164
1st Special Report	Fifth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 222

Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Support for children with special educational needs and disabilities	HC 85
2nd	Defence Nuclear Infrastructure	HC 86
3rd	High Speed 2: Spring 2020 Update	HC 84
4th	EU Exit: Get ready for Brexit Campaign	HC 131
5th	University technical colleges	HC 87
6th	Excess votes 2018–19	HC 243
7th	Gambling regulation: problem gambling and protecting vulnerable people	HC 134
8th	NHS capital expenditure and financial management	HC 344
9th	Water supply and demand management	HC 378
10th	Defence capability and the Equipment Plan	HC 247
11th	Local authority investment in commercial property	HC 312
12th	Management of tax reliefs	HC 379
13th	Whole of Government Response to COVID-19	HC 404
14th	Readying the NHS and social care for the COVID-19 peak	HC 405
15th	Improving the prison estate	HC 244
16th	Progress in remediating dangerous cladding	HC 406
17th	Immigration enforcement	HC 407
18th	NHS nursing workforce	HC 408

Number	Title	Reference
19th	Restoration and renewal of the Palace of Westminster	HC 549
20th	Tackling the tax gap	HC 650
21st	Government support for UK exporters	HC 679
22nd	Digital transformation in the NHS	HC 680
23rd	Delivering carrier strike	HC 684
24th	Selecting towns for the Towns Fund	HC 651
25th	Asylum accommodation and support transformation programme	HC 683
26th	Department of Work and Pensions Accounts 2019–20	HC 681
27th	Covid-19: Supply of ventilators	HC 685
28th	The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's management of the Magnox contract	HC 653
29th	Whitehall preparations for EU Exit	HC 682
30th	The production and distribution of cash	HC 654
31st	Starter Homes	HC 88
32nd	Specialist Skills in the civil service	HC 686
33rd	Covid-19: Bounce Back Loan Scheme	HC 687
34th	Covid-19: Support for jobs	HC 920
35th	Improving Broadband	HC 688
36th	HMRC performance 2019–20	HC 690
37th	Whole of Government Accounts 2018–19	HC 655
38th	Managing colleges' financial sustainability	HC 692
39th	Lessons from major projects and programmes	HC 694
40th	Achieving government's long-term environmental goals	HC 927
41st	COVID 19: the free school meals voucher scheme	HC 689
42nd	COVID-19: Government procurement and supply of Personal Protective Equipment	HC 928
43rd	COVID-19: Planning for a vaccine Part 1	HC 930
44th	Excess Votes 2019–20	HC 1205
45th	Managing flood risk	HC 931
46th	Achieving Net Zero	HC 935
47th	COVID-19: Test, track and trace (part 1)	HC 932
48th	Digital Services at the Border	HC 936
49th	COVID-19: housing people sleeping rough	HC 934
50th	Defence Equipment Plan 2020–2030	HC 693
51st	Managing the expiry of PFI contracts	HC 1114
52nd	Key challenges facing the Ministry of Justice	HC 1190

Number	Title	Reference
53rd	Covid 19: supporting the vulnerable during lockdown	HC 938
54th	Improving single living accommodation for service personnel	HC 940
55th	Environmental tax measures	HC 937
56th	Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund	HC 941