



House of Commons  
Home Affairs Committee

---

# Policing priorities

---

**Fifth Report of Session 2022–23**

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

*Ordered by the House of Commons  
to be printed 25 October 2023*

**HC 635**

Published on 10 November 2023  
by authority of the House of Commons

## Home Affairs Committee

The Home Affairs Committee is appointed by the House of Commons to examine the expenditure, administration, and policy of the Home Office and its associated public bodies.

### Current membership

[Rt Hon Dame Diana Johnson MP](#) (*Labour, Kingston upon Hull North*) Chair

[Rt Hon Diane Abbott MP](#) (*Independent, Hackney North and Stoke Newington*)

[Lee Anderson MP](#) (*Conservative, Ashfield*)

[Paula Barker MP](#) (*Labour, Liverpool, Wavertree*)

[James Daly MP](#) (*Conservative, Bury North*)

[Simon Fell MP](#) (*Conservative, Barrow and Furness*)

[Carolyn Harris MP](#) (*Labour, Swansea East*)

[Adam Holloway MP](#) (*Conservative, Gravesham*)

[Marco Longhi MP](#) (*Conservative, Dudley North*)

[Tim Loughton MP](#) (*Conservative, East Worthing and Shoreham*)

[Alison Thewliss MP](#) (*Scottish National Party, Glasgow Central*)

The following Members were also Members of the Committee during this Parliament:

[Rt Hon Yvette Cooper MP](#) (*Labour, Normanton, Pontefract and Castleford*); [Janet Daby MP](#) (*Labour, Lewisham East*); [Dehenna Davison MP](#) (*Conservative, Bishop Auckland*); [Stephen Doughty MP](#) (*Labour (Co-op) Cardiff South and Penarth*); [Ruth Edwards MP](#) (*Conservative, Rushcliffe*); [Laura Farris MP](#) (*Conservative, Newbury*); [Andrew Gwynne MP](#) (*Labour, Denton and Reddish*); [Holly Lynch MP](#) (*Labour, Halifax*); [Stuart C McDonald MP](#) (*Scottish National Party Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Kirkintilloch East*); [Gary Sambrook MP](#) (*Conservative, Birmingham, Northfield*); [Matt Vickers MP](#) (*Conservative, Stockton South*)

### Powers

The Committee is one of the departmental select committees, the powers of which are set out in House of Commons Standing Orders, principally in SO No 152. These are available on the internet via [www.parliament.uk](http://www.parliament.uk).

### Publications

© Parliamentary Copyright House of Commons 2023. This publication may be reproduced under the terms of the Open Parliament Licence, which is published at [www.parliament.uk/copyright](http://www.parliament.uk/copyright).

Committee reports are published on the Committee's website at [www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom](http://www.parliament.uk/homeaffairscom) and in print by Order of the House.

Evidence relating to this report is published on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

### Committee staff

The current staff of the Committee are Gigs Banga (Committee Specialist), Zara Bernard (Committee Specialist), Sonia Draper (Committee Operations Manager), Maz Keating (Second Clerk), Penny McLean (Committee Specialist), Benedict Morter (Committee Operations Officer), Jessica Mulley (Clerk), Lauren Nickolls (Police and Criminal Justice Researcher), Rebecca Owen-Evans (Committee Specialist), George Perry (Senior Media and Communications Officer), and Laudy Samra (Assistant Inquiry Manager Apprentice)

## Contacts

All correspondence should be addressed to the Clerk of the Home Affairs Committee, House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA. The telephone number for general enquiries is 020 7219 6856; the Committee's email address is [homeaffcom@parliament.uk](mailto:homeaffcom@parliament.uk).

You can follow the Committee on X (formerly Twitter) using [@CommonsHomeAffs](https://twitter.com/CommonsHomeAffs).



# Contents

---

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>1 Culture, misconduct and complaints</b>	<b>7</b>
The case of the Met	8
Joining the police: attracting and vetting the right people	9
A culture that supports those who call out misconduct	11
Misconduct processes and dismissals	12
Identifying concerns and determining misconduct	12
Dismissals	13
Bringing more outside scrutiny in	16
Taking a 'a fitness to practise' approach	17
Criminal conduct: Investigating police-perpetrated abuse	18
A complaints system that inspires confidence	19
Accountability and the role of the IOPC	21
<b>2 Building trust and confidence in policing</b>	<b>22</b>
Building trust and confidence through strong performance	22
Building trust and confidence through transparency and accountability	23
A duty of candour?	23
Building trust and confidence through neighbourhood policing	23
The impact of racism and disproportionality on trust and confidence	25
Stop and search	25
The treatment of victims and survivors from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds	27
The Police Race Action Plan and institutional racism	28
Building trust and confidence through better care for victims and survivors	30
Case study: Improving policing's response to violence against women and girls	31
<b>3 Prioritising roles and functions</b>	<b>34</b>
The policing mission: understanding the police's purpose	34
Different demands, different challenges: policing in the United States of America	35
Understanding changing demand and the resource to meet it	37
Prioritising crime types: volume and high-harm crime	38
More focus on fraud	39
Non-crime demand—the "service of last resort"	40
Mental health demand and Right Care, Right Person	41

The role of the police in prevention work	43
<b>4 A workforce fit for the future</b>	<b>45</b>
A workforce that reflects the community it serves	45
Retention and wellbeing	46
Building the skills and capabilities to meet evolving challenges	47
A workforce strategy beyond the Uplift Programme	47
Experience levels	47
Specialist skills and expectations of “omnicompetence”	48
Training and learning	49
The degree debate	50
<b>5 The wider criminal justice system</b>	<b>52</b>
Progressing cases and working with the Crown Prosecution Service	52
Case files and disclosure	52
Redacting case files	54
Charging powers, outcomes, and reducing pressure on the system	55
<b>Annex: Executive summary of policing priorities Town Hall event</b>	<b>57</b>
Deliberative Public Opinion on Policing Priorities	57
Executive Summary	57
<b>Conclusions and recommendations</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Formal minutes</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>Witnesses</b>	<b>72</b>
<b>Published written evidence</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament</b>	<b>77</b>

## Summary

When we launched this inquiry, we intended to consider how policing should prioritise the many outward roles that it plays. On hearing the evidence however, one of our early conclusions was that the first priority for policing in England and Wales was instead to look inward and ensure it has the right people and right culture to deliver a service that earns public trust, confidence and consent. Policing must prioritise (re)establishing that model of policing by consent not only because it is the right thing to do: without public trust and confidence in the police, the success of attempts to prevent and detect crime will be reduced, no matter how impressive the strategic thinking behind them may be.

We have been shocked by revelations about serious criminality and misconduct perpetrated by individual police officers. The most egregious examples have come from within the Metropolitan Police Service (“the Met”), the largest force in England and Wales. Far from setting an example for other forces to follow, the Met has repeatedly failed to tackle absolutely unacceptable practices and behaviour. We heard that many of the Met’s problems are echoed in other forces. Some of these systematic failures require a national solution.

Policing must build public trust and confidence by demonstrating that it is competent in preventing and responding to crime, that its officers have integrity, and that its wider culture will not tolerate wrongdoing, discrimination or criminality within its own ranks. It must communicate in an open, transparent and accessible way with communities, developing a two-way dialogue that moves from telling the public that its culture will change to showing them that it actually has.

Policing cannot succeed in its mission without the right people, with the right skills, in the right roles to meet demand. But recruiting and retaining the right people goes further than skills and aptitudes. A cultural expectation of high standards and strong values are equally essential. Systems and processes must cultivate positive behaviours in place of reactive responses to misconduct. Officers and staff must be supported in raising concerns about the behaviour of others.

We heard policing’s focus should be on what soonly policing can do – but also that prevention was a key area. Clarifying the police mission is not only vital in supporting officers and staff to manage demand. It will also help policing navigate what the Police Foundation calls “the public safety system” without taking on the work of other agencies that are better placed to respond, or reinforcing its place as the “service of last resort” when others are unable to step up.

We know that “non-crime demand” has put pressure on policing, and welcome attempts to ensure that the right person provides the right care to people who are suffering. But, at least in the short-term, demand with a mental health component is likely to remain. And a deadline for moving policing to a new model is not a solution to unmet mental health need. If health and social care services do not have the capacity to play their part, the Government must step up.

We focussed on what policing’s priorities should be and have concluded that the key priority is developing a culture that recruits, supports and nurtures officers and staff to

maintain high standards of performance and behaviour across the board – including robust challenge and effective sanctions when the line is crossed. Outcomes for victims and survivors of crime matter hugely. Policing has an important role in preventing crime from happening in the first place. But until policing can make sustained cultural change, rather than rushing to operationalise crisis responses, it will not be able to perform at the high level that we as citizens want and need.

As His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has said, “England and Wales are arguably safer than they have ever been”, for which policing should take at least some of the credit.<sup>1</sup> For example, the general threat from firearms is relatively low but even here there is no room for complacency. While access to firearms is currently challenging for criminals, we heard how important it will be for criminal justice agencies to keep on top of developments such as 3D printing to ensure it stays that way.

As the world changes, policing needs to change with it. The service faces a crisis in public confidence, growing and increasingly complex demands, and undermining revelations about longstanding and deeply problematic cultures. This must be a turning point for the police – marginal changes are not enough.

---

<sup>1</sup> His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022](#), June 2023



# Introduction

---

We launched our inquiry, in July 2022, against a backdrop of high-profile criminal and disciplinary cases involving police officers, low charging and detection rates and on-going concerns about how forces treat women and people from minority communities. One might expect that recommendations from an inquiry on Policing priorities would include a clear steer on crime areas needing more focus. While we do consider prioritisation of policing's roles and functions, our recommendations instead largely reflect our key conclusion: that the first priority for policing in England and Wales should be to look inward and ensure it has the right people and right culture to deliver a service that earns public trust, confidence and consent. Only by (re)establishing a collective sense that “the police are the public and that the public are the police” can policing achieve its crime prevention and detection goals.<sup>2</sup> For that reason, the first areas we consider in this report are policing culture, and how trust and confidence in policing might be increased. We go on to look at the implications for policing's workforce and interactions with other parts of the wider criminal justice system.

It was important that we heard the voices of members of the public as part of this inquiry. We would like to express our thanks to all those who took the time to join our deliberative Town Hall, or a “distributed dialogue.”<sup>3</sup> Your contribution has informed our thinking.

Throughout this Parliament, we have conducted other inquiries with implications for policing, some of which we refer to and build on in this report. Our inquiry into “*The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on*” found that, while there have been important improvements, persistent, deep rooted and unjustified racial disparities in key areas remain.<sup>4</sup> When we examined “*Police Conduct and Complaints*”, we called for a cultural change, established by and led from the top, to ensure that lessons are learned, that actions are taken to redress poor and unprofessional behaviour, and that police officers remember always that the trust of the public on which they depend needs to be earned and constantly maintained.<sup>5</sup> And our inquiry into the “*Investigation and prosecution of rape*” concluded that charging, prosecution and conviction levels remained shamefully low.<sup>6</sup>

During this inquiry, we have been appalled by terrible cases of misconduct and criminality committed by officers. Martin Hewitt, then Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), told us that things would likely get worse before they got better, as the service works to identify and cleanse itself of these “pockets of toxic culture.”<sup>7</sup> Our predecessor Committee's inquiry into “*Policing for the future*” concluded that figures on police welfare painted a “picture of a service under serious strain” and that communities were being “increasingly let down” without significant reform and investment.<sup>8</sup> Outgoing Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Sir Thomas Winsor, echoed this, stating

---

2 Home Office, [Definition of policing by consent](#), December 2012

3 In a “distributed dialogue” stakeholders and citizen groups set up their own events to discuss a topic, following prompts from organisers. The rationale is that “dialogue on complex issues should include a range of conversations that happen in different spaces”, Involve UK, [Distributed dialogue](#), accessed 20 October 2023

4 Home Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2021–22, [The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on](#), HC 139

5 Home Affairs Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2021–22, [Police conduct and complaints](#), HC 140

6 Home Affairs Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2021–22, [The investigation and prosecution of rape](#), HC 193

7 [Q30](#)

8 Home Affairs Committee, Tenth Report of Session 2017–19, [Policing for the future](#), HC 515, para 12

demand and public expectations could not be met without sufficient funding. He said, “given that the police cannot meet all future demand”, decisions had to be made on “what the public want the police to do less of.”<sup>9</sup>

A year later his successor Andy Cooke said England and Wales were “arguably safer than they have ever been”, for which some of the credit must lie with the police.<sup>10</sup> But he also couldn’t “recall a time when the relationship between the police and the public was more strained.” He said forces were failing to get the basics right in investigation and responding to the public. In his view, the police needed to prioritise the issues that matter most to the public, concentrating on effective neighbourhood policing and critical elements of the police service’s leadership and workforce (such as more scrutiny of vetting and recruitment processes).

As Andy Cooke noted, policing is a “complex system operating within an even more complex criminal justice system” with “widespread systemic failings in both.” We set out to understand what changes were needed for policing to give the kind of service that citizens deserve—and most officers and police staff want to provide—in challenging contemporary circumstances. We also wanted to understand the extent to which Baroness Casey’s conclusions about behaviour and culture in the Met might apply to other forces. Policing Minister, Chris Philp, acknowledged that “elements” of what Baroness Casey identified “will be present and problematic in other police forces around the country.”<sup>11</sup> The Review team itself encouraged “other forces to read our reports and [ ... ] look in the mirror to see whether they recognise themselves there.”<sup>12</sup>

In the Minister’s view “a combination of fixing the conduct issues and doing the basics of policing—common-sense policing—right are the ingredients necessary to restore public confidence.”<sup>13</sup> We believe that policing cannot get those basics right without first effecting and sustaining cultural change within forces.

---

9 Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2021](#), March 2022

10 His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022](#), June 2023

11 [Q471](#)

12 [Q431](#)

13 [Q493](#)

# 1 Culture, misconduct and complaints

1. A modern police service must repair its culture before it can improve its service. For example, we heard during our inquiry that the service would “only be fit” to police violence against women and girls (VAWG) “if it is able to police itself effectively first.”<sup>14</sup> However, Baroness Casey’s Review into the Met’s culture and standards of behaviour raised doubts about the ability of the force to tackle “deep seated cultures.”<sup>15</sup>

2. Many of the revelations about poor behaviour and criminal activity within policing have focussed on the Met – both the largest force in England and Wales and one that holds some national responsibilities. Some submissions were concerned that failings within the Met would reflect poorly on other parts of the service.<sup>16</sup> However, we heard that the Met’s problems were echoed across forces, not just by reputation but in actuality. His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection of misogyny across the police service described examples of highly concerning behaviour such as male officers making inappropriate sexual comments about colleagues and members of the public, pursuing women in lower ranks for sex, viewing pornography at work and sending it to female colleagues, and stopping cars driven by women in what they called “booty patrol.”<sup>17</sup> During the life of this inquiry, several cases of misconduct and predatory or discriminatory behaviour involving officers from other forces have also come to light, reiterating that these problems go wider than the Met.

3. We were impressed by the approach that former Chief Constable Lee Freeman KPM of Humberside Police had taken in the aftermath of the revelations about David Carrick, serial rapist and former Met Police officer, who was sentenced during the lifetime of this inquiry. While Chief Constable Freeman expressed pride in the progress Humberside Police made from being in special measures to gaining the “highest grades ever” in its latest HMICFRS police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspection, his open letter to officers, staff and volunteers refuted the idea that misconduct was a problem only for the Met.<sup>18</sup> Instead, he called on his team to move from being the silent majority to being “active guardians of our culture and behaviours before we lose all police legitimacy with our communities and the permissions and the ability to police by consent”.<sup>19</sup> He clearly set out his expectation that the force “demonstrate to our communities that we can be trusted, through our actions and not words”, with “every interaction [... to] be one that you would be happy for your own family members to have received.”<sup>20</sup>

4. The Met is in the spotlight. We expect them to provide system leadership and role model the very best policing can be. However, attempting to push responsibility for failings in police culture solely on to the Met will not serve the public. All forces should keep standards of behaviour and internal culture under constant review, and seize the opportunity to

14 Refuge ([POP0051](#))

15 Baroness Louise Casey, [Baroness Casey Review: Final Report](#), March 2023

16 Office of the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner ([POP0019](#)), Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex ([POP0009](#)), Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire ([POP0017](#))

17 His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

18 [Q144](#)

19 The Lincolnite, [“Trust has been severely damaged”: Chief constable’s open letter about David Carrick](#), January 2023

20 The Lincolnite, [“Trust has been severely damaged”: Chief constable’s open letter about David Carrick](#), January 2023

consider the extent to which Baroness Casey’s findings and recommendations apply to them. HMICFRS has recently reported that Humberside “requires improvement” to its vetting and counter-corruption arrangements, reinforcing the message that no force—not even the highest-performing—can afford to lose focus on these crucial areas.<sup>21</sup>

## The case of the Met

5. A Public Attitude Survey for Q4 2022–23 showed 69% of Londoners agreed that the Met “is an organisation they can trust”,<sup>22</sup> down from 85% in 2018/19.<sup>23</sup> Only 56% agreed the Met works to ensure all officers adhere to the highest possible standards of professionalism, and only 49% of Londoners felt the police were doing a good job in the area where they live.<sup>24</sup> Others share concerns about the Met’s performance. HMICFRS moved the Met into the “Engage” phase of its monitoring process in June 2022, having identified “substantial and persistent concerns about several aspects of performance”. These included counter-corruption arrangements and “several high-profile incidents that raise ongoing concerns about the force’s performance, or that are likely to have a chilling effect on public trust and confidence.”<sup>25</sup>

6. The Casey Review found evidence in the Met of “severe institutional failings [ ... ] that will require radical reform to resolve”.<sup>26</sup> Baroness Casey concluded that the force lacked “accountability and transparency”<sup>27</sup> and that “policing by consent” needed to be restored to the force’s guiding principles by which all its policies and practices are measured.<sup>28</sup> Southwark Council had also told us that the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) “could do more to give Londoners a voice in its supervision” of the Met.<sup>29</sup> Baroness Casey recommended the force “introduce a new process with Londoners to apologise for past failings and rebuild consent.”

7. In response to a recommendation by Baroness Casey, the Mayor is now chairing a quarterly Policing Board to drive through changes. We are pleased to see that the new board will hold four public meetings a year<sup>30</sup> and that applications for remunerated board roles were sought from “individuals from across London’s communities”.<sup>31</sup> The Board’s first meeting took place on 26 September 2023, and we were pleased to see a number of communities across London were represented.<sup>32</sup>

8. Baroness Casey said “clean-up” should be expected to start happening within a year of her findings, and that from two years and then “on a periodic basis”, an independent,

21 HMICFRS, [A report into the effectiveness of vetting and counter-corruption arrangements in Humberside Police](#), September 2023

22 Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, [MOPAC surveys](#), Q4 2022–23

23 Metropolitan Police Service ([POP0086](#))

24 Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, [MOPAC surveys](#), Q4 2022–23

25 His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, [Police forces in Engage](#), March 2023

26 Baroness Casey Review, [Press notice: Baroness Casey Review of the Metropolitan Police: Final report](#), March 2023

27 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

28 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

29 Southwark Council ([POP0037](#))

30 Mayor of London, [Mayor to establish London Policing Board to oversee and scrutinise reform of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), May 2023

31 Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime, [Join the London Policing Board](#), accessed 12 September 2023

32 London Policing Board, [Meetings](#), accessed 9 October 2023

external reviewer should be brought into provide assurance of progress.<sup>33</sup> Sir Mark Rowley, the new Met Commissioner, told us that reforming the Met would be “several years’ work”.<sup>34</sup> The Policing Minister, Chris Philip, said he was unwilling to impose “arbitrary or artificial time limits”<sup>35</sup> on the Met’s improvement journey. The sheer scale of the challenges facing the Met demands a clear timetable for the force to demonstrate publicly that sufficient progress is being made.

**9. There are thousands of committed and ethical officers and staff working in the Met. They—like members of the public, victims, and survivors—have been let down for too long. We are concerned that without an explicit timetable for future external review of the Met, there will not be sufficient follow-through on Baroness Casey’s recommendations and that her Review will join a long list of those that have gone before without effective implementation. We understand that the new quarterly Policing Board convened by the Mayor of London can provide ongoing scrutiny, but it remains to be seen whether that will be enough to drive change at the scale and pace required or whether it will be sufficient to show Londoners that progress has been made. Baroness Casey was brought in precisely because previous efforts by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime to drive cultural change in the Met had failed.**

*10. We recommend the Home Office and the Mayor of London co-ordinate in commissioning a further independent review of the Met to monitor and measure progress in implementing Baroness Casey’s findings up to March 2024, a year on from the publication of her review.*

## Joining the police: attracting and vetting the right people

11. In November 2022, HMICFRS concluded it was “too easy for the wrong people to join and stay in the police”, partly because “vetting standards are not high enough.” Some forces had stopped carrying out checks on an applicant’s employment history or obtaining any references.<sup>36</sup> Our Chair had previously raised concerns about the limitations of online interviewing to assess the suitability of candidates for such a crucial role.<sup>37</sup> Baroness Casey said, compared to other public services such as education and children’s services, policing lacked an awareness that the profession might attract people precisely because they want to abuse the power it provides. As a result, policing had not implemented the necessary recruitment, vetting, and inspection practices.<sup>38</sup>

12. We observed this lack of awareness during our sessions when we heard that misogyny existed in policing because it existed in society. It is true that “misogyny is a societal issue, not just a policing issue”<sup>39</sup> but we must also acknowledge that those who seek to abuse women (or any other group) are likely to be attracted to a profession such as policing, with its special access to and power over others, particularly vulnerable people. Failing to acknowledge this does a disservice to the many who become police officers for the right

33 [Q446](#)

34 [Q562](#). In July 2023, the Met issued its ‘[New Met for London](#)’ plan covering the period up to 2025 and stating three priorities for reform: “community crime-fighting, culture change and fixing our foundations.”

35 [Q482](#)

36 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

37 Oral evidence taken before the Public Accounts Committee on 25 April 2022, HC 1215, [Q32](#)

38 [Q439](#)

39 [Q108](#)

reasons. Citizens recognise the importance of vetting: when we held an online deliberative Town Hall event with over 1300 members of the public, 90% of participants agreed that police should invest in more consistent processes for vetting officers and staff.

13. Festus Akinbusoye, speaking in his roles as Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) lead for prevention and PCC for Bedfordshire, told us that “everybody should be reaching those national standards” on vetting rather than there being “such inconsistency in decision making, training, resourcing and so on.”<sup>40</sup> We believe that this consistency will be especially important as, following its Review of the process of police officer dismissals, the Home Office seeks to “make it a statutory requirement for officers to hold vetting”, with a “legislative routeway to dismiss those who are unable to do so.”<sup>41</sup> The updated Code of Practice includes a rebuttable presumption that a person “will not be suitable to hold vetting clearance if they have a conviction or caution for a criminal offence”<sup>42</sup> It also stipulates that “if a person cannot pass vetting checks or maintain clearance, they should be dismissed from policing.”<sup>43</sup> Operation Assure in the Met already intends to make use of the Police (Performance) Regulations 2020 to remove officers who have failed to maintain their vetting.<sup>44</sup>

14. In response to HMICFRS’ findings, the Home Office “asked the College of Policing to strengthen the statutory code of practice for police vetting, making the obligations all forces must legally follow stricter and clearer.”<sup>45</sup> An updated code was published on 20 July 2023.<sup>46</sup> The Approved Professional Practice (APP) guidance on vetting is due an update “later this year”.<sup>47</sup>

15. Vetting is not only important prior to joining the police. Submissions recognised that for vetting checks to be effective, they must be regular too.<sup>48</sup> However, HMICFRS said some forces had fallen behind on re-vetting. Festus Akinbusoye confirmed this. In April 2023, the Met announced, henceforth, a senior vetting officer would review an officer’s vetting clearance if: there was a criminal investigation into them, there had been a misconduct hearing resulting in demotion or a warning, or when “adverse information” comes to the notice of Professional Standards officers.<sup>49</sup> While we welcome this development, we are surprised and disappointed to find that such practices were not already a matter of routine. In July, the College’s updated Code of Practice stated that “vetting will be repeated if there’s a material change in a person’s circumstances, including misconduct where an individual is not dismissed.”<sup>50</sup> The College will also introduce “an accreditation system which will mean forces require a licence to carry out vetting” and establish a “new unit to support forces to implement our policies and procedures.”<sup>51</sup>

---

40 [Q19](#)

41 [UIN HCWS1035](#) [on police integrity], 18 September 2023

42 Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

43 College of Policing, [Vetting Code of Practice updated](#), July 2023

44 Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

45 The College of Policing’s Vetting Code of Practice is a statutory document that provides key principles for police vetting. It is designed to support [the Approved Professional Practice \(APP\) on vetting](#), a much more detailed guidance document issued by the College to forces to carry out their vetting functions. The vetting APP is not a statutory document so forces are not legally required to follow it.

46 College of Policing, [Vetting Code of Practice](#), July 2023

47 Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

48 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0067](#))

49 MPS, [Met provides first update on strongest doubling down on standards for 50 years](#), April 2023

50 College of Policing, [Vetting Code of Practice updated](#), July 2023

51 College of Policing, [Vetting Code of Practice updated](#), July 2023

16. Some will be attracted to a career in policing precisely because it provides a position of power that can be exploited or abused. Vetting upon recruitment and in-service needs to reflect this. It cannot be right that vetting practices vary between forces, or that officers can evade vetting upon transfer. As citizens, we should have the same protections no matter where we live in the country, and regardless of whether officers are from territorial or specialist forces.

17. *We recommend the Home Office empower the College of Policing to require forces to use consistent recruitment processes which include values-based interviewing. We expect to see all forces aligning recruitment processes and utilising values-based interviewing within 12 months.*

18. *Common standards for vetting should be enforced nationally, with sanctions upon non-compliant forces. We recommend the Government make vetting upon transfer a statutory requirement within the lifetime of the current Parliament. It should also ensure all forces immediately implement His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services's recommendation on re-vetting officers of concern, including those who have been subject to a criminal investigation, received a formal warning or reduction in rank following a misconduct hearing, or where "adverse information" has otherwise come to the force's notice. We recommend the Home Office monitor how local policing bodies are holding their chief constables accountable for implementing the recommendation, taking remedial action swiftly where accountability is found lacking or progress in implementation unsatisfactory. We invite the Home Office to report its progress on this in six months' time: that report should include details of monitoring mechanisms and any remedial steps taken or planned.*

## A culture that supports those who call out misconduct

19. Witnesses highlighted how reporting of inappropriate behaviour needs to be embedded "within the cultural norms of policing"<sup>52</sup> but several reports have drawn attention to challenges that prevent personnel from doing so. The Independent Office for Police Conduct's (IOPC) Operation Hotton found officers and staff did not speak out about the bullying culture and inappropriate behaviour at Charing Cross police station because they lacked "confidence that it would be dealt with effectively" and feared repercussions.<sup>53</sup> Baroness Casey found that Met personnel were not confident raising complaints as they did not believe action would be taken, an assumption often proved correct.<sup>54</sup>

20. HMICFRS's inspection echoed these findings among wider policing. Some of those with personal experience of prejudicial and improper behaviour said it had "often" been witnessed by colleagues but "rarely challenged".<sup>55</sup> Women were less confident than men overall about reporting colleagues, fearing repercussions. Of those who did report, many

52 Dr Leanne Savigar-Shaw (Lecturer in Policing at Staffordshire University); Dr Lauren Metcalfe (Head of Department, Society, Crime and Environment at Staffordshire University); Mr Ian Ackerley (Course Leader, Policing and Criminal Investigation at Staffordshire University); Dr Rizwan Mustafa (Regional Course Director, Institute of Policing at Staffordshire University); Dr Laura Walton-Williams (Director of Business & Enterprise, School of Justice, Security and Sustainability at Staffordshire University) ([POP0066](#))

53 Independent Office for Police Conduct, [Operation Hotton Learning report](#), January 2022

54 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Letter from Baroness Casey to Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service Sir Mark Rowley](#), October 2022

55 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

were dissatisfied with the outcome and had “lost all confidence in their force”.<sup>56</sup> Research from Portsmouth University indicates that officers who believe in the fairness of their organisation are “less likely to engage in misconduct” and “less likely to adhere to the protection of other officers through the ‘blue code of silence’”.<sup>57</sup>

21. Steve Hartshorn, Chair of the Police Federation for England and Wales (PFEW) told us how stretched supervisory roles are across the police service. More effective supervision would enable personnel to “feel supported” to “call out inappropriate behaviour”.<sup>58</sup> Operation Hotton found “lack of adequate supervision may have allowed conduct issues to become more widespread and unchallenged”,<sup>59</sup> and Baroness Casey noted that line managers and supervisors were warning personnel against taking misconduct action against colleagues.<sup>60</sup>

**22. Improving policing culture means creating a safe space for personnel to raise concerns. All team members, especially supervisors, should have the skills and resources needed to nurture positive team cultures and support those coming forward with concerns.**

**23. *The College of Policing’s standards for leaders must, at every level of leadership, include the responsibility to support team members who call out inappropriate behaviour, along with the duty to do so oneself. We recommend the standards are amended accordingly. We invite the College of Policing to write to us on progress towards standards revision and the impact of changes in six months’ time.***

## Misconduct processes and dismissals

24. The police discipline system is a vital component of police accountability.<sup>61</sup> There is no single oversight body: the system consists of internal processes managed within each police force. Concerns around its efficacy have grown as more cases of officers who have continued to serve despite multiple allegations against them.

## Identifying concerns and determining misconduct

25. We heard that identifying misconduct can be challenging. Kathie Cashell of the IOPC told us that “discriminatory behaviour and sexual misconduct are not identified as misconduct as often as we would like.”<sup>62</sup> Instead, there is an “over-reliance on the criminal outcome”, without considering the implications as to “whether this is a person fit to be in the police force.”<sup>63</sup> HMICFRS said the service does not have a shared definition or understanding of misogynistic and predatory behaviour in a policing context. It was concerned whether police could detect wider and escalating patterns of behaviour amongst officers.<sup>64</sup> Sarah Kincaid of the Casey Review team said policing needed to look

56 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

57 Sarah Charman (School of Criminology at University of Portsmouth); Paul Gilmour (School of Criminology at University of Portsmouth) ([POP0082](#))

58 [Q179](#)

59 Independent Office for Police Conduct, [Operation Hotton Learning report](#), January 2022

60 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Letter from Baroness Casey to Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service Sir Mark Rowley](#), October 2022

61 Provisions for the police disciplinary system are set out in [The Police \(Conduct\) Regulations 2020](#)

62 [Q398](#)

63 [Q398](#)

64 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022



at “patterns of predatory behaviour” rather than at incidents in isolation or focussing on the letter of the “vague” misconduct regulations.<sup>65</sup> In light of the apparent lack of clarity on what constitutes misogynistic or predatory behaviour within policing, we welcome media reports that the Met’s internal policy now makes it explicit that its officers are prohibited from paying for sex.<sup>66</sup> Paying for sex is a form of commercial sexual exploitation intimately associated with organised crime. As well as prohibiting police officers from engaging in sexual exploitation and abuse, this policy demonstrates a commitment to combatting violence against women and rightly prohibits officers engaging in conduct that leaves them open to corruption and influence by organised crime.

26. There is no automatic process to ensure that a force is alerted should one of their officers or staff come to police notice, particularly outside its home area<sup>67</sup>. Nor is there an “obvious system that would flag” to arresting officers that suspects are police officers.<sup>68</sup> Only after David Carrick was found to have committed serious crimes was it discovered that he had previously come to police notice on several occasions, illustrating the undesirable consequences of missed opportunities to intervene and prevent escalation.

27. HMICFRS has said that it is feasible to organise automatic alerts on the Police National Database (PND)—the national police information system to record intelligence—so that when new information was entered regarding officers or staff, the employing force would be updated.<sup>69</sup>

**28. Without appropriate intelligence, forces cannot detect patterns of misconduct or criminal behaviour among officers and staff, or act on them. Proactively alerting forces to new adverse information would provide a valuable opportunity for re-vetting or intervention which may, in turn, prevent escalation.**

*29. We support the recommendation from HMICFRS that by 31 December 2023 Chief Constables make routine use of the PND to discover otherwise unreported adverse information about officers and staff. We recommend that the Government, and HMICFRS, urgently work with the PND and other sources of valuable information pertaining to their employees’ conduct, to enable ready and proactive access. We would request that they report progress on this in their response to this report.*

*30. We heard that here has been a lack of clarity on what constitutes misogynistic or predatory behaviour, as well as multiple reports of police officers engaging in commercial sexual exploitation. For that reason, we recommend that forces which have not already done so follow the Met’s lead and make it explicit in policy that their police officers are prohibited from paying for sex.*

## **Dismissals**

31. Officers individually hold the Office of Constable. Andy Cooke told us that “in cases of misconduct” this can make it “far more difficult to dispense with an officer’s services” than for other employees.<sup>70</sup> To dismiss an officer there must be a finding of “gross

65 [Q450](#)

66 Metro, [Met Police officers banned from using sex workers and must declare romantic relationships](#), 18 July 2023

67 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

68 Chief Constable Lucy D’Orsi, British Transport Police, [Professionalism in policing](#), January 2023

69 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

70 [Q119](#)

misconduct”. But gross misconduct is only vaguely defined, as a breach of professional standards so serious that it potentially warrants an officer’s dismissal. The bar for what is considered “gross misconduct” appears inconsistent across forces. HMICFRS’s inspection found cases treated as misconduct only, or not as misconduct at all, when they should have been assessed as potential gross misconduct.<sup>71</sup> Likewise, in Baroness Casey’s view the Met do not “understand fully what gross misconduct means”.<sup>72</sup>

32. The outcomes of gross misconduct cases are decided at misconduct hearings which can result in a warning, reduction of rank, dismissal, or no further action.<sup>73</sup> In 2016, independent Legally Qualified Chairs (LQCs) were introduced to chair these hearings, replacing senior officers. Decisions as to whether a case is proven and, if so, what the sanction should be, are a majority decision by the panel, which also includes an Independent Panel Member (IPM) and an officer of at least Superintendent rank.<sup>74</sup>

33. There has been much debate about the value and efficacy of LQCs and their impact on dismissal decisions. Senior police leaders, including Sir Mark Rowley, argued that officers were less likely to be dismissed by LQCs and called for chief officers to be given powers to remove officers for misconduct themselves.<sup>75</sup> On the other hand, the Police Superintendents Association (PSA) and PFEW felt that LQCs made the process fairer and more transparent<sup>76</sup>, with the latter questioning whether vesting dismissal power in senior officers would really improve decisions or enhance public trust.<sup>77</sup> The National Association for LQCs (NALQC) argued that the “quality of investigations carried out and, therefore, the quality of evidence presented is variable.”<sup>78</sup> For the NALQC, it was “a statement of the obvious that poor or inadequate evidence is unlikely to result in an allegation of gross misconduct being proved.”<sup>79</sup>

34. In January 2023 the Home Office launched a Review of police dismissals, which reported in September 2023.<sup>80</sup> Following the Review, on 31 August the Home Office announced that regulatory changes would be made to enable chief officers to chair misconduct hearings.<sup>81</sup> The Legally Qualified Person (LQP) on the panel would provide “independent advice and helping to maintain rigour”, with hearing outcomes still determined by majority decisions.<sup>82</sup> The Review had received “anonymised case studies of where the LQC has decided an officer ought to be dismissed, but has been “out-voted” by the other panel members.”<sup>83</sup>

---

71 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

72 [Q458](#)

73 Where there is sufficient evidence (on the balance of probabilities) of gross misconduct and it is in the public interest for the individual to cease to be an officer without delay, officers are instead referred to an accelerated hearing, chaired by a Chief Constable (or by a panel composed in accordance with regulation 55 of the Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020 where the subject of the disciplinary proceedings is a senior officer), Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

74 The panel composition differs for senior officers, Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

75 [Q50](#)

76 Police Superintendents’ Association ([POP0073](#)), Police Federation of England & Wales ([POP0089](#))

77 Police Federation of England & Wales ([POP0089](#))

78 National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs ([POP0085](#))

79 National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs ([POP0085](#))

80 Home Office, [Police officer dismissals: Home Office review](#), September 2023

81 Home Office, [Government to make it easier to sack rogue police officers](#), August 2023

82 Home Office, [Government to make it easier to sack rogue police officers](#), August 2023

83 Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

35. The Home Office also announced that “under the new system, a finding of gross misconduct will automatically result in a police officer’s dismissal, unless exceptional circumstances apply” and that chief officers “will also be given a right to challenge decisions”, with a “presumption for former officers and special constables’ cases to be heard under fast-track procedures chaired by senior officers.”<sup>84</sup>

36. Making chief officers the chairs of misconduct hearings and giving them more power to challenge hearing outcomes will not address concerns about the underlying and deep-rooted cultural issues that enable problematic behaviours in the first place. Nor will it address difficulties in identifying or speaking out about concerning behaviour, the interpretation of “gross misconduct”, or the quality of forces’ misconduct investigations – issues need to be tackled separately. We note that the Home Office’s Review of dismissals recommends an accreditation programme for Professional Standards investigators, and hope that this will support both the quality of investigations and the esteem these crucial roles attract.<sup>85</sup>

37. Our witnesses told us repeatedly that misconduct regulations were overly complex and restrictive and we welcome the Home Office’s steps towards simplification. In the Met, Baroness Casey had found a mindset that “we can’t change anything unless the regs change”.<sup>86</sup> In her view they could have been doing “an awful lot within the regulations and rules they already have”.<sup>87</sup> Policing cannot afford to wait to act whilst a new system beds in, or rely on the letter of regulations alone to solve problems in misconduct processes.

38. Both HMICFRS and Baroness Casey found that existing Chief Officer’s powers under Regulation 13 to dismiss probationary officers were not being used fairly or effectively.<sup>88</sup> We look forward to more comprehensive guidance on the usage of Regulation 13 from the Home Office, as recommended in its Review, and are interested to see the Home Office’s thinking on legislative options to make volunteer Special Constables subject to the same Regulation 13 powers as their paid colleagues.

**39. When the Home Office first proposed its review of dismissals, the Independent Office for Police Conduct argued that the focus on dismissals was “too narrow.”<sup>89</sup> We agree. The Home Office’s proposals will not address the overall weaknesses in the misconduct and disciplinary system.**

**40. There are circumstances where the public would hold dismissal appropriate but current regulations do not provide a clear mechanism for it. Dismissing an officer who fails re-vetting should be straightforward and we welcome the Home Office’s commitment to this. We are pleased that the Home Office is engaging with stakeholders to create a list of criminal offences which would automatically amount to gross misconduct upon conviction. We ask the Home Office to set out by the end of the year its timetable for completing this work.**

84 Home Office, [Government to make it easier to sack rogue police officers](#), August 2023

85 Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

86 [Q450](#)

87 [Q450](#)

88 HMICFRS [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022; and Baroness Louise Casey, [Letter from Baroness Casey to Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service Sir Mark Rowley](#), October 2022

89 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0067](#))

41. We are persuaded, however, that policing could do more within the existing disciplinary system, ahead of any regulatory changes. Giving chief officers more say over dismissals will not on its own deliver a more consistent interpretation of “gross misconduct” or higher quality of investigations. We also remain concerned about troubling race disparities in the misconduct system, highlighted in our previous report on *“The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on.”*<sup>90</sup>

42. *The Review of Dismissals was too narrow in scope. We recommend the Home Office immediately commission wider work on the functioning of the competence and disciplinary system, linked to the “Fitness to Practise” regime (see paras 51–54).*

43. *We recommend the Home Office evaluate the impact of regulatory and other changes to policing misconduct and disciplinary processes 12 months after implementation. The evaluation should include consideration of the proportion of cases resulting in a finding of gross misconduct, changes in dismissal rates, the speed of misconduct cases, challenges against decisions and disproportionality in dismissal outcomes. We support in principle the recommendations made following the Home Office’s own review, that “the Government, with the policing sector, [ ... ] consider the way data is reported, where there are possible gaps, and how to improve collection to enable more meaningful data across England and Wales”, and that the Home Office carry out multi-variate analysis to “identify any disproportionality related to intersectional characteristics.”*<sup>91</sup> *We recommend these considerations and analysis commence immediately and invite the Home Office to set out its timetable for completion in its response to our report.*

### **Bringing more outside scrutiny in**

44. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are responsible for holding chief officers to account. They are themselves accountable to Police and Crime Panels consisting of local councillors. The Home Office is considering extending rights to challenge misconduct hearing outcomes to PCCs in addition to chief officers, “to allow democratically elected commissioners to hold those making dismissals decisions to account”.<sup>92</sup>

45. We question however whether such an extension would create a conflict of interest for PCCs and their equivalents. Police and Crime Commissioners exist to provide democratic oversight and set local policing strategy. We are concerned that giving them extra powers to challenge individual misconduct hearing outcomes could encourage them to stray into operational decision-making, and that the (often party-) political and elected nature of their post could be seen to influence their decisions. With regards to democratic checks and balances, an Independent Panel Member already sits on the panel.<sup>93</sup>

46. **Police and Crime Commissioners should drive systemic improvements in local forces, for example by taking steps to assure themselves that misconduct and competence processes are fit for purpose, rather than intervening in individual cases. HMICFRS has noted that Police and Crime Commissioners currently only have to comment on its reports once, within 56 days of publication, when forces have may not yet have made**

90 Home Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2021–22, [The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on](#), HC 139, Summary

91 Home Office, [Home Office Review: The process of police officer dismissals](#), September 2023

92 Home Office, [Government to make it easier to sack rogue police officers](#), August 2023

93 Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Devon and Cornwall, [Independent panel members](#), accessed 29 September 2023

changes as a result of the Inspectorate’s recommendations. As a result, “the obligation has proved insufficient in making sure Police and Crime Commissioners are holding chief constables to account for implementing improvements.”<sup>94</sup> We call for increased responsibility upon Police and Crime Commissioners to update HMICFRS on the impact of its recommendations.

*47. We support HMICFRS’s call for Police and Crime Commissioners to be required to provide follow-up comments, at least annually, where HMICFRS have not yet confirmed that recommendations pertaining to them and their local force have been sufficiently addressed. We will return to matters of local accountability in our inquiry into Police and Crime Commissioners.*

48. Recent shocking examples of misconduct and criminal behaviour have understandably shaken public faith in the ability of policing to police itself. To ameliorate concerns about the police “marking their own homework” and to rebuild trust in decision-making, it will be vital to bring in external expertise with sufficient power and independence to provide meaningful challenge and drive change. During the inquiry we suggested that the Army, for example, might be able to advise on how to root out inappropriate individuals.<sup>95</sup> We endorse Baroness Casey’s recommendation that the Met bring in outside expertise to support the management of the organisation and the building of a positive culture. We recommend that such external expertise is embedded in all Police Forces.<sup>96</sup>

**49. The perception of policing as marking its own homework with regards to professional standards and misconduct is damaging. We recommend influential independent scrutiny of these processes.**

*50. We recommend police forces embed specialist external expertise in permanent roles to drive the scale of cultural reform needed by officers, staff and the public in order to restore public faith in policing.*

### ***Taking a ‘a fitness to practise’ approach***

51. Not all actions or incidents falling short of professional standards are intentional or a matter of misconduct. The police disciplinary system is intended to “encourage a culture of learning and development” rather than a blame culture.<sup>97</sup> Our evidence however suggests that this may not be the case. For instance, the IOPC described the disciplinary system as having an “excessive focus on wrongdoing”.<sup>98</sup>

52. There are separate performance regulations regarding unsatisfactory performance, attendance, or “gross incompetence”.<sup>99</sup> The Home Office has announced that it will be “streamlining [ ... ] the performance system to ensure it’s effective at removing officers who demonstrate a serious inability or failure to perform their duties”.<sup>100</sup> But we heard the interaction of disciplinary and performance systems creates a complicated, slow, and

94 His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022](#), June 2023

95 [Q593](#)

96 Baroness Louise Casey, [Baroness Casey Review: Final Report](#), March 2023

97 Home Office, [Conduct, Efficiency and Effectiveness: Statutory Guidance on Professional Standards, Performance and Integrity in Policing](#), 2020

98 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0067](#))

99 [The Police \(Performance\) Regulations 2020](#)

100 Home Office, [Government to make it easier to sack rogue police officers](#), August 2023

bureaucratic system. Combined with policing's rigid approach to the regulations, this does not support a holistic approach to assessing an officer's attributes, skills, behaviours, and suitability for policing. The IOPC suggested a "fitness to practise" approach, more akin to that adopted in other professions.<sup>101</sup> This "would set a national standard for what is expected of officers", meaning that "they would have to meet that standard before joining the service and maintain their accreditation throughout their career."<sup>102</sup>

**53. A regime that sought to identify fitness to practise the profession of a police officer could be more effective than separate, rigid misconduct and performance systems in ensuring that those in the service have the attributes, skills and values to do the job well. We believe this would create a less adversarial system, and one more likely to support a culture of learning and development. It could also help reinforce the status of policing as a skilled profession.**

*54. Working with the College of Policing, NPCC and other key stakeholders, we recommend the Home Office scope out a "Fitness to Practise" regime for policing. This should be done as part of the review of wider functioning of the disciplinary system we have recommended already.*

## Criminal conduct: Investigating police-perpetrated abuse

55. Witnesses highlighted the importance of dealing "robustly with police officer abusers, in order to secure public confidence and cultural change within forces"<sup>103</sup>. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner had "huge concern" that police who have perpetrated domestic abuse have been "allowed to stay" in the service.<sup>104</sup>

56. In June 2022, a joint investigation by HMICFRS, the College of Policing, and the IOPC into police-perpetrated domestic abuse found "systemic deficiencies" in the ways in which some forces managed allegations against their personnel and that "safeguards to ensure and help demonstrate an impartial investigation and case decisions are not consistently applied".<sup>105</sup> Zoe Byrne of Victim Support questioned officers investigating allegations of offences—particularly in VAWG cases—made against their colleagues. She argued that, to ensure independence in investigations, such allegations should be investigated by officers from a different force. The IOPC's 2022/23 public perceptions tracker found that "women's likelihood to report VAWG drops significantly if the offender is a police officer".<sup>106</sup>

57. Kathie Cashell, Director of Strategy and Impact at the IOPC, highlighted the challenges faced by officers who are victims of crimes perpetrated by a colleague.<sup>107</sup> HMICFRS also highlighted the need to strengthen the rights of police officer victims, recommending that they be given similar rights to the public, including the right to raise formal complaints.<sup>108</sup> As Tom Whiting of the IOPC told us, police officers raising complaints do not have the right to regular updates, to see the outcomes or to have complaint decision reviewed, as complainants do. Complaints from the public can be reviewed by the IOPC or relevant

101 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0067](#))

102 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0096](#))

103 Centre for Women's Justice ([POP0075](#))

104 [Q312](#)

105 College of Policing, HMICFRS and IOPC, [Police perpetrated domestic abuse: Report on the Centre for Women's Justice super-complaint](#), June 2022

106 IOPC, [Public perceptions tracker summary report - 2022/23](#), July 2023

107 [Q394](#)

108 HMICFRS, [An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#), November 2022

PCC if the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome. Mr Whiting told us that the IOPC “changes 37% of complaints” it reviews. For PFEW, it is “completely unacceptable, and unjust, that officers do not get the same support as other victims.”<sup>109</sup> We agree that police officers who are victims should have similar rights to members of the public.

58. When an officer is being investigated for criminal activity the already lengthy misconduct process can be elongated. This is because, often “the misconduct is put on hold” until the criminal investigation is complete.<sup>110</sup> Sophie Linden estimated that recent cases identified in the Met could take two to three years to finalise because of a combination of backlogs in the criminal courts and the low speed of misconduct processes.<sup>111</sup> In Kathie Cashell’s view there is more scope to run the two processes in parallel. She acknowledged that “routes to do that” are “not simple, and they may be likely to be challenged”, but nevertheless “could be used more.”<sup>112</sup>

**59. If policing can’t get its approach to complainants, victims and survivors within the service right, it has little chance of doing so for others.**

*60. We recommend the Home Office work with the Ministry of Justice in considering amendments to the Victims and Prisoners Bill to clarify rights for police officers who are themselves the victims of police-perpetrated crime. The Home Office should work with the Independent Office for Police Conduct to ascertain how police complainants could be afforded similar rights to other complainants and whether this would require amending the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020. Any necessary changes to the Regulations should be completed with the current Parliament.*

*61. We strongly recommend the Home Office examine measures to further reassure the public that officers accused of offences will be investigated without fear or favour – whether this be through investigation by an officer from another force or through some other means.*

**62. It is unacceptable that it takes two to three years for a decision on whether officers facing serious allegations should be dismissed.**

*63. We recommend the Home Office explore with the Independent Office for Police Conduct how misconduct processes could run concurrently with criminal cases. It should also set time-limited targets for the reduction of time taken to reach decisions on dismissal for misconduct.*

## A complaints system that inspires confidence

64. The police complaints system is key to police accountability. Despite the establishment of the IOPC in 2018, our witnesses highlighted the system’s complexity, with the public unclear on the role of the police, the IOPC and PCCs.<sup>113</sup> In the NPCC’s view, the process is also too slow, with long waits for both officers and complainants, “which does not help create a sense of justice being done.”<sup>114</sup>

109 Police Federation of England & Wales ([POP0089](#))

110 [Q409](#)

111 [Q371](#)

112 [Q409](#)

113 Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))

114 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

65. IOPC research in 2022/23 found only 32% of the public were confident that the police dealt fairly with complaints – the lowest level since testing began in 2017.<sup>115</sup> While the proportion of the public that had heard of the IOPC had increased on previous years, the proportion who were not confident that the IOPC did a good job was also the highest it has been since testing began. As the IOPC notes, this suggests that increased awareness is not translating to increased confidence.<sup>116</sup> We note that the Home Secretary has appointed Dr Gillian Fairfield to lead an independent review of the IOPC which is expected to report in Autumn 2023.<sup>117</sup> We eagerly await this.

**66. *We urge the Home Office to consider the findings of the IOPC Review. We recommend, given concerns about the complexity of the complaints system and lack of clarity about key players in that system, the Government consider how the Independent Office of Police Conduct review might be supported by a wider review of Police and Crime Commissioners’ roles in complaint handling.***

**67. *In our previous report on Police conduct and complaints, we concluded that uniting the roles of chair and director general of the IOPC detracted from the ability to scrutinise the executive action of the IOPC and to hold it to account. Notwithstanding the findings of the forthcoming Review, we again recommend that the Government appoint an independent chair alongside the director general of the IOPC as a matter of urgency.***<sup>118</sup>

68. StopWatch highlighted the absence of a requirement for the police to record demographic information relating to complaints.<sup>119</sup> According to the IOPC, in 2022/23 most complainants (55%) whose ethnicity was known were recorded as White. However, complainants’ ethnicity was not recorded in 31% of cases.<sup>120</sup> StopWatch argue that this data gap prevents effective monitoring and evaluation of how accessible the system is to people from minority ethnic backgrounds. We agree that the police and IOPC need this data to “develop evidence-based strategies to tackle disparities in the complaints system.”<sup>121</sup>

**69. *It is vital that policing understands who is making complaints, why they are doing so and what the outcomes are. Ethnic disproportionalities exist across areas such as stop and search and use of force, and the generally lower levels of confidence in the police amongst many people from Black and minority ethnic communities, make this particularly important. More understanding is also needed of the experiences of complaining among people with other protected characteristics.***

**70. *We recommend the Home Office requires forces to record data on all protected characteristics of complainants with the aim of achieving a greater understanding of who is making complaints, the outcomes of those complaints, and the extent to which there is disproportionality. Professional Standards Departments should analyse the data and adopt a “reform or explain” approach. To ensure transparency and scrutiny, this data should be submitted to the Independent Office for Police Conduct and made publicly available in a clear and accessible way on a regular basis.***

115 Independent Office for Police Conduct, [Public perceptions tracker summary report 2022/23](#), July 2023

116 Independent Office for Police Conduct, [Public perceptions tracker summary report 2022/23](#), July 2023

117 Home Office, [Independent Review of the Independent Office for Police Conduct](#), March 2023

118 Home Affairs Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2021–22, [Police conduct and complaints](#), HC 140, para 54

119 StopWatch UK ([POP0050](#))

120 IOPC, [Police complaints Statistics for England and Wales 2022/23](#), October 2023

121 [POP0050](#), StopWatch



### ***Accountability and the role of the IOPC***

71. Some argue the IOPC “lacks the teeth necessary to hold the police to account.”<sup>122</sup> Baroness Casey concluded that the IOPC does not “currently have the levers required” to create necessary change.<sup>123</sup> In our previous inquiry, we raised issues regarding the lack of clarity around monitoring and implementation of IOPC recommendations.<sup>124</sup> This remains unclear. Both HMICFRS and Baroness Casey found that issues they identified had been raised before by scrutiny bodies like the IOPC. For example, warnings and recommendations arising from Operation Hotton had not been acted on and the issues were apparently allowed to continue.<sup>125</sup>

**72. We remain deeply concerned over the inadequate monitoring and implementation of recommendations from scrutiny bodies including the Independent Office for Police Conduct. Revoicing a recommendation from our report on *Police conduct and complaints*, we urge the Government to review how the IOPC, HMICFRS, and Coroners’ learning recommendations can be reported upon in a joined-up and meaningful way, with data published centrally to simplify and streamline access.**<sup>126</sup>

**73. We repeat the recommendation from our previous report on police conduct and complaints that Government monitor and review bi-annually how effectively local policing bodies are holding their chief constables accountable for implementing IOPC recommendations and report the outcomes to us.**<sup>127</sup>

---

122 UNJUST C.I.C (POP0033)

123 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Baroness Casey Review: Final Report](#), March 2023

124 Home Affairs Select Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2021–22, [Police Conduct and Complaints](#), HC 140, para 151

125 IOPC, [Operation Hotton Learning report](#), January 2022

126 Home Affairs Select Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2021–22, [Police Conduct and Complaints](#), HC 140, para 152

127 Home Affairs Select Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2021–22, [Police Conduct and Complaints](#), HC 140, paras 151 and 152

## 2 Building trust and confidence in policing

---

74. The police need the trust and confidence of the public not only as an end in itself but also to do an effective job in preventing and detecting crime. During our inquiry, we heard how poor service and misconduct can undermine that trust and confidence.<sup>128</sup>

### Building trust and confidence through strong performance

75. As of 29 September 2023, four of 43 forces were in the Engage stage of the HMICFRS monitoring process.<sup>129</sup> This happens when the Inspectorate considers a force is not “responding to a cause of concern, or not succeeding in managing, mitigating or eradicating the cause of concern”.<sup>130</sup> Chief Inspector Andy Cooke said his Inspectorate had limited powers to take further action.<sup>131</sup> He has recommended the Government clarify and extend in legislation HMICFRS’s remit and powers, including to inspect functions delivered by PCCs, issue directions, and re-establish HMICFRS’s role in appointing chief officers.<sup>132</sup>

76. The Home Secretary pointed to the progress made by Greater Manchester, South Yorkshire and Humberside forces to show “the system does work”<sup>133</sup>. We applaud this progress—and note the recent exit of both Cleveland and Gloucestershire from the process—but remain concerned that forces can stay in Engage for so long: around four years in one case.<sup>134</sup> We agree with Andy Cooke that this is “too long”.<sup>135</sup> We understand that the process is not meant to be punitive, but the complex system of police accountability leaves us unclear as to how long a force can remain in a failing state without further action. We share the Chief Inspector’s view that HMICFRS should have more power to drive improvements.

**77. The Home Secretary highlighted success stories of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services’s “Engage” process but the Inspectorate needs more powers to drive through recommended changes.**

**78. *We support HMICFRS’s call for the Home Secretary to review the limitations of its remit and powers and establish whether legislative change is needed. We believe the Chief Inspector of Constabulary should have powers to give directions where a force’s identified failings pose a significant risk to public safety. This should include—in certain circumstances—power to direct the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s and the College of Policing’s support for the force. We recommend formal arrangements for high-performing forces to “buddy” struggling ones are put in place within 12 months.***

---

128 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0067](#))

129 His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, [Police forces in Engage](#), March 2023

130 HMICFRS, [Our approach to monitoring forces](#), October 2022. In the Engage phase, forces develop an improvement plan to address specific cause(s) of concern and may receive support from external organisations such as the College of Policing or NPCC, brokered by HMICFRS.

131 [Q158](#)

132 His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2022](#), June 2023

133 [Q678](#)

134 His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, [Police forces in Engage](#), March 2023

135 [Q161](#)

79. *HMICFRS states that, while it regularly makes recommendations to organisations other than police forces to improve public safety, only Police and Crime Commissioners are required to respond to its reports. We support HMICFRS’s call for further “additional departments and agencies” to be required to respond to its reports. This could include the Crown Prosecution Service and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales, for example. We recommend a statutory requirement be put in place for the Home Office to respond to recommendations made by HMICFRS in its thematic reports within the life of the current Parliament.*

## Building trust and confidence through transparency and accountability

### *A duty of candour?*

80. Police officers have a responsibility to cooperate during investigations, inquiries and formal proceedings and to participate “openly and professionally” when identified as a witness.<sup>136</sup> However, the Police Foundation suggested a further “statutory duty of candour” could promote openness and transparency in the public interest.<sup>137</sup> In addition to a statutory duty of candour, specified healthcare professionals are subject to a professional duty of candour. Professionals are expected to “be open and honest with patients and families” when something has gone wrong with their treatment or caused them “harm or distress.”<sup>138</sup> We would like to see a similar professional duty for officers and staff, perhaps as part of the revised Code of Ethics and “underpinned by active efforts to embed a culture of integrity.”<sup>139</sup>

81. **We appreciate the openness of those who gave evidence, but fear that under pressure leaders can default to a defensive position, missing opportunities to help the public understand the challenges they face or to build trust by admitting mistakes. We urge leaders across policing to recognise the true scale of the changes needed and the benefits of open dialogue with citizens, notwithstanding that some operational details will need to remain confidential.**

82. *We recommend that the NPCC, College of Policing, Home Office and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners formally consider whether a professional “duty of candour” might drive greater transparency in policing. We consider that, while this would not be enough on its own to drive the culture change needed, it would help set the direction of travel towards a presumption of openness.*

## Building trust and confidence through neighbourhood policing

83. Sir Mark Rowley acknowledged that “those whom we need to do better at protecting have the lowest trust in us” and “unless we can fix this by working with communities, we will not succeed.”<sup>140</sup> We heard about the importance of neighbourhood policing in

136 The Police (Conduct) Regulations 2020, [Schedule 2](#)

137 The Police Foundation ([POP0035](#))

138 NHS Resolution, [Duty of candour animation](#), March 2022

139 Office of the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner ([POP0019](#))

140 [Q92](#)

achieving this and developing “connection between the public and their police”.<sup>141</sup>,<sup>142</sup> The then-Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester argued that neighbourhood policing teams “are key to gaining trust and confidence in communities.”<sup>143</sup> Sir Mark Rowley said he planned to deploy neighbourhood policing in a way that “targets more resources at the communities where we have the lowest trust,” creating the “strongest neighbourhood policing that we have ever had in London.” 75% of participants in our Town Hall said they believed that police should invest more in neighbourhood policing, building relationships with local communities. Support for neighbourhood policing was similarly high amongst all demographic subgroups.

84. However, there are limits to the power of visible local policing. For example, Festus Akinbusoye highlighted that while the public might want more police on the streets, it is not the most effective way to tackle growing technology-enabled threats and online crime.<sup>144</sup> We believe that, for communities who do not currently trust the police or may already feel “over-policed”, simply increasing police presence will neither reassure nor build trust.<sup>145</sup> Instead, longstanding issues such as disproportionate use of force must be tackled, and genuine communication with community members must take place, where they are active participants in dialogue.

85. We heard that neighbourhood policing often ends up deprioritised against other demands.<sup>146</sup> Baroness Casey found this in London.<sup>147</sup> Some stakeholders felt neighbourhood policing needed to be seen as more of a specialism and protected.<sup>148</sup> For some this also meant that more police functions should embed the principles of community policing. As they highlighted, the work of dedicated community officers in building relationships can easily be “unravelling” by other teams.<sup>149</sup> Baroness Casey drew attention to this challenge for community-based officers in London when pan-London teams such as the Territorial Support Group and the Violent Crime Task Force were seen as “parachuting in” without adequate liaison, knowledge of local issues, or sufficient sensitivity.<sup>150</sup> When community groups kindly gave their time to the inquiry by running “distributed dialogues”, one of the messages we heard was the disappointment felt when an officer who has spent time building strong relationships with communities is then moved to another post. We also heard that more needed to be done to increase cultural competence.

141 Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))

142 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

143 Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))

144 [Q35](#)

145 End Violence Against Women Coalition ([POP0088](#)), Women of Colour in Policing ([POP0095](#)), Dr Leanne Savigar-Shaw (Lecturer in Policing at Staffordshire University); Dr Lauren Metcalfe (Head of Department, Society, Crime and Environment at Staffordshire University); Mr Ian Ackerley (Course Leader, Policing and Criminal Investigation at Staffordshire University); Dr Rizwan Mustafa (Regional Course Director, Institute of Policing at Staffordshire University); Dr Laura Walton-Williams (Director of Business & Enterprise, School of Justice, Security and Sustainability at Staffordshire University) ([POP0066](#))

146 Police Superintendents’ Association ([POP0073](#))

147 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Baroness Casey Review: Final Report](#), March 2023

148 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

149 Dr Leanne Savigar-Shaw (Lecturer in Policing at Staffordshire University); Dr Lauren Metcalfe (Head of Department, Society, Crime and Environment at Staffordshire University); Mr Ian Ackerley (Course Leader, Policing and Criminal Investigation at Staffordshire University); Dr Rizwan Mustafa (Regional Course Director, Institute of Policing at Staffordshire University); Dr Laura Walton-Williams (Director of Business & Enterprise, School of Justice, Security and Sustainability at Staffordshire University) ([POP0066](#))

150 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Baroness Casey Review: Final Report](#), March 2023

86. There was widespread agreement among our witnesses that neighbourhood work was the bedrock of policing. But too often it is side-lined by abstractions or otherwise undermined, for example where officers are taken away from their usual duties to respond to emergency situations, or the actions of non-territorial squads undermining the trust built up by local teams.

87. Neighbourhood policing does not simply mean an increased police presence in communities. It has to be accompanied by community engagement where community members are treated as active participants whose concerns are genuinely responded to. Community engagement should, however, not be left to neighbourhood officers. Instead, it is core to the work of all policing with a public-facing role.

88. *We recommend the College of Policing and individual forces maximise efforts to make neighbourhood policing a recognised specialism. Initial and on-going training for all public-facing personnel should incorporate communication, de-escalation and engagement skills.*

## The impact of racism and disproportionality on trust and confidence

89. Survey evidence suggests trust in the police is lower amongst people from Black and minority ethnic groups. For example, a YouGov poll in April 2023 found that only 46% of those from minority ethnic backgrounds trust the police in general, down from 52% in October 2020.<sup>151, 152</sup> Only 32% trusted the Met. Some submissions also highlighted that trust in the police is particularly low amongst Muslim people.<sup>153</sup>

90. Many submissions spoke about the disproportionate and discriminatory use of police powers against people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, particularly Black people—including stop and search and use of force such as Tasers and restraint—and the disproportionately negative outcomes they experience throughout the criminal justice system (CJS).<sup>154</sup> We also heard about an over-representation of Black people on London’s Gangs Matrix<sup>155</sup> and concerns about the experiences of victims and survivors from Black or minority ethnic communities.<sup>156</sup> Multiple submissions argued that a “modern police service must be anti-racist and non-discriminatory in culture, policy and practice”.<sup>157</sup>

### Stop and search

91. Stop and search, and the damaging impact it can have on police relations at community and individual level, was a major concern among witnesses. Dr Rick Muir said, if used “well and fairly” and communicated well, stop and search can be effective and people can come away from encounters not feeling “humiliated or disproportionately targeted.”<sup>158</sup> However, the IOPC is concerned this is not always the case with the way the Met conducts stop and search on Black people.<sup>159</sup>

151 YouGov, [Survey Results](#), 20 March-12 April 2023

152 YouGov, [Trust in police has fallen amongst ethnic minority Britons](#), December 2021

153 Home Office ([POP0074](#)), The Police Foundation ([POP0035](#))

154 StopWatch UK ([POP0050](#)), Runnymede Trust ([POP0081](#))

155 UNJUST C.I.C ([POP0033](#))

156 Victim Support ([POP0068](#))

157 Women in Prison ([POP0072](#)), Office of the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner ([POP0019](#))

158 [Q15](#)

159 IOPC, [National stop and search learning report](#), April 2022

92. The Met accounts for around one third (32%) of all stop and search in England and Wales.<sup>160</sup> The force uses its search powers disproportionately: in the year ending 31 March 2023, Black people were stopped at a rate of 60.52 per 1,000 population, compared with a rate of 14.14 for White people.<sup>161</sup> The IOPC has found evidence of poor communication by officers with those being searched, consistent use of force on Black people during searches, failure to use body-worn video from the outset, and officers continuing to seek further reasons to search an individual after the initial grounds turned out to be unfounded.<sup>162</sup> Baroness Casey said the Met’s use of stop and search “needs a fundamental reset” and recommended the Met establish a charter with Londoners on how and when it is used.<sup>163</sup>

93. Sir Mark Rowley conceded to the Committee that the way the Met was using stop and search was “not working from a Black community’s perspective”.<sup>164</sup> However, he argued that was because “young Black men in London are 12 times more likely to be murdered than young White men” and the effort to protect those young Black men “means we are going to put more stop and search in the areas where there is high crime.”<sup>165</sup> We might expect that a tool used primarily to prevent serious violence would primarily be targeted on weapons. However, the Met carries out more searches for drugs than for weapons – a trend reflected in the wider service.<sup>166</sup> HMICFRS has said the high prevalence of drug possession searches indicates that enforcement “efforts are not being effectively focused on force priorities” and contributes to ethnic disproportionality in search rates “despite evidence that there is no correlation between ethnicity and rates of drug use”.<sup>167</sup> In the year ending June 2022, approximately 1 in 11 adults in England and Wales aged 16 to 59 years (9.2%) reported using drugs in the last year.<sup>168</sup> Data from the 2014 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey: Survey of Mental Health and Wellbeing, England suggests that there were “no meaningful differences between ethnic groups in the percentage of men using illicit drugs” – although White British adults and Black adults were more likely to have used illicit drugs in the year before being surveyed than Asian adults, and White British men were more likely to have used illicit drugs compared with White British women.<sup>169</sup> Black women, White British women and women from the White Other group were more likely to have used illicit drugs, compared with Asian women.

94. Dr Muir told us there was much tension around suspicion-less stops under Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.<sup>170</sup> In his view, there needed to be a “higher threshold” for using this power as it is “not very effective in detecting weapons” but “causes a lot of community disquiet.” The Runnymede Trust recommended the law

---

160 Home Office, [Police powers and procedures: Stop and search and arrests, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2023](#), September 2023

161 Metropolitan Police Service, [MPS Stop and Search Monthly Report](#), accessed 3 October 2023

162 IOPC, [National stop and search learning report](#), April 2022

163 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

164 [Q57](#)

165 [Q58](#)

166 Metropolitan Police Service, [MPS Stop and Search Monthly Report](#), accessed 13 September 2023

167 HMICFRS, [Disproportionate use of police powers: a spotlight on stop and search and the use of force](#), February 2021

168 Office for National Statistics, [Drug misuse in England and Wales: year ending June 2022](#), December 2022

169 Home Office, [Illicit drug use](#), October 2017

170 [Q15](#)

for suspicion-less searches be repealed.<sup>171</sup> A super-complaint made by the Criminal Justice Alliance on the use of section 60 searches is currently being investigated by police HMICFRS, the IOPC and College of Policing.<sup>172</sup>

95. In June 2023, the Chief Inspector of Constabulary said more research was needed on the deterrent value of stop and search and causes of disproportionality in its use.<sup>173</sup> Later that month, the Home Secretary said that “the police have my full support to ramp up the use of stop and search, wherever necessary, to prevent violence and save more lives.”<sup>174</sup> She also said she planned to put into law that police should communicate with local communities when a Section 60 order is put in place.

96. We heard that currently “only a minority of forces [have] very effective and independent groups” for local stop and search scrutiny.<sup>175</sup> On 31 August 2023, the Home Office opened a consultation on new national guidance for community scrutiny panels which will set out a consistent approach for local scrutiny of the use of police powers – including stop and search.<sup>176</sup>

**97. Use of stop and search powers is particularly controversial and has a wide-ranging impact for the Met in particular. But this is not an issue that other forces can afford to ignore. Disproportionality in stop and search across policing damages community relationships. Our report on “*The Macpherson Report: twenty two years on*” drew attention to the evidential gap on the effectiveness of stop and search in reducing serious violence crime.<sup>177</sup> That evidence is still lacking.**

*98. We are concerned at the duration of the investigation following the supercomplaint on section 60 searches. We welcome the Home Office’s recent commitment to better communication around section 60 searches, along with moves to support more consistent local scrutiny. We strongly support His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service’s recent recommendation for further primary research to quantify the deterrent value of stop and search and the causes of disproportionality in its use. This research should examine the impact on trust and confidence that stop and search has so that officers can make evidence-based decisions on how best to deploy it.*

### ***The treatment of victims and survivors from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds***

99. In the Victim Commissioner’s 2021 annual victims’ survey minority ethnic respondents were less likely than White respondents to agree the police fully supported victims or treated them fairly and with respect.<sup>178</sup> In December 2022, Victim Support reported that victims of domestic abuse from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds

171 Runnymede Trust ([POP0081](#))

172 Criminal Justice Alliance, [More harm than good: A super-complaint on the harms caused by ‘suspicion-less’ stop and searches and inadequate scrutiny of stop and search powers](#), May 2021

173 HMICFRS, [Police service has limited window of opportunity to repair public trust, says chief inspector](#), June 2023

174 Home Office, [Police urged to use stop and search to save more lives](#), June 2023

175 StopWatch UK ([POP0050](#))

176 Home Office, [National guidance for community scrutiny panels](#), August 2023

177 Home Affairs Committee, Third Report of Session 2021–22, [The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on](#), HC 139, para 422

178 Victims Commissioner, [2021 Victim survey](#), September 2021

were disproportionately dismissed and side-lined by the police.<sup>179</sup> Data analysis by the charity Missing People found that people from minority ethnic groups were missing for longer and less likely to be found by the police.<sup>180</sup>

100. Victim Support told us that police are “increasingly being made responsible” for delivering victim care and support services commissioned by PCCs.<sup>181</sup> As the charity highlighted, this is likely to “deter victims who do not want to engage with the police,” or those who have had a poor experience with the police, from accessing support. This clearly could be a particular issue for victims and survivors from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Dame Vera Baird (then Victims’ Commissioner) said this group were among “the least likely” to engage with the CJS.<sup>182</sup>

101. In our report on “*The investigation and prosecution of rape*” we noted that some victims and survivors can be supported more effectively by dedicated “by and for” services.<sup>183</sup> “By and for” services are “designed and led by those that share the same protected characteristic(s) as the victims they aim to serve.”<sup>184</sup> Witnesses in our Policing priorities inquiry stressed the importance of support and resourcing for “by and for” services to ensure that victims from particular communities get the support they need.<sup>185</sup> For example, in a survey by the Domestic Abuse Commissioner, 78% of Black and minoritised survivors who had accessed a “by and for” service said they felt safer than when they first thought about accessing support, compared to 48% who had accessed another kind of service, and 30% who had accessed no support whatsoever. Victim Support said “independent support alongside policing” was needed and that police focus should be on and “preventing and investigating crime”.<sup>186</sup>

**102. Policing should provide an effective and compassionate service to victims and survivors. But it cannot provide the level of specialisation that “by and for” services can, nor cater as effectively for those victims and survivors who do not wish to report a crime or engage with the police.**

**103. *When commissioning victim services, Police and Crime Commissioners should be mindful that not all victims will want to report crime or have trust and confidence in the police. By and for services may provide a more tailored approach and ensure that all victims and survivors have equitable access to crucial support.***

### **The Police Race Action Plan and institutional racism**

104. On 24 May 2022, the NPCC and College of Policing published a joint Police Race Action Plan (‘the plan’). It sets out the ambitions of police chiefs to create an anti-racist

179 Victim Support, [New research shows police failing to act on domestic abuse report – ethnic minority victims worst affected](#), December 2022

180 Missing People, [New research shows patterns in the experiences of minority ethnic groups reported missing](#), March 2023

181 Victim Support (POP0068)

182 Victims Commissioner, [The Victims’ Bill—an opportunity to revolutionise how victims are treated](#), June 2022

183 Home Affairs Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2021–22, [The investigation and prosecution of rape](#), HC 193, para 69

184 Home Office, [Delivery of support to victims of domestic abuse in domestic abuse safe accommodation services](#), October 2021

185 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales (POP0090) End Violence Against Women Coalition (POP0088), Refuge (POP0051)

186 Victim Support (POP0068)



police service that can be trusted by Black people.<sup>187</sup> However, the plan has faced criticism for not explicitly acknowledging that the police service is institutionally racist. StopWatch felt this was a “necessary precondition” before progress could be made towards policing becoming anti-racist.<sup>188</sup> Abimbola Johnson, Chair of the Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board (ISOB) highlighted the impact that deciding not to explicitly acknowledge institutional racism has on Black communities’ trust in the police: “there is some feeling that if there is a reluctance to even name and label the issue as it currently is, how genuine will the actions that follow behind it be?”<sup>189</sup> Indeed, survey results from February 2023 about the plan found black respondents were “more sceptical” than White respondents about whether it would have a positive impact.<sup>190</sup>

105. Baroness Casey found institutional racism in the Met on the basis that:

- whilst clearly not everyone in the Met is racist, there are racists and people with racist attitudes within the organisation;
- Black and minority ethnic officers and staff experience racism at work and it is routinely ignored, dismissed, or not spoken about. Many do not think it worth reporting;
- racism and racial bias are reinforced within Met systems; and
- the Met under-protects and over-polices Black Londoners.<sup>191</sup>

106. Sir Mark Rowley accepted Baroness Casey’s four tests, but did not accept the label of “institutionally racist” because of the differing definitions it can have.<sup>192</sup> When questioned, the Commissioner told us he had not witnessed racism or sexism in the Met but having only worked there “for six years as a very senior officer. It doesn’t come across your desk in that way.”<sup>193</sup> We understand that senior leaders in any organisation are likely to be removed from the worst excesses of its culture, however, in our opinion, senior leaders should have the same “grip” on frontline culture that we would expect them to have of local crime data: they must be proactive in seeking out ways to ensure that the racism, sexism and homophobia that citizens and personnel are subjected to do “cross their desks.” Policing Minister Chris Philp also told the Committee that institutional racism was “not a description that the commissioner, the Home Secretary or I have adopted” for the force or service more widely.<sup>194</sup>

107. Baroness Casey highlighted the importance of having a “single guiding mind” taking responsibility for implementing change. She criticised successive Governments for “complete denial of their responsibility” and not doing “anything to address the racism” in the Met.<sup>195</sup>

---

187 NPCC, [Police Race Action Plan: Improving Policing for Black People](#), accessed 13 September 2023

188 StopWatch UK ([POP0050](#))

189 [Q417](#)

190 NPCC, [We are listening to improve policing for Black people](#), February 2023

191 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

192 [Q546](#)

193 [Q573](#)

194 [Q474](#)

195 [Q436](#)

108. “Institutional racism” is a contested term. However, we note that Baroness Casey applied four tests in the Met and found evidence of it. Whether or not the Met identifies as institutionally racist, a significant proportion of the citizens it serves—and its own officers and staff—perceive it to be. It cannot be right that substantial proportions of British people believe, based on lived experience, that policing is systemically and institutionally racist. Much the same is true of misogyny and homophobia.

109. Abimbola Johnson highlighted the risks should admissions of institutional racism by leaders fail to translate meaningfully to rank and file officers who translate police into practice on the frontline.<sup>196</sup> She told us that some chief officers are very clearly committed to progressing the Plan but others were “quite silent” and a few even “actively obstructive about pushing it forward.”<sup>197</sup> Since then the ISOB has published its annual report which “found good intentions and pockets of promising activity.” It concluded, though, that “this, however, is not enough.”<sup>198</sup> ISOB made seven recommendations.

**110. *The National Race Action Plan contains admirable aspirations. Stakeholders need to ensure they are realised speedily. We recommend the NPCC commit to a clear timeframe for the next iteration of the plan and adopt an “accept or explain” response to ISOB’s recommendations.***

## Building trust and confidence through better care for victims and survivors

111. Several stakeholders noted the importance of improving victim care in restoring trust and confidence,<sup>199</sup> calling for a more “victim-centred” and “trauma-informed”<sup>200</sup> approach. Many identified a lack of information, updates and advice for victims<sup>201</sup> throughout a case and the need for better “customer service focus”.<sup>202</sup> Zoe Byrne of Victim Support told us that “there is no system without victims who consent, who co-operate and who trust that system.”<sup>203</sup> In her view, victims have not been a priority in policing, with the result that their trust and confidence in the police has reached “an all-time low.” She argued that the police “must provide a quality service for victims that delivers their rights and entitlements.”<sup>204</sup>

**112. Victim and survivor care is one of the basics that policing has to get right. We agree that failure to prioritise the needs of victims and survivors in the past has undermined trust and confidence in policing today. We are pleased to see that an interim Victims’ Commissioner has finally been appointed. It is, to us, wholly unacceptable that the position was vacant from September 2022 until October 2023.<sup>205</sup> The Government**

196 [Q426](#)

197 [Q413](#)

198 Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board, [Police Race Action Plan: Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board Annual Report](#), August 2023

199 Independent Victims’ Commissioner for London ([POP0047](#))

200 Latin American Women’s Rights Service ([POP0013](#)), Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#)), End Violence Against Women Coalition ([POP0088](#)), Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#)), The Children’s Society ([POP0078](#)), One Small Thing ([POP0040](#)), Refuge ([POP0051](#))

201 Rights of Women ([POP0054](#))

202 Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire ([POP0017](#))

203 [Q210](#)

204 [Q222](#)

205 Victims Commissioner, [About us](#), accessed 13 September 2023

has explained that the recent appointment is temporary in order to “enable a new recruitment campaign to be launched which better reflects the new responsibilities the role will have once the Victims and Prisoners Bill is passed.”<sup>206</sup> We invite the Government to explain in its response to this report why an interim commissioner could not have been appointed a year ago.

113. *We urge the Government to expedite recruitment of a permanent new Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales, so that victims and survivors do not face such a long wait without a representative again. We recommend policing proactively publish and interrogate data on outcomes and victim satisfaction to measure the impact of a renewed focus on supporting victims.*

### Case study: Improving policing’s response to violence against women and girls

114. We received many submissions from organisations supporting VAWG victims and survivors, raising a range of issues from the quality of first police contact with victims to poor use of safeguarding measures by the police to protect victims, and approaches to investigations and prosecutions that leave victims feeling as if they are on trial.<sup>207</sup> Misogyny within the service may well play a part in these problems.

115. Refuge argued that first responders often “do not understand the dynamics of domestic abuse” and “therefore fail to properly investigate cases, victim-blame survivors or make discriminatory assessments.”<sup>208</sup> Rights of Women echoed these concerns, arguing that it is “still commonplace to hear victims have been arrested when the suspect has made a counter-allegation or argued that they have acted in self-defence.”<sup>209</sup> It was concerned that a “biased mindset” was preventing “thorough investigation into the background of the relationship” and an understanding of the “full context” of an incident.

116. In December 2022, Operation Soteria<sup>210</sup> published its Year One Report based on rape responses in five police forces.<sup>211</sup> It found that the police were putting disproportionate effort into testing the credibility of a victim’s account which was, even if unintentionally, reinforcing rape myths. It concluded investigations needed to be rebalanced towards a more thorough investigation of suspects’ behaviour. Similarly, Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) guidance states that domestic abuse cases should not solely rely on victims and that an evidenced-based, “suspect-centric approach is an effective strategy for investigating

206 Ministry of Justice, [Interim Victims’ Commissioner appointed](#), October 2023

207 Latin American Women’s Rights Service ([POP0013](#)), Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#)), End Violence Against Women Coalition ([POP0088](#)), Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#)), The Children’s Society ([POP0078](#)), One Small Thing ([POP0040](#)), Refuge ([POP0051](#))

208 Refuge ([POP0051](#))

209 Rights of Women ([POP0054](#))

210 Operation Soteria is a joint police and CPS programme to develop new operating models for the investigation and prosecution of rape in England and Wales. From July 2023 the Operation Soteria approach to will be [rolled out across England and Wales](#), “improving support for victims and putting the focus on the suspect.”

211 Operation Soteria, [Operation Soteria Year One Report](#), December 2022. The forces involved were Avon and Somerset Police, the Metropolitan Police Service, Durham Constabulary, West Midlands Police and South Wales Police.

and prosecuting DA offences”.<sup>212</sup> But in practice, the Domestic Abuse Commissioner said this was often not the case, with victims contacting her office about police minimising allegations or accusing them of lying.<sup>213</sup>

117. Several witnesses agreed that a lack of experience and specialist knowledge can hamper investigation of Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) and VAWG cases. Richard Atkinson of the Law Society said the complexity of investigating these offences “should not be underestimated” and Kirsty Brimelow of the Criminal Bar Association raised concerns about the quality of evidence obtained by inexperienced officers.<sup>214, 215</sup> This reinforces Operation Soteria findings that investigators lacked specialist RASSO knowledge, with insufficient learning and development opportunities. Zoe Byrne from Victim Support told us that it is “absolutely best practice” for forces to have specialist RASSO units, but noted that even where this was the case “capacity is not sufficient.”<sup>216</sup> Baroness Casey recommended the Met establish new specialist “Soteria” teams for RASSO cases.<sup>217</sup>

118. In February 2023 the Government announced a “crackdown” on domestic abuse to protect women and girls, including new legislation for “tougher management” of offenders convicted of controlling or coercive behaviour and a pilot of new civil protection orders.<sup>218</sup> These new measures will only be as effective as their implementation. We were concerned to hear from the Domestic Abuse Commissioner that police are not adequately enforcing existing protective measures for victims such as bail, non-molestation orders, existing Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders and restraining orders.<sup>219</sup> She said police needed more guidance, training, and supervision in this area and better co-ordination with the CPS. Jessica Eagelton of Refuge agreed that these measures “are underused and used inconsistently.”<sup>220</sup>

**119. Policing needs to show rather than tell women and girls that cultural change has taken place. It can start by providing a consistently excellent service to victims and survivors of VAWG. The availability of officers with the right skills and sensitivities is a crucial part of this.**

**120. We repeat our previous recommendation, made in our report on “The investigation and prosecution of rape”, that the Government strongly encourage forces without specialist police rape and sexual offence teams to put such teams in place and with sufficient resource, including capacity for ongoing training and development.**<sup>221</sup>

121. Multiple stakeholders raised particular concerns about the vulnerability of migrant victims of abuse.<sup>222</sup> Many supported a “firewall” to restrict the police’s ability

---

212 CPS, [Domestic Abuse](#), December 2022

213 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#))

214 [Q244](#)

215 [Q247](#)

216 [Q221](#)

217 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

218 Home Office, [Domestic abusers face crackdown in raft of new measures](#), February 2023

219 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#))

220 [Q326](#)

221 Home Affairs Committee, Eighth Report of Session 2021–22, [Investigation and prosecution of rape](#), HC 193, para 102

222 Latin American Women’s Rights Service ([POP0013](#))

to share victims' personal data with Immigration Enforcement.<sup>223</sup> In January 2023, the Government rejected a Justice Committee recommendation for such a firewall.<sup>224</sup> Refuge said the refusal was “putting migrant victims at risk”.<sup>225</sup> In July 2023, the Women and Equalities Committee added to calls for an “appropriate firewall-type mechanism”.<sup>226</sup>

122. The Government's alternative proposal to a firewall, the Immigration Enforcement Migrant Victims Protocol, was due to be finalised by Autumn 2022.<sup>227</sup> The Government said it would set out that “no immigration enforcement action will be taken against that victim while investigation and prosecution proceedings are ongoing, and the victim is receiving support and advice to make an application to regularise their stay.”<sup>228</sup>

**123. All victims need to feel safe in coming forward to the police and be confident in reporting potential criminality. The Government's alternative proposals do not go far enough to address the concerns of migrant victims and survivors who may be unsure of what will happen to them after prosecution, or if a prosecution does not proceed through no fault of theirs.**

*124. We restate the previous Home Affairs Committee's recommendation from its 2018 report into Domestic Abuse, that “immigration status must not bar victims of abuse from protection and access to justice.”<sup>229</sup> We concur with the Women and Equalities Committee's recommendation that the Government “establish an appropriate firewall-type mechanism between the police and the Home Office to prevent data sharing for the purposes of enforcing immigration rules against victims of abuse.” As that Committee said, any information sharing from the police with Immigration Enforcement on victims should only be in exceptional circumstances for the purposes of assisting in the safeguarding of the individual or acting against their abuser.*

---

223 Latin American Women's Rights Service ([POP0013](#)), Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#)), End Violence Against Women Coalition ([POP0088](#)), Solace ([POP0048](#)), Refuge ([POP0051](#))

224 Justice Committee, Eighth Special Report of Session 2022–23, [Pre-legislative scrutiny of the draft Victims Bill: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report](#), HC 932, para 14

225 Refuge, [Refuge responds to Government's response of the Justice Select Committee's report on the draft Victims Bill](#), January 2023

226 Women and Equalities Committee, Sixth Report of Session 2022–23, [So-called honour-based Abuse](#), HC 831, para 59

227 Rt Hon Priti Patel MP, [Letter to Dame Diana Jonson MP](#), 9 August 2022

228 Home Office, [Review of data sharing: migrant victims and witnesses of crime](#), December 2021

229 Home Affairs Committee, Ninth Report of Session 2017–19, [Domestic Abuse](#), HC 1015, para 103

### 3 Prioritising roles and functions

125. We have considered how policing should manage its competing priorities. We conclude that before policing look at what areas it should prioritise, it should first look within and ensure it has the right people and right culture to deliver a service that earns public trust, confidence and consent.

#### The policing mission: understanding the police’s purpose

126. There was consensus among witnesses that the strategic purpose of policing was to prevent and detect crime. The NPCC and APCC have described the mission of policing as being:

to make communities safer by upholding the law fairly and firmly; preventing crime and antisocial behaviour; keeping the peace; protecting and reassuring communities; investigating crime and bringing offenders to justice.<sup>230</sup>

127. While it is hard to disagree with any of this, there was less clarity on what this meant in practice and how it should influence the allocation of resources among competing priorities. Witnesses spoke of “mission creep”, as police increasingly pick up non-crime demand from other services and play a greater role in safeguarding and risk management. In Sir Mark Rowley’s view this has left his officers facing a “blurred bureaucratic mission”.<sup>231</sup>

128. In August 2022 the Government asked the NPCC to lead a review into the productivity of policing.<sup>232</sup> The NPCC said it will look at “identifying the barriers” in policing and “the most efficient operating models”.<sup>233</sup> We await the findings with interest. We believe a shared national understanding of the role and mission of the police, that clarifies what policing is there to do and—crucially—what it is not there to do is vital to effective reform.

129. While the Home Office has made clear its desire for “common sense policing”, it has failed to set a wider strategic vision for policing.<sup>234</sup> A speech by the Home Secretary in April 2023 indicated that a common sense approach means “prioritising the highest harm crimes and those that matter most to the public”. But this does not recognise the trade-offs that might be involved should the “highest harm” crimes not be at the forefront of what the majority of the general public considers to matter most. Every crime has a negative impact, and citizens rightly expect that police will take all reasonable steps to prevent and detect it. But we wonder how policy statements such as “there is no such thing as a minor crime” will translate on the frontline, where PCCs and chief officers will have to make tough choices about resource allocation.<sup>235</sup>

130. We agree with the Police Foundation’s Strategic Review of Policing: an updated policing mission is needed to reflect aspects of modern police roles such as crime disruption and safeguarding and to provide “a more detailed statement of the specific

230 NPCC and APCC, [Policing Vision 2025](#)

231 [Q103](#)

232 Home Office, [NPCC led review: operational productivity of policing](#), August 2022

233 Home Office, [NPCC led review: operational productivity of policing](#), August 2022

234 Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, [Common sense policing](#), April 2023

235 Home Office, [Police pledge to pursue any reasonable lead to solve more crime](#), August 2023

functions that will be performed”.<sup>236</sup> The NPCC, APCC and College of Policing have set out their Policing Vision 2030. This provides several helpful ambitions for what policing must achieve, but more could be done to translate these into clear expectations of what the public can and should expect modern policing to deliver.<sup>237</sup>

**131. Officers, staff and citizens alike deserve and require a shared national understanding of the role and mission of the police, and the basic functions that policing should get right all the time.**

*132. We recommend the Home Office, working together with key partners, set out its vision for the basics that the public nationwide have the right to expect from policing. This may reflect the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, College of Policing and NPCC’s Policing Vision 2030, but will also focus on how those objectives may be perceived in the public mind.*

## Different demands, different challenges: policing in the United States of America

The Committee visited New York and Dallas between Sunday 21 May and Friday 26 May 2023 for the purposes of its inquiry into Policing priorities. Over four days, six Members (Diana Johnson, Lee Anderson, Paula Barker, Simon Fell, Carolyn Harris and Tim Loughton) met representatives of the New York and Texas UK consulates, the New York Police Department (NYPD), the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), academics, the National Cyber Forensic Training Alliance, the Colleyville Police Department, the Dallas Police Department, and the Deason Center for Criminal Justice Reform, Texas. They also had a demonstration of the capacities of the Fort Worth Police Department’s training facility in Texas (the Bob Bolen Public Safety Complex).

The visit enabled some comparison of issues that face major police forces, broadly comparable in some ways to, say, the Metropolitan Police in London, and that face smaller police departments serving local and more rural communities. While the information obtained during the visit informs many sections of this Report, this note seeks to draw out briefly some of the more notable similarities that face US police Departments and England and Wales Police Services, as well as briefly highlighting some of the key points of difference.

The overarching point is that while policing everywhere may face many of the same basic challenges, methods of dealing with those challenges may differ quite substantially in terms of priority, funding and philosophical approach. In particular, the UK, with an admittedly substantially smaller population, has a broadly coherent and national system of policing oversight, including the Independent Office for Police Conduct and the presence of Police and Crime Commissioners as elected representatives. The sheer number of law enforcement agencies in the USA and different funding and local arrangements across the 50 States and within them provides perhaps the clearest point of difference in how policing systems operate on either side of the Atlantic. Despite these differences, we were impressed by the level

236 The Police Foundation, [The final report of the strategic review of policing in England and Wales](#), March 2022

237 Strategic Policing Partnership Board, [Policing Vision 2030](#)

of joint working between the USA and UK on economic and cyber crime. We saw at first hand the value of forces working so closely to share intelligence, data and capability on areas of mutual interest.

Among other key points discussed were:

**Recruitment and retention:** As with British police services, both the New York and Dallas Police Departments discussed with us the difficulties of recruiting and retaining police officers, with the stresses of the job and, in particular, pay and conditions cited as major drivers in retention problems. US Police Departments are, however, both differently funded (not on a national basis) and more autonomous (no national standards of training or pay), which creates competition among forces within even the same State or local area for officers.

**Community policing:** British policing has always been based on the principle of the consent of those who are policed. It shares with its US counterparts growing criticism that officers are not always sufficiently diverse to represent fully the communities in which they work and which they seek to protect. We heard of new initiatives to increase engagement with local communities in the US, particularly in New York, and heard that some work remains to be done on increasing the diversity of policing in many areas.

**Oversight of policing:** Domestic oversight of policing has come in for some criticism in recent years, but England and Wales have an Independent Office of Police Complaints to deal nationally with complaints as well as a Chief Inspectorate of Constabulary to report on operations, and to support the work of professional standards departments within the 43 police forces. US arrangements differ considerably from location to location, not least because of the vastly differing sizes of police departments (the NYPD is broadly the same size as the Metropolitan Police Force; the Colleyville Police Department which we visited in Texas was at the other end of the scale with around 50 officers in total).

**Daily challenges:** As is the case at home, we heard repeatedly that crime rates were falling in US jurisdictions, but that street crime, violence and drugs remained significant challenges for everyone we met, with similar challenges about how to allocate limited resources most efficiently to deal with crime while also fulfilling the other functions that fall to policing. The prevalence of mental health-related incidents that take up police time as a service of last resort arose as an issue during our visit, reflecting the frustrations recently expressed at home by, among others, the Commissioner of the Metropolis about the diversion of officers away from more core tasks.

**Gun crime:** It is impossible to visit the US without being aware of the substantial difference in approach to gun crime. The UK does not have a routinely armed police service and does have significant control on gun possession. US officers are routinely armed and we witnessed some training facilities and programmes at Fort Worth both impressive in their efficiency and chilling in the scale of their necessity. Compared with England and Wales, we heard that much of the USA's response to crime revolves around issues with gun ownership and criminals' use of firearms. Knife crime was therefore considered less of a priority.



## Understanding changing demand and the resource to meet it

133. Witnesses noted the police service “can only be effective if it understands the current and future demand generators and how to respond to these.”<sup>238</sup> But we heard that the 43-force structure can pose challenges to this, particularly with forces using different digital systems. This can act as a barrier to collaboration, data sharing and consistency. For Dr Rick Muir, this arrangement means policing needs “a stronger strategic centre”.<sup>239</sup> The Police Foundation has previously called for a new Crime and Policing Strategy Unit within the Home Office to anticipate trends, identify patterns in crime and crime prevention, and enable the Department to be more proactive.<sup>240</sup>

134. We recognise that under current arrangements, the Home Office rightly distances itself from operational policing decisions. Yet the least the public might expect from the Government is provision to local forces of the necessary resources to meet the challenges they face. The Institute for Government noted that, while spending on policing has grown in recent years, it is still lower than it was in 2009/10.<sup>241</sup>

135. As our predecessor Committee did in 2015, we heard concerns about the police funding distribution model, which uses the “Police Allocation Formula”(PAF) to calculate the bulk of central Government funding to PCCs.<sup>242, 243</sup> In 2022, the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) highlighted the impact the PAF, well past its use-by date, continues to have on policing. Distribution of newly recruited officers under the Police Uplift Programme based on the PAF has meant that allocations are “out of date by at least 7 years”, with some forces having more officers at the end of the programme in March 2023 than they had in 2010, and “others remaining below previous peak strength.”<sup>244</sup>

136. Several submissions stressed the need to reform the PAF.<sup>245</sup> PFEW supported a “long-term funding settlement” like that of the NHS.<sup>246</sup> In January 2023, Minister Chris Philp said the Home Office had begun a review of PAF eighteen months earlier and was “preparing to publish a first public consultation early this year.”<sup>247</sup> We still have not seen this.

**137. Crime and demand patterns change over time. Policing priorities need to reflect this these changed contexts. We are not convinced that the 43-force model facilitates an effective strategic response to change especially as forces develop different initiatives that do not always align. The understandable lack of appetite for major changes to that structure intensifies the need for the centre to provide the basic building blocks for an effective service. It therefore cannot be right that the Police Allocation Formula remains outdated. If a long-term funding settlement is not possible, commissioners and forces should at least have the information they need to make medium-term financial plans.**

---

238 Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))

239 [Q1](#)

240 The Police Foundation, [The final report of the strategic review of policing in England and Wales](#), March 2022

241 Institute for Government, [Performance Tracker 2022/23: Spring update - Police](#), February 2023

242 Home Affairs Committee, Fourth Report of the Session 2015–16, [Reform of the Police Funding Formula](#), HC 476

243 Home Office, [Guide to the police allocation formula](#), March 2013

244 Public Accounts Committee, Fifteenth Report of Session 2022–23, [The Police Uplift Programme](#), HC261

245 West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ([POP0030](#))

246 Police Federation of England & Wales ([POP0089](#))

247 UIN 124098 [[on police finance](#)], 24 January 2023

138. ***Multiple bodies are involved in setting the strategic direction of policing both locally and nationally. However, the Home Office must provide a strong “strategic centre” and take responsibility for providing policing with the resources it needs to succeed. As a first step, the Home Office must urgently review the Police Allocation Formula and update it where necessary, setting out points for future review in advance to facilitate effective planning by PCCs and forces.***

139. In September 2022, Home Secretary Suella Braverman wrote an open letter to officers stating that “there is a perception that the police have had to spend too much time on symbolic gestures” rather than “actually fighting criminals.”<sup>248</sup> In March 2023 the Government published a draft Code of Practice on “non-crime hate incident” recording that stated “the police will only record non-crime hate incidents when it is absolutely necessary and proportionate and not simply because someone is offended.”<sup>249</sup> We asked the Policing Minister for evidence about the extent to which non-crime hate incidents were taking police away from their other responsibilities. He responded that there were no estimated figures on police time saved under the new code.<sup>250</sup> He said, “the Government’s primary concern ... does not relate to police time spent on this recording” but “reports of the police wrongly getting involved in lawful debate in this country.”

140. The Home Secretary has also called for “no politically correct distractions” in policing.<sup>251</sup> When we asked Sir Mark Rowley whether he thought the police were too “woke”, he replied with a simple “no.”<sup>252</sup> He said that the Met “have not always got that right”, the cornerstone was to police “without fear or favour.”<sup>253</sup> The public debate following the Met’s tweeting around operational decisions made during recent protests in London demonstrates that, while getting operational decisions right is crucial to building public trust and confidence, getting the public messaging around those decisions right matters too. In September 2023, the Home Secretary asked HMICFRS to carry out an inspection of political activism and impartiality in the police.<sup>254</sup> We agree that police should both be, and be seen to be, impartial. However, with several forces in the Engage process, we are keen to see more evidence base for this use of HMICFRS resources.

141. ***We recommend the Home Office monitor the effect of changes in response to non-crime hate incidents and crime recording more broadly, so that adverse impacts are quickly identified and the effect on public trust and confidence tracked.***

## Prioritising crime types: volume and high-harm crime

142. Police forces looking to prioritise effectively may seek to differentiate between higher “volume crime”, which may be seen as relatively “low harm” but potentially impacts more people, and lower volume crime which causes greater harm but to fewer victims. Prioritising may involve choosing to invest in one at the expense of the other, at least in the short term. Participants in our Town Hall event, with around 1,400 members of the public, were mostly unwilling to accept this trade-off – but among those who were willing to make a trade-off, roughly twice as many prioritised high-volume crime.

248 Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, [Open letter to leaders of the police for England and Wales](#), 24 September 2022

249 Home Office, [Police will prioritise freedom of speech under new hate incident guidance](#), March 2023

250 Home Office ([POP0097](#))

251 Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, [Suella Braverman at the APCC and NPCC Partnership Summit](#), 9 November 2022

252 [Q550](#)

253 [Q551](#)

254 Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, [Letter to HMCI Andy Cooke](#), 1 September 2023

143. While focusing on higher volume crime is likely to produce the greatest happiness for the greatest number of people, it may risk leaving some of the most vulnerable people unprotected from serious harm. In addition, we heard challenges to the utility of the very distinction between “volume” and “high-harm” crime. A 2022 HMICFRS inspection found that “the screening of volume crimes can overlook the complexity and harm caused by serious acquisitive crime [SAC]” such as burglary and robbery.<sup>255</sup> The Inspectorate highlighted that most SAC offences did not lead to a charge and warned that without “a concerted and focused drive” to tackle this, “the public is likely to lose confidence in forces’ ability to keep them safe.”<sup>256</sup> In response, on 5 October 2022, the NPCC committed that an officer would attend every home burglary, with chief officers expected to implement the policy “as soon as practically possible.”<sup>257</sup> The Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that there were 2.7 million theft offences in the year ending March 2023, of which 409,000 were domestic burglaries.<sup>258</sup>

144. Acquisitive crimes are not the only high volume crimes that can have huge impacts on victims. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner argued that “domestic abuse is a high-volume crime”.<sup>259</sup> In the year ending March 2023, the police flagged 889,441 recorded offences as domestic abuse-related.<sup>260</sup>

### **More focus on fraud**

145. Policing Minister Chris Philp said that “since 2010 overall crime has fallen by 50% according to the crime survey, [ ... ] which I think we can all be extremely pleased about.”<sup>261</sup> While this figure is encouraging, it fails to take account of fraud and computer misuse. Throughout our inquiry, we heard that fraud was a major threat facing citizens. The Government said fraud is “by far the most common crime”,<sup>262</sup> with the Home Secretary telling us it accounted for “over 40% of crime these days, and it is rising quickly.”<sup>263</sup> Fraud can have “serious financial and emotional impacts on victims”, with consequences as serious as “losing life savings and pension pots, going bankrupt or being made homeless.”<sup>264</sup>

146. We heard that an “analogue police service”<sup>265</sup> needed to “transform its ability” to respond effectively to fraud.<sup>266</sup> The NAO found that the estimated incidence of “actual and attempted fraud against individuals in England and Wales rose by 12% from 3.4 million in the year ending March 2017, to 3.8 million in the year ending June 2022”. But over the same period the number of fraud offences resulting in a charge or summons fell from 6,402 to 4,816.<sup>267</sup> In Dr Rick Muir’s view, fraud investigation should be largely given “to

255 HMICFRS, [The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime – Finding time for crime](#), August 2022

256 HMICFRS, [The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime – Finding time for crime](#), August 2022

257 NPCC, [All home burglaries will be attended by the police](#), October 2022

258 Office for National Statistics, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2023](#), July 2023

259 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#))

260 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales](#), March 2023

261 [Q460](#)

262 Home Office, [Fraud Strategy: stopping scams and protecting the public](#), June 2023

263 [Q573](#)

264 Victim Support ([POP0068](#))

265 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

266 Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex ([POP0009](#)), The Police Foundation ([POP0035](#)), Social Market Foundation ([POP0045](#)), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners ([POP0083](#))

267 National Audit Office, [Progress combatting fraud](#), November 2022

dedicated investigators” located at the regional or national level, rather than cases handed out to local forces “that do not prioritise it.”<sup>268</sup> We revisit the need for specialist skills in the police workforce to investigate fraud in chapter 4.

147. We were also told that victims of fraud should receive more attention.<sup>269</sup> Dr Muir highlighted the limits of current victim care for fraud victims because ultimately they want their money back and services for supporting victims of crime are not typically set up to help with this.<sup>270</sup> The City of London Authority Board said forces must “boost the awareness and training of their officers so they can give victims appropriate support on first contact” and advice on protecting themselves.<sup>271</sup>

148. However, we also heard that the response to fraud is not solely a responsibility for the police. The NPCC saw a “clear role for industry in designing out crime”.<sup>272</sup> The Home Secretary told us the Government’s new anti-fraud champion was “working with industry to ensure that companies are adequately incentivised to tackle fraud.”<sup>273</sup> She also referred to provisions in the Online Safety Bill that will require social media and search engine “giants” to have measures to prevent fraud, “charters with the banking, accountancy and telecoms sectors, which are already seeing results”, and an online fraud charter that the Government is hoping to follow up with “very soon.”

149. In May 2023 the Home Office published its Fraud Strategy.<sup>274</sup> The Home Secretary told us it was “quite ambitious” but that a “step change” was needed to tackle this “multifaceted” crime, including “greater powers to pursue the fraudsters”, “better technological capability” and “a degree of greater personal responsibility on the part of citizens to be more aware” of threats.<sup>275</sup>

**150. Private industry, particularly social media platforms and the mobile networks, must play its part in “designing out” fraud. We plan to revisit the crucial area and the right balance of responsibilities in our inquiry on this topic.**

*151. We support the commitment in the Government’s Fraud Strategy to “make the tech sector commit to protect their customers through legislation and voluntary commitments” and “help banks slow down suspicious payments.” We urge the Home Office to deliver on those commitments as soon as possible. For example, a new online fraud charter was to be delivered by the end of Summer 2023.<sup>276</sup> We expect to see this by the end of 2023 at the latest.*

## Non-crime demand—the “service of last resort”

152. Policing faces many pressures that sit outside its core mission of “preventing crime and disorder”.<sup>277</sup> Several witnesses said that instead of being “all things to all people”

---

268 [Q5](#)

269 City of London Police Authority Board ([POP0049](#))

270 [Q5](#)

271 City of London Police Authority Board ([POP0049](#))

272 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

273 Oral evidence taken on 14 June 2023, HC (2022–23) 201, [Q575](#) [Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP]

274 Home Office, [Fraud Strategy](#), May 2023

275 Oral evidence taken on 14 June 2023, HC (2022–23) 201, [Q574](#) [Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP]

276 Home Office, [Government and industry meet to progress the fight against fraud](#), July 2023

277 College of Policing, [The Code of Ethics: reading list](#), July 2014

policing should “prioritise those functions which only the police can do”<sup>278</sup>. We believe that a narrow focus on fighting crime would be “untenable” and indeed undesirable, as it would mean excluding safeguarding and wider partnership roles that policing can and should play.<sup>279</sup> As an example, Operation Encompass provides a model where if the police attend a domestic abuse incident where a child lives, they notify safeguarding staff at the child’s school before the child arrives there the next day. It has called for this to be a statutory obligation on all forces.<sup>280</sup>

153. The divide between crime and non-crime demand may also be more porous than it initially appears. Dr Rick Muir said, “most of the things that the public are calling the police about do not result in a crime being recorded”, but that “does not necessarily mean all of that is not related to crime.”<sup>281</sup> For example, crimes may surface during the investigation into a road traffic collision or an effective missing persons investigation may protect someone at risk of criminal or other forms of exploitation. The charity Missing People argued that “finding missing people and making them safe must be a priority for a modern police service” as only they “have the investigative powers and skills to find missing people at risk of harm.”<sup>282</sup> Dr Muir also highlighted the increased “risk management” work done by the police such as monitoring violent and sexual offenders in the community.<sup>283</sup>

154. Gregor McGill of the CPS told us that “the challenges of austerity” have meant the police have been “pulled into areas” that they “did not have to go into before.”<sup>284</sup> We heard how picking up this “non-crime demand”<sup>285</sup> from other services who do not have the resource to meet it leaves the police themselves open to “overstretch” and “overreach”.

155. **Policing faces challenges in delivering its core mission. Simultaneously it has become “the service of last resort for people in crisis.”**<sup>286</sup> **We agree with the National Police Chiefs’ Council and College of Policing that tackling this mission creep “requires cross-Government working.”**<sup>287</sup>

### ***Mental health demand and Right Care, Right Person***

156. We heard that too often police spent time on demand linked to mental health that should have been diverted to other services. Sir Mark Rowley told us that mental health demand was “crippling” policing’s front line.<sup>288</sup> The Met estimated that its officers spend “well over 10,000 hours each month responding to mental health concerns and ... health matters”. The PCC for Bedfordshire, Festus Akinbusoye, agreed that too many officers were “stuck in A&E and dealing with mental health jobs”.<sup>289</sup>

---

278 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

279 The Police Foundation ([POP0035](#))

280 Operation Encompass ([POP0091](#))

281 [Q2](#)

282 Missing People ([POP0070](#))

283 [Q2](#)

284 [Q272](#)

285 UNJUST C.I.C ([POP0033](#)), Mr Michael Wearing ([POP0004](#))

286 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

287 National Police Chiefs’ Council; College of Policing ([POP0001](#))

288 [Q103](#)

289 [Q27](#)

157. Martin Hewitt, former Chair of the NPCC, had previously told us that “our fundamental contract with the public is that, when there is an emergency or they are in distress, we will turn up.”<sup>290</sup> For him, the challenge is then bringing other services in so that going forward people are supported and do not keep ending up in crisis situations. As Dr Muir put it, the police might have the powers to “impose a solution” or “deescalate a situation” in the moment, but they cannot solve the underlying problems.<sup>291</sup>

158. Over a three-year period, Humberside Police worked with partners in ambulance, mental health, acute hospitals and social services to develop the “Right Care Right Person” (RCRP) model in response to such demand. The model involves forming an agreement with partners to ensure that the most appropriate service responds to health-related calls rather than the police necessarily being the first responder. The Policing Minister praised the initiative which he said was “saving something like 15,000 hours a year” of policing time. He said Government would roll the concept out across England via a “National Partnership Agreement” involving the Home Office, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and key partners.<sup>292</sup>

159. Following the Minister’s speech, on 24 May 2023, the Met Commissioner wrote to leaders of London health and social care providers stating the Met would introduce RCRP from September 2023 and train its call handlers to use the model to triage calls and decide whether to deploy officers.<sup>293</sup> Whilst this was in line with the Government’s rollout ambitions, health chiefs reportedly “raised the alarm” that vulnerable people will be “left in limbo” and put at risk of harm.<sup>294</sup> The Guardian quoted Dr Adrian James, President of the Royal College of Psychiatrists, as calling the sudden move “unhelpful” and came without the “resources that will be necessary to plug those gaps”.<sup>295</sup> In August there were media reports that the Met had come to an agreement with London health bodies and would commence RCRP from 31 October 2023.<sup>296</sup>

160. The Home Office and others have presented the key benefit of RCRP in terms of police hours saved. But it does not necessarily follow that this either improves mental health outcomes overall or improves police performance in other areas. We need to see the evidence that it does so. Jessica Eagelton of Refuge had previously warned of risks to domestic abuse and VAWG victims who might present in mental health crisis, should police attend fewer mental health calls. She said officers should be “peeling back the layers of such cases,” not viewing them in black and white.”<sup>297</sup> While Minister Philp told us there was “no suggestion in Humberside that people with mental health problems have fallen through the cracks and been neglected”<sup>298</sup>, we would like to see more rigorous system-wide evaluation of the model. We also note that Humberside’s success in implementation followed three years of development, and phasing-in over a year and a half.

**161. The police should work effectively with other services without having to compensate for lack of resources elsewhere or absorb demand that should rightly sit with others.**

---

290 [Q34](#)

291 [Q2](#)

292 Chris Philp MP, [Cutting red tape to free up police time to focus on solving crimes](#), 13 April 2023

293 Metropolitan Police Service, [Introduction of Right Care, Right Person model](#), accessed 12 September 2023

294 The Guardian, [Met plan to stop mental health response will leave thousands ‘without support’](#), 29 May 2023

295 The Guardian, [Met plan to stop mental health response will leave thousands ‘without support’](#), 29 May 2023

296 The Guardian, [Met wins battle with NHS over not attending mental health calls](#), 17 August 2023

297 [Q313](#)

298 [Q523](#)

We understand that often police will not be the right professionals to intervene in mental health situations. We believe profoundly that people with mental health issues should receive expert care from the right professionals, rather than needlessly coming into contact with police officers who already face a range of demands aligned to their core mission. We are concerned however that there are risks associated with challenging other services to step up without providing them with sufficient resources to do so. Simply shifting unrealistic demand onto other services will not represent overall policy success for the Government. Moving to a new model may save police time but we should also expect to see “non-crime demand” outcomes improve across the system because the right professionals are responding, as well as improved policing performance in the core areas of preventing, investigating and detecting crime.

162. *The Right Care Right Person model appears to have been successful in reducing demand on police in Humberside. We recommend that, as it is adopted across the country, the Home Office carefully evaluate the impact of its adoption on both policing time and overall performance, publishing its first findings a year on from the adoption of the National Partnership Agreement.*

163. *We recommend the Home Office also work with the Department of Health and Social Care to evaluate the impact of RCRP on wider outcomes, for example, for those in mental health crisis who might previously have been dealt with by the police and be prepared to take remedial action where necessary to support other service providers. This evaluation should include any impact on the workload, wellbeing and safety of policing colleagues as well as partners in health and social care.*

164. *If Right Care Right Person is to succeed as a national approach, it is crucial that those frontline health and care services who will be expected to step up receive the resources they need to do so. As Government makes funding settlements across these services, it must ensure that those resources are in place.*

## The role of the police in prevention work

165. Many of our witnesses were keen to see the police focusing on crime prevention but opinions differed on what this might look like in practice.<sup>299</sup> Some called for a “strategic shift from response to prevention”<sup>300</sup> and several highlighted effective collaboration with other public bodies, specialist organisations and victims’ representatives.<sup>301</sup> For Dr Rick Muir, police should have a “preventive mindset” rather than delivering preventive work themselves. He said, “we need to be clear about the role of the police, and much more systemic about thinking about the role of health, local authorities and others in preventing crime”,<sup>302</sup> otherwise police could be “dragged into doing the prevention because they think no one else is going to do it.” This echoes concerns about the police picking up non-crime demand.

299 Association of Police and Crime Commissioners ([POP0083](#)), Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))

300 Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex ([POP0009](#))

301 Latin American Women’s Rights Service ([POP0013](#)), West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ([POP0030](#))

302 [Q8](#)

166. Other stakeholders raised concerns that police prevention and intelligence-driven approaches, such as the Gangs Matrix, can stereotype, stigmatise and pre-emptively criminalise young Black people and expose them to greater enforcement powers.<sup>303</sup>

**167. Policing has a key role in crime prevention, but greater clarity is needed about what that role is and where police responsibilities end and those of others begin. The Government has to allow policing to prioritise its purposes and functions in the sound knowledge of its key roles.**

*168. We recommend the Government set out in its response to this report its vision for policing's role in crime prevention.*



## 4 A workforce fit for the future

169. There were 147,430 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in the 43 territorial forces in England and Wales in March 2023. This represents a sharp increase from the lows of the mid to late 2010s.<sup>304</sup> The Government’s Police Uplift Programme (which ran from July 2019 to March 2023) exceeded its target of recruiting 20,000 new officers by close to a thousand.<sup>305</sup> The Met was the only force to not hit its target, missing its allocation of 4,557 additional officers by 1,089 (23.9%).<sup>306</sup>

170. The uplift in FTE numbers is welcome, but as some of our witnesses suggested, newly recruited officers are not likely to have experience or specialist policing skills. Retention and well-being can also be challenges and we were concerned to hear about an absence of workforce planning beyond the Uplift programme.

### A workforce that reflects the community it serves

171. Several witnesses argued the police should be representative of the communities they serve and that this would support better engagement between the police and minority and underrepresented groups.<sup>307</sup> Following the Uplift Programme, the number and proportion of female officers and Black, Asian and minority ethnic officers has increased. But despite this female officers still account for only around 35.5% of officers, and only 8.3% of all officers identify as being from a minority ethnic group.<sup>308</sup> The picture was described as “most concerning” for Black officers who represent just 1.3% of officers.<sup>309,310</sup> While the Met has the highest proportion of officers who identify as being from a Black or minority ethnic group at (approximately 17.3%), this is still far lower than the 46.3% of Londoners from a Black or minority ethnic background according to the 2021 Census.<sup>311</sup> Baroness Casey also found “the higher the rank [ ... ] the less representation” there was, with higher attrition rates amongst Black and ethnic minority officers exacerbating this.<sup>312</sup> Line managers have a crucial role in setting the culture of an organisation. As of March 2023, the Home Office stated that while 36.8% of police constables were women, this number fell to 27.0% for sergeants (the first level of line management) and 26.9% for inspectors (who manage teams and/or portfolios).<sup>313</sup>

172. The Police Foundation said it would take decades for the service to achieve representation and recommended the development of a plan to improve workforce diversity that includes setting targets and legislating for “time limited positive discrimination policies” to reach them. However, the Police Foundation also warned that “while a more representative workforce is necessary, it is not on its own sufficient” to tackle racism—an anti-racist internal culture is also needed.<sup>314</sup> Improved representation should not in and of

304 Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2023](#), July 2023

305 Home Office, [Police officer uplift, final position as at March 2023](#), July 2023

306 Home Office, [Police officer uplift, final position as at March 2023](#), July 2023

307 West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (POP0030), Police Now (POP0087), Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) (POP0014)

308 Home Office, [Police officer uplift, final position as at March 2023](#), July 2023

309 The Police Foundation (POP0035)

310 Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales](#), July 2023

311 Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales](#), July 2023

312 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

313 Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales](#), July 2023

314 The Police Foundation (POP0035)

itself be treated as evidence of cultural change—it is important to remember that to succeed within a workplace, workers may have to internalise or adapt to its prevailing culture. During our visit to New York, we saw first-hand how a laudable focus on increasing the diversity of the service has not yet translated into better relationships with communities.

**173. A police service that fails to attract, retain and progress diverse officers will be unable to demonstrate that it can meet the needs of diverse communities. While a representative workforce is crucial, we cannot rely on numerical representation alone to drive far-reaching cultural change. Instead, officers, staff and communities need to see evidence of processes, actions and outcomes that are fair, inclusive, and enhanced by meaningful two-way communication.**

*174. Police and Crime Commissioners should hold forces to account on efforts to recruit, retain and progress a broadly representative workforce across all ranks.*

*175. Senior officers should actively support staff organisations representing groups and consider the full range of tools at their disposal to ensure that forces reflect the community they serve.*

## Retention and wellbeing

176. The 2021 National Police Wellbeing Survey found a significant increase in the number of officers and civilian staff intending to leave policing from the previous year.<sup>315</sup> The year ending March 2023 saw the highest number of police service leavers and the highest percentage voluntary leaver rate since comparable records began in 2003.<sup>316</sup> Chair of PFEW, Steve Hartshorn, said “officers are reaching breaking point”.<sup>317</sup> The PSA also described a “wellbeing and mental health crisis” in the policing workforce and said that Occupational Health support varied significantly across forces.<sup>318</sup> As a result, officers were “suffering and turning to police charities for help.” The PSA were “strong supporters of the objectives behind the Police Covenant”, but said that progress in making its impacts tangible had so far been “far too slow.”<sup>319</sup> The PSA called for actions associated with the Covenant to be implemented “as quickly as possible”. It also cited “poor pay” as a further reason for leaving.<sup>320</sup>

177. Without consistent provision and analysis of exit interviews there is “very limited evidence” for the reasons behind rising officer resignations. This limits capacity to develop creative and effective retention solutions.<sup>321</sup> Steve Hartshorn suggested these should be mandated by the Home Office.<sup>322</sup> We agree.

**178. Whilst the National Police Wellbeing Survey, along with surveys carried out by PFEW, provide useful information on police wellbeing and morale, we would also like to see these complemented by data from mandated exit interviews.**

---

315 Oscar Kilo, [National Police Wellbeing Survey 2021 results](#), May 2022

316 Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2023](#), July 2023

317 PFEW, [Pay and Morale Survey finds policing rests on a knife edge](#), January 2023

318 Police Superintendents’ Association ([POP0073](#))

319 Police Superintendents’ Association ([POP0073](#))

320 [Q73](#)

321 Sarah Charman (School of Criminology at University of Portsmouth); Paul Gilmour (School of Criminology at University of Portsmouth) ([POP0082](#))

322 [Q197](#)

179. *We recommend the Home Office complete implementation of the Police Covenant within six months.*

180. *We recommend the Home Office work with partners to create a mechanism to collect data on staff and officer views on police culture, wellbeing and morale. This would, for example, provide an annual picture on confidence to whistle blow on unacceptable behaviour.*

## Building the skills and capabilities to meet evolving challenges

### *A workforce strategy beyond the Uplift Programme*

181. A 2022 NAO review of the Uplift Programme found that the new intake does not fully meet current or future policing needs.<sup>323</sup> Later the same year, the Public Accounts Committee concluded that the focus of the Home Office had been “on getting people through the door” but it had not set out how the impact of new officers would be measured.<sup>324</sup> UNISON criticised the lack of a “strategic vision from government for the police workforce beyond the blunt measure” of the Programme.<sup>325</sup> We also find it surprising that no such vision is in place. Several witnesses argued that forces need to “radically modernise” workforce planning, looking to skills that will be needed in the future.<sup>326</sup> The College of Policing agreed that it “make[s] sense for policing to have service-wide capability in workforce planning” to provide “a national picture of evolving threats and the distribution of relevant skills across the service”.<sup>327</sup> The Police Foundation suggested this could sit within the College.<sup>328</sup>

### *Experience levels*

182. The NAO estimated that nationally, Uplift recruitment coupled with normal turnover will mean by 2023–24, 38% of officers will have fewer than five years’ experience. The comparable figure in 2014–15 was 12%.<sup>329</sup> Richard Atkinson from the Law Society felt that inexperienced officers have been left dealing with complex cases and “are floundering a little”.<sup>330</sup> Supervisors should be playing a crucial role in decision-making and advice-giving, but we also heard of “inexperienced sergeants supervising inexperienced officers.” Baroness Casey too highlighted a general lack of effective line management and supervision across the Met.<sup>331</sup>

183. The Met acknowledged that “whilst officer growth has provided vital capacity, experience levels (at entry and supervisory levels) have increasingly become an issue”.<sup>332</sup> However, Sir Mark Rowley was optimistic about “the passion and enthusiasm of new

323 National Audit Office, [The Police Uplift Programme](#), March 2022

324 Public Accounts Committee, Fifteenth Report of Session 2022–23, [The Police Uplift Programme](#), HC261

325 UNISON ([POP0094](#))

326 Police Superintendents’ Association ([POP0073](#))

327 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

328 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

329 National Audit Office, [The Police Uplift Programme](#), March 2022

330 [Q244](#)

331 Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, [Final report: An independent review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service](#), March 2023

332 Metropolitan Police Service ([POP0086](#))

recruits” and Jessica Eagelton from Refuge suggested that with the right systems in place, more new officers might be an opportunity to shift negative cultures and “refresh some of the thinking” in place in forces.<sup>333, 334</sup>

### **Specialist skills and expectations of “omnicompetence”**

184. Dr Rick Muir said as policing was becoming increasingly complex, a move away from expecting “omni-competence” among officers was needed.<sup>335</sup> Andy Cooke agreed, saying that officers could not be expected to “be an expert in everything they deal with in response.”<sup>336</sup> While there will always need to be a 24/7 999 response, “officers need access to specialists at an early stage.”<sup>337</sup>

185. We heard that a “modern police force may need to rely less on warranted officers and more on those with specialist” skills, knowledge and expertise.<sup>338</sup> The NPCC highlighted that the Uplift Programme had not focused on increasing staff “who also play mission critical roles”, such as control room staff, digital forensics or data analysts.<sup>339</sup> UNISON was concerned about a “reverse civilianisation” where officers have to take on more staff and administrative functions to fill gaps, impacting forces’ efficiency.<sup>340, 341</sup>

186. We heard of a particular need for specialist skills to tackle fraud and online crime. Gregor McGill of the CPS told us that investigations and prosecutions by specialist central teams “get better results”<sup>342</sup> but that it was a challenge at the local level to build “a good, strong fraud case”. Steve Hartshorn agreed that most frontline officers would struggle with complex fraud cases and might miss “some of the fundamental detail needed for the specialist investigation.”<sup>343</sup> Andy Cooke also felt that a “response officer carrying a busy workload and working three shifts is not the right person to be investigating frauds in this country.”<sup>344</sup>

187. Yet Kirsty Brimelow of the Criminal Bar Association said its members have seen inexperienced officers increasingly being assigned to fraud cases, leading to errors in dealing with technical evidence.<sup>345</sup>

188. The Fraud Strategy promises a new national fraud squad with over 400 new posts.<sup>346</sup> However, we heard several concerns about policing’s ability to attract and retain fraud specialists, particularly as the pay cannot compete with the private sector.<sup>347</sup> We question therefore whether this goal is achievable and whether, instead of recruiting additional fraud specialists it risks moving existing ones around the system. We also note that

---

333 [Q94](#)

334 [Q321](#)

335 [Q12](#)

336 [Q150](#)

337 [Q149](#)

338 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

339 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

340 UNISON ([POP0094](#))

341 Baroness Beverley Hughes (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester at Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))

342 [Q278](#)

343 [Q192](#)

344 [Q142](#)

345 [Q229](#)

346 Home Office, [Fraud Strategy](#), May 2023

347 [Q142](#), [Q192](#)

National Crime Agency staff are civil servants with differing pay arrangements to both policing and the private sector, adding perhaps greater barriers to attracting and retaining specialists.<sup>348</sup> We are not persuaded that the proposed national squad is sufficient to tackle fraud effectively.

**189. It is no longer sufficient that individual forces design their own workforce plans and strategies in isolation. Crime crosses force boundaries and requires specialist officers and recruits with unique skills. Following the end of the uplift programme, it must be a priority of the Government to set out how it intends to work with forces to deliver an effective workforce strategy that will enable the Police to adequately meet the challenges of the future.**

*190. We recommend the Home Office set out a workforce plan and strategy for policing over the next ten years as a matter of urgency. The plan should address officer and staff numbers and skills. Particular attention should be placed on recognised areas of shortage. The plan should be subject to periodic review and impact analysis, with the first of these completed and published by 31 December 2024.*

**191. We are concerned that the status of NCA staff as civil servants with different pay scales to policing increases the challenge of recruiting and retaining the right people. We are not convinced that it is feasible to recruit 400 entirely new fraud specialists.**

*192. We recommend the Home Office, working collaboratively with forces and the NCA, create a sustainable pipeline of fraud specialists, with fair pay scales that will encourage retention.*

## Training and learning

193. 90% of participants in our deliberative Town Hall agreed that police across England and Wales should have more consistent training and development. The College of Policing said training and continual professional development were the most powerful levers to transform the productivity of a workforce” but that there is a “postcode lottery” of approaches within policing.<sup>349, 350</sup> Andy Marsh said there were differences in the CPD offering depending on role and rank, with generalist, frontline officers missing out. For example, training and accreditation is required for those in public order or firearms commands, but equivalent training opportunities are not available for response or neighbourhood officers.<sup>351</sup> Sir Mark Rowley said that investment in leadership training for those in command, line management and supervisory roles is inadequate, with national programmes having been “cut back” over time.<sup>352</sup>

194. The Police Foundation has called for more professional standards—for example, training standards around stop and search—to be made mandatory.<sup>353</sup> It further recommended a Learning and Development Fund.<sup>354</sup> PFEW called for “protected

---

348 [Q578](#)

349 National Police Chiefs’ Council; College of Policing ([POP0001](#))

350 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

351 [Q34](#)

352 [Q47](#)

353 The Police Foundation, [The final report of the strategic review of policing in England and Wales](#), March 2022

354 The Police Foundation ([POP0035](#))

learning time for all police officers ... to receive the ongoing training needed, whether that be changes to the law, or how to better deal with communities and encourage trust and confidence.”<sup>355</sup>

**195. We recognise that training of local officers needs to be shaped by local considerations. However, citizens should be able to be assured that all officers share basic skills, and that approaches are broadly similar nationwide.**

*196. We recommend the Home Office empower the College of Policing to mandate learning curricula and essential Continuous Professional Development. This could lead to development of a Licence to Practise as part of the wider Fitness to Practise model we have discussed.*

**197. Strong leadership is crucial, especially given the current high proportion of inexperienced officers. We welcome the College of Policing’s commitment to underpinning the future of police leadership.**

*198. Policing must continue its investment in leadership, especially at sergeant level. These training elements should be embedded within the workforce plan we have recommended.*

### **The degree debate**

199. There is debate about whether the policing profession should require officers to have, or be working towards, a degree. There are routes into policing aimed at joiners already holding a degree, along with the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship for those who don’t but can earn one on the job.<sup>356</sup> The “traditional entry” route, the Initial Police Learning Development Programme (IPLDP), does not require or award a degree. It was due to be phased out but on 9 November 2022, the Home Secretary announced she would be keeping IDLDP open while the College of Policing reviewed “options for a new non-degree entry route”.<sup>357</sup> IPLDP will now cease to be available on 31 March 2024.<sup>358</sup> The new Police constable entry programme (PCEP) will not require study for a qualification during probation, with recruits becoming police constables after two years if they pass probation. This entry route is scheduled to become available from April 2024.

200. Dr Rick Muir noted that because policing “has become more complex” training needed to be at a “higher level.”<sup>359</sup> He explained that while this did not mean a degree should be a requirement of entry to the profession, there should be multiple routes for officers to work towards a degree qualification. In contrast Andy Cooke did not regard a degree as essential and was concerned that making it a requirement could stop “good people” from applying.<sup>360</sup> In April 2022, Home Office officials told the Public Accounts Committee that it was “certainly not seeing” the degree apprenticeship scheme “putting

355 Police Federation of England & Wales (POP0089)

356 Police: be the difference, [Ways in to policing](#), accessed 13 September 2023

357 Rt Hon Suella Braverman KC MP, [Suella Braverman at the APCC and NPCC Partnership Summit](#), November 2022

358 College of Policing, [Joining the police as a new police constable \(PC\)](#), accessed 17 October 2023

359 [Q14](#)

360 [Q146](#)

recruits off.”<sup>361</sup> Instead, they said it gave “the officer the chance to accredit what they learn to degree standard, and therefore it recognises the abilities and skills that a fully formed and functioning police officer has in the modern world.”

**201. The esteem afforded to police officers should reflect the complexity of skills and knowledge needed to do the job well. Given the Government’s general enthusiasm for degree apprenticeships, and the Home Office’s previous view that the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship was not deterring officers from applying, we find the rethink in this area surprising.**

***202. The Home Office should take care that its determination to keep a non-degree route open into policing is not in conflict with attempts to build the profile of policing as a highly skilled profession, and does not create more inconsistency with the recruitment, competency requirements and training of other entry routes. We recommend the Home Office investigate further the impact of making a degree a mandatory requirement first on police officers’ recruitment and retention and, secondly, on the potential impact on policing’s reputation. We also recommend that the Home Office keep under review the wider impacts of its decision to retain a non-degree entry route. We recommend all three of these elements of research and analysis be commenced within the next three months.***

---

361 Oral evidence taken before the Public Accounts Committee on 25 April 2022, HC (2021–22) 1215, [Q24](#) [Rachel Watson]

## 5 The wider criminal justice system

203. We have focused on priorities for the police service but recognise policing as part of a wider criminal justice system. Policing’s potential to deliver on its core missions is profoundly impacted by the functioning of criminal justice. Several of our witnesses suggested that weaknesses in criminal justice were undermining policing.

204. Some expressed frustration at court backlogs and delays, and the impact they had on investigations and victim attrition.<sup>362</sup> The PSA was concerned that the recent uplift in police numbers could exacerbate this, with “more cases progressed without the capacity available within the court system to respond.”<sup>363</sup> The Public Accounts Committee was of a similar mind.<sup>364</sup> Similarly, Richard Atkinson told us that many solicitors were leaving criminal defence work and that this would “have a direct impact on policing when they cannot get duty solicitors at the time, or at all, in order to be able to complete their investigations”.<sup>365</sup>

### Progressing cases and working with the Crown Prosecution Service

#### *Case files and disclosure*

205. To progress cases, police must work effectively with colleagues in the CPS. However, 2020 guidance from the Director of Public Prosecutions on the information police must submit to the CPS for an initial charging decision—known as “DG6”—is a clear point of contention.<sup>366</sup>

206. Policing stakeholders argued that DG6 has increased expectations on officers to complete full case files pre-charge and placed a greater administrative burden on officers to go through the “long and complex task” of classifying all material gathered in an investigation on if it could be used at trial.<sup>367</sup> They said that this delayed charging decisions and consumed a disproportionate level of police resource on cases that may not continue. PFEW said this contributed to “frustration” among officers.<sup>368</sup> There were calls to “return to a more streamlined prosecution case files [for] pre-charging decisions”.<sup>369</sup>

207. The CPS told us the updated guidance “ensures that cases are trial and guilty plea ready when entering the courts, and should be seen against the potential impact on victims of a prosecution failing at trial because of a disclosure issue being identified at a late stage.”<sup>370</sup>

208. Gregor McGill drew our attention to the fact that the CPS return “about 45%” of case files to the police because of quality issues, although it can vary significantly across

362 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#)), Tracy Brabin (Mayor of West Yorkshire at West Yorkshire Combined Authority) ([POP0041](#)), [Q229](#)

363 Police Superintendents’ Association ([POP0073](#))

364 Public Accounts Committee, Fifteenth Report of Session 2022–23, [The Police Uplift Programme](#), HC261, Summary [Q223](#), [Q223](#)

366 CPS, [Charging \(The Director’s Guidance\) - sixth edition, December 2020, incorporating the National File Standard](#), December 2020

367 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

368 Police Federation of England & Wales ([POP0089](#))

369 Sarah Charman (School of Criminology at University of Portsmouth); Paul Gilmour (School of Criminology at University of Portsmouth) ([POP0082](#))

370 Crown Prosecution Service ([POP0101](#))



forces”.<sup>371</sup> Kirsty Brimelow of the Criminal Bar Association added that “across files we are seeing that there seems to be a lack of understanding about what should be disclosed and what should not.”<sup>372</sup> This is probably exacerbated by long-standing practice of case file preparation and disclosure of material to the CPS often falling to “inexperienced officers who are overwhelmed by it and their workloads more generally.”<sup>373</sup> In 2018 the Justice Committee recommended more be done in policing to embed disclosure into every stage of the investigative process and not just delegated as an add-on “to the most junior person as has all too often been the case in the past.”<sup>374</sup>

209. High standards in preparing case files and disclosure to the CPS is crucial to meeting policing priorities but a requirement for full files before charging may be counter-productive. The frustration of expending effort on cases which do not progress may instead perpetuate a negative culture towards disclosure and encourage its de-prioritisation. This undermines the work that policing has done in recent years to embed disclosure into the investigation process.

210. In lieu of any immediate changes to DG6, the police must be able to obtain early legal advice on case files to ensure that they are robust for charging.<sup>375</sup> We note in an inspection in December 2022, HMICFRS found good practice examples, such as in Essex Police where the child protection team had agreed with its local CPS a process for advice to be obtained early in an investigation.<sup>376</sup>

211. We welcome the recent launch of the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences, and understand that this will “focus on disclosure application for crime types with a large volume of digital material”, as well as assessing the Attorney General’s Guidelines on Disclosure and considering “legislative and non-legislative modifications that could improve the regime.”<sup>377</sup> However, the Review is not due to report until Summer 2024.

**212. As the police and CPS bicker over where the burden of investigation and paperwork should lie, victims and survivors lose out. We understand the rationale for DG6 and we note that the CPS consulted forces and the NPCC when designing the updated guidance.**<sup>378</sup>

**213. *Now that DG6 has been in place for almost three years, we recommend the CPS review its implementation and impact, consulting stakeholders before proposing changes that will better reflect an appropriate balance between the need for effective early investigation and proportionality in resource consumption. We understand that there is already “work ongoing” in this area, and that the piece of work we recommend here may now come under the auspices of the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences.***<sup>379</sup>

---

371 [Qq265–267](#),

372 [Q248](#)

373 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

374 Justice Committee, Eleventh Report of Session 2017–19, [Disclosure of evidence in criminal cases](#), HC 859, para 106

375 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#))

376 HMICFRS, [Digital forensics: An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations](#), December 2022

377 Home Office, [Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences: terms of reference](#), October 2023

378 Crown Prosecution Service ([POP0101](#))

379 The Rt Hon Chris Philp MP, [Policing Minister: Police Superintendents’ Association conference](#), September 2023

214. *We urge the Home Office to accelerate the timetable for the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences.*

215. *We recommend the CPS and NPCC review the process for police obtaining early advice from prosecutors before full case files are prepared or submitted and charging decisions made. Where possible, we recommend this work draw on local examples of existing good practice.*

### **Redacting case files**

216. We heard that another “major stumbling block for case progression is the extent of redaction required to comply with data protection legislation”.<sup>380</sup> Officers must redact all personal information contained in material that is classified as not necessary for a charging decision before the case file can be sent to the CPS.<sup>381</sup> The NPCC and the College of Policing said this “labour-intensive” process “ties up police resources for a protracted period of time”, meaning investigations take longer, and possibly adds to likelihood of victims withdrawing their support for a case.<sup>382</sup>

217. The College noted that the problem has become worse as digital devices such as phones and laptops have developed ever greater storage capacity, meaning there is more data for the police to process and redact.<sup>383</sup> Disparities in digital capabilities across the 43 local forces exacerbate the problem.<sup>384</sup> An inspection last year by HMICFRS into police handling of digital forensics found that some forces were “overwhelmed” and “ineffective” at handling digital evidence, leading to greater delays in cases and impacting the chances of successful prosecution.<sup>385</sup> There has been insufficient investment to improve the examination and processing of digital devices.<sup>386</sup>

218. The College of Policing and NPCC called for a “redaction bubble” that would allow the police to share unredacted material with the CPS at pre-charge advice stage.<sup>387</sup> HMICFRS also found pockets of innovative practice between some local teams in forces and their counterparts in the CPS. One team in the City of London Police had agreed a staged submission process with the CPS depending on the circumstances of each investigation.<sup>388</sup> The CPS told us it is working with the Home Office and Attorney General’s Office to explore options, but cautioned that, in terms of redaction, any solution must comply with data protection laws.<sup>389</sup>

**219. Lengthy and inefficient redaction processes and protracted investigations are neither effective nor fair on either victims or suspects. The handling of case files needs to comply with data protection laws. However, ensuring that the requirements are**

---

380 National Police Chiefs’ Council; College of Policing ([POP0001](#))

381 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

382 National Police Chiefs’ Council; College of Policing ([POP0001](#))

383 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))

384 Crown Prosecution Service ([POP0101](#))

385 HMICFRS [Police forces overwhelmed and ineffective when it comes to digital forensics, new report finds](#), December 2022

386 HMICFRS [Digital forensics: An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations](#), December 2022

387 National Police Chiefs’ Council; College of Policing ([POP0001](#))

388 HMICFRS [Digital forensics: An inspection into how well the police and other agencies use digital forensics in their investigations](#), December 2022

389 Crown Prosecution Service ([POP0101](#))

proportionate and that forces have the digital capacity to meet such requirements efficiently is an urgent issue that needs addressing. More needs to be done to pilot solutions and get the balance right.

220. *We recommend the Home Office expedite, with urgency, its work with the Attorney General’s Office and CPS to identify potential solutions to the lengthy and resource-intensive redaction process in case file preparation. This should include piloting a “redaction bubble”, consideration of any necessary changes to data protection regulations and consultation with HMICFRS on harnessing existing good practice. Forces with the poorest digital capabilities should be prioritised for the pilots and outcomes formally evaluated. We expect initial piloting to be completed withing 12 months.*

221. *We second HMICFRS’ recommendation that the Home Office lead a review of the digital forensics budget and identify where need is greatest. The review should encompass future funding needs at both force level and centrally. It should provide a basis for a national strategy to bring the service into the 21st century in terms of digital forensics. We recommend the Home Office launch and commence implementation of the national strategy within 12 months.*

### **Charging powers, outcomes, and reducing pressure on the system**

222. The police can charge suspects in some less serious cases without recourse to the CPS. Some have called for the range of cases in which this is possible to be increased to speed up case handling.<sup>390</sup> Richard Atkinson, however, cautioned this could lead to “overcharging” by the police and warned that it would not necessarily be “speedier” if challenges arose further down the line. He reflected that in the past, when the police were responsible for charging, “cases were lost because [ ... ] police charged on what they thought was sufficient evidence” and prosecutors were not given sufficient time to prepare for cases.<sup>391</sup>

223. Given the variation in case file quality across police forces, together with the need there would be for oversight and review of evidence that may be put before a court, we do not believe giving the police more charging powers is the answer to improving outcomes. Doing so would risk more charges being changed or dropped, and delays in cases further down the line.

224. However, convictions are not the only measure of justice obtained, or “always the best outcome for a victim” when the process can be traumatic and difficult for them.<sup>392</sup> Focusing rigidly on convictions can undermine innovative work on other solutions and create perverse incentives. Transform Justice highlighted that more effective diversion could increase the capacity of prosecutors and reduce backlogs in magistrates’ courts and release resources for police to focus on investigating more serious crimes, but the NPCC pointed out that “until full credit is given for this work, it is less attractive than it could be for forces to invest in.”<sup>393</sup> Making more use of evidence-based diversion and alternative disposals might help to avoid a situation whereby the system—already under huge pressures—struggles to deal with any increased volume of cases resulting from

390 Tracy Brabin (Mayor of West Yorkshire at West Yorkshire Combined Authority) ([POP0041](#))

391 [Qq232–233](#)

392 Tracy Brabin (Mayor of West Yorkshire at West Yorkshire Combined Authority) ([POP0041](#))

393 Transform Justice ([POP0026](#)), National Police Chiefs’ Council ([POP0023](#))

the increased number of officers and renewed focus on investigating all reasonable lines of inquiry for every crime. It would also complement strategic moves elsewhere in the criminal justice system to promote the use of community-based solutions.<sup>394</sup>

**225. Broadening police powers to charge without recourse to the CPS is not the solution to case backlogs in the courts.**

*226. We recommend the Home Office work, in collaboration with the NPCC, to put more incentives in place for alternative disposals to charging and prosecuting individuals in court, where they have been proved effective and better fit with victims' needs and wants. If alternative disposals can speed up the delivery of the justice to which victims and survivors are entitled, while reducing court backlogs, everyone benefits.*

# Annex: Executive summary of policing priorities Town Hall event

---

## Deliberative Public Opinion on Policing Priorities

### *Executive Summary*

As part of its broader inquiry into police reform, the Home Affairs Committee collaborated with the Institute for Democratic Engagement & Accountability (IDEA) at the Ohio State University, a research organization specializing in deliberative constituent engagement, on a Deliberative Town Hall. As part of their standard protocol for such events, IDEA worked with a local online survey panel (YouGov's UK online panel) to recruit a representative sample of constituents to take a pre-survey about their views on police priorities, which also included basic background information on current policing issues. Survey respondents were then randomly selected into either a treatment or control group to eliminate self-selection effects. Constituents in the treatment group were provided additional background information and invited to participate in an online Deliberative Town Hall on the evening of April 18, 2023. The event featured MPs Rt. Hon. Dame Diana Johnson (Labour) and Tim Loughton (Conservative) and Bedfordshire PCC Festus Akinbusoye (Conservative). Over 1300 constituents from England and Wales attended the Deliberative Town Hall, with the vast majority participating for at least a full hour. Constituents in both the treatment and control groups then received a post-survey asking many of the same questions as the pre-survey, allowing researchers to track changes in opinion due to participation in the Deliberative Town Hall.

The full report contains comprehensive analysis of all the pre- and post-survey data, as well as qualitative information from the town hall itself, but the key takeaways are presented briefly below:

- There was overwhelming consensus on two priorities: a striking 90% of participants supported investing in and improving vetting and training for police officers.
- A commanding majority of participants, 75%, believe that police should invest more in neighbourhood policing, building relationships with local communities. Also notably, support for neighborhood policing was similarly high amongst all demographic subgroups. This strong preference was also reinforced with a huge amount qualitative data lamenting the closure of local police stations and calling for increased police visibility in neighbourhoods.
- Participants were largely mixed on whether or not police should do more to support victims of crime. However, after the Deliberative Town Hall, the share of participants who felt that police should not do more in this area increased by 10%.
- While participants were split on whether police misconduct was a systemic issue or simply due to a few bad officers, a large majority did agree that ethnic minorities are treated worse by police than white citizens.

- 80% of attendees reported that the Deliberative Town Hall affected their opinions on what actions should be taken to improve policing, with 19% of participants saying the town hall affected their opinions “a lot.”
- After the Deliberative Town Hall, the percentage of participants who trusted the Home Affairs Committee some or most of the time increased 22 points, while approval of the Home Affairs Committee jumped 18%. There were smaller gains in trust and approval for Parliament as a whole and the police, suggesting a smaller but significant “splash” effect on citizens’ trust in government and institutions more broadly.
- An overwhelming majority—94%—of attendees, said that deliberative events like the one they participated in are valuable and should be a more regular part of the legislative process.

# Conclusions and recommendations

---

## Culture, misconduct and complaints

1. There are thousands of committed and ethical officers and staff working in the Met. They—like members of the public, victims, and survivors—have been let down for too long. We are concerned that without an explicit timetable for future external review of the Met, there will not be sufficient follow-through on Baroness Casey’s recommendations and that her Review will join a long list of those that have gone before without effective implementation. We understand that the new quarterly Policing Board convened by the Mayor of London can provide ongoing scrutiny, but it remains to be seen whether that will be enough to drive change at the scale and pace required or whether it will be sufficient to show Londoners that progress has been made. Baroness Casey was brought in precisely because previous efforts by the Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime to drive cultural change in the Met had failed. (Paragraph 9)
2. *We recommend the Home Office and the Mayor of London co-ordinate in commissioning a further independent review of the Met to monitor and measure progress in implementing Baroness Casey’s findings up to March 2024, a year on from the publication of her review.* (Paragraph 10)
3. Some will be attracted to a career in policing precisely because it provides a position of power that can be exploited or abused. Vetting upon recruitment and in-service needs to reflect this. It cannot be right that vetting practices vary between forces, or that officers can evade vetting upon transfer. As citizens, we should have the same protections no matter where we live in the country, and regardless of whether officers are from territorial or specialist forces. (Paragraph 16)
4. *We recommend the Home Office empower the College of Policing to require forces to use consistent recruitment processes which include values-based interviewing. We expect to see all forces aligning recruitment processes and utilising values-based interviewing within 12 months.* (Paragraph 17)
5. *Common standards for vetting should be enforced nationally, with sanctions upon non-compliant forces. We recommend the Government make vetting upon transfer a statutory requirement within the lifetime of the current Parliament. It should also ensure all forces immediately implement His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services’s recommendation on re-vetting officers of concern, including those who have been subject to a criminal investigation, received a formal warning or reduction in rank following a misconduct hearing, or where “adverse information” has otherwise come to the force’s notice. We recommend the Home Office monitor how local policing bodies are holding their chief constables accountable for implementing the recommendation, taking remedial action swiftly where accountability is found lacking or progress in implementation unsatisfactory. We invite the Home Office to report its progress on this in six months’ time: that report should include details of monitoring mechanisms and any remedial steps taken or planned.* (Paragraph 18)

6. Improving policing culture means creating a safe space for personnel to raise concerns. All team members, especially supervisors, should have the skills and resources needed to nurture positive team cultures and support those coming forward with concerns. (Paragraph 22)
7. *The College of Policing's standards for leaders must, at every level of leadership, include the responsibility to support team members who call out inappropriate behaviour, along with the duty to do so oneself. We recommend the standards are amended accordingly. We invite the College of Policing to write to us on progress towards standards revision and the impact of changes in six months' time.* (Paragraph 23)
8. Without appropriate intelligence, forces cannot detect patterns of misconduct or criminal behaviour among officers and staff, or act on them. Proactively alerting forces to new adverse information would provide a valuable opportunity for re-vetting or intervention which may, in turn, prevent escalation. (Paragraph 28)
9. *We support the recommendation from HMICFRS that by 31 December 2023 Chief Constables make routine use of the PND to discover otherwise unreported adverse information about officers and staff. We recommend that the Government, and HMICFRS, urgently work with the PND and other sources of valuable information pertaining to their employees' conduct, to enable ready and proactive access. We would request that they report progress on this in their response to this report.* (Paragraph 29)
10. *We heard that here has been a lack of clarity on what constitutes misogynistic or predatory behaviour, as well as multiple reports of police officers engaging in commercial sexual exploitation. For that reason, we recommend that forces which have not already done so follow the Met's lead and make it explicit in policy that their police officers are prohibited from paying for sex.* (Paragraph 30)
11. When the Home Office first proposed its review of dismissals, the Independent Office for Police Conduct argued that the focus on dismissals was "too narrow." We agree. The Home Office's proposals will not address the overall weaknesses in the misconduct and disciplinary system. (Paragraph 39)
12. There are circumstances where the public would hold dismissal appropriate but current regulations do not provide a clear mechanism for it. Dismissing an officer who fails re-vetting should be straightforward and we welcome the Home Office's commitment to this. We are pleased that the Home Office is engaging with stakeholders to create a list of criminal offences which would automatically amount to gross misconduct upon conviction. We ask the Home Office to set out by the end of the year its timetable for completing this work. (Paragraph 40)
13. We are persuaded, however, that policing could do more within the existing disciplinary system, ahead of any regulatory changes. Giving chief officers more say over dismissals will not on its own deliver a more consistent interpretation of "gross misconduct" or higher quality of investigations. We also remain concerned about troubling race disparities in the misconduct system, highlighted in our previous report on "*The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on.*" (Paragraph 41)



14. *The Review of Dismissals was too narrow in scope. We recommend the Home Office immediately commission wider work on the functioning of the competence and disciplinary system, linked to the “Fitness to Practise” regime (see paras 51–54). (Paragraph 42)*
15. *We recommend the Home Office evaluate the impact of regulatory and other changes to policing misconduct and disciplinary processes 12 months after implementation. The evaluation should include consideration of the proportion of cases resulting in a finding of gross misconduct, changes in dismissal rates, the speed of misconduct cases, challenges against decisions and disproportionality in dismissal outcomes. We support in principle the recommendations made following the Home Office’s own review, that “the Government, with the policing sector, [ ... ] consider the way data is reported, where there are possible gaps, and how to improve collection to enable more meaningful data across England and Wales”, and that the Home Office carry out multi-variate analysis to “identify any disproportionality related to intersectional characteristics.” We recommend these considerations and analysis commence immediately and invite the Home Office to set out its timetable for completion in its response to our report. (Paragraph 43)*
16. Police and Crime Commissioners should drive systemic improvements in local forces, for example by taking steps to assure themselves that misconduct and competence processes are fit for purpose, rather than intervening in individual cases. HMICFRS has noted that Police and Crime Commissioners currently only have to comment on its reports once, within 56 days of publication, when forces have may not yet have made changes as a result of the Inspectorate’s recommendations. As a result, “the obligation has proved insufficient in making sure Police and Crime Commissioners are holding chief constables to account for implementing improvements.” We call for increased responsibility upon Police and Crime Commissioners to update HMICFRS on the impact of its recommendations. (Paragraph 46)
17. *We support HMICFRS’s call for Police and Crime Commissioners to be required to provide follow-up comments, at least annually, where HMICFRS have not yet confirmed that recommendations pertaining to them and their local force have been sufficiently addressed. We will return to matters of local accountability in our inquiry into Police and Crime Commissioners. (Paragraph 47)*
18. The perception of policing as marking its own homework with regards to professional standards and misconduct is damaging. We recommend influential independent scrutiny of these processes. (Paragraph 49)
19. *We recommend police forces embed specialist external expertise in permanent roles to drive the scale of cultural reform needed by officers, staff and the public in order to restore public faith in policing. (Paragraph 50)*
20. A regime that sought to identify fitness to practise the profession of a police officer could be more effective than separate, rigid misconduct and performance systems in ensuring that those in the service have the attributes, skills and values to do the job well. We believe this would create a less adversarial system, and one more likely to support a culture of learning and development. It could also help reinforce the status of policing as a skilled profession. (Paragraph 53)

21. *Working with the College of Policing, NPCC and other key stakeholders, we recommend the Home Office scope out a “Fitness to Practise” regime for policing. This should be done as part of the review of wider functioning of the disciplinary system we have recommended already. (Paragraph 54)*
22. If policing can't get its approach to complainants, victims and survivors within the service right, it has little chance of doing so for others. (Paragraph 59)
23. *We recommend the Home Office work with the Ministry of Justice in considering amendments to the Victims and Prisoners Bill to clarify rights for police officers who are themselves the victims of police-perpetrated crime. The Home Office should work with the Independent Office for Police Conduct to ascertain how police complainants could be afforded similar rights to other complainants and whether this would require amending the Police (Complaints and Misconduct) Regulations 2020. Any necessary changes to the Regulations should be completed with the current Parliament. (Paragraph 60)*
24. *We strongly recommend the Home Office examine measures to further reassure the public that officers accused of offences will be investigated without fear or favour – whether this be through investigation by an officer from another force or through some other means. (Paragraph 61)*
25. It is unacceptable that it takes two to three years for a decision on whether officers facing serious allegations should be dismissed. (Paragraph 62)
26. *We recommend the Home Office explore with the Independent Office for Police Conduct how misconduct processes could run concurrently with criminal cases. It should also set time-limited targets for the reduction of time taken to reach decisions on dismissal for misconduct. (Paragraph 63)*
27. *We urge the Home Office to consider the findings of the IOPC Review. We recommend, given concerns about the complexity of the complaints system and lack of clarity about key players in that system, the Government consider how the Independent Office of Police Conduct review might be supported by a wider review of Police and Crime Commissioners' roles in complaint handling. (Paragraph 66)*
28. *In our previous report on Police conduct and complaints, we concluded that uniting the roles of chair and director general of the IOPC detracted from the ability to scrutinise the executive action of the IOPC and to hold it to account. Notwithstanding the findings of the forthcoming Review, we again recommend that the Government appoint an independent chair alongside the director general of the IOPC as a matter of urgency. (Paragraph 67)*
29. It is vital that policing understands who is making complaints, why they are doing so and what the outcomes are. Ethnic disproportionalities exist across areas such as stop and search and use of force, and the generally lower levels of confidence in the police amongst many people from Black and minority ethnic communities, make this particularly important. More understanding is also needed of the experiences of complaining among people with other protected characteristics. (Paragraph 69)

30. *We recommend the Home Office requires forces to record data on all protected characteristics of complainants with the aim of achieving a greater understanding of who is making complaints, the outcomes of those complaints, and the extent to which there is disproportionality. Professional Standards Departments should analyse the data and adopt a “reform or explain” approach. To ensure transparency and scrutiny, this data should be submitted to the Independent Office for Police Conduct and made publicly available in a clear and accessible way on a regular basis. (Paragraph 70)*
31. We remain deeply concerned over the inadequate monitoring and implementation of recommendations from scrutiny bodies including the Independent Office for Police Conduct. Revoicing a recommendation from our report on Police conduct and complaints, we urge the Government to review how the IOPC, HMICFRS, and Coroners’ learning recommendations can be reported upon in a joined-up and meaningful way, with data published centrally to simplify and streamline access. (Paragraph 72)
32. *We repeat the recommendation from our previous report on police conduct and complaints that Government monitor and review bi-annually how effectively local policing bodies are holding their chief constables accountable for implementing IOPC recommendations and report the outcomes to us. (Paragraph 73)*

### Building trust and confidence in policing

33. The Home Secretary highlighted success stories of His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services’s “Engage” process but the Inspectorate needs more powers to drive through recommended changes. (Paragraph 77)
34. *We support HMICFRS’s call for the Home Secretary to review the limitations of its remit and powers and establish whether legislative change is needed. We believe the Chief Inspector of Constabulary should have powers to give directions where a force’s identified failings pose a significant risk to public safety. This should include—in certain circumstances—power to direct the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s and the College of Policing’s support for the force. We recommend formal arrangements for high-performing forces to “buddy” struggling ones are put in place within 12 months. (Paragraph 78)*
35. *HMICFRS states that, while it regularly makes recommendations to organisations other than police forces to improve public safety, only Police and Crime Commissioners are required to respond to its reports. We support HMICFRS’s call for further “additional departments and agencies” to be required to respond to its reports. This could include the Crown Prosecution Service and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Probation for England and Wales, for example. We recommend a statutory requirement be put in place for the Home Office to respond to recommendations made by HMICFRS in its thematic reports within the life of the current Parliament. (Paragraph 79)*
36. We appreciate the openness of those who gave evidence, but fear that under pressure leaders can default to a defensive position, missing opportunities to help the public understand the challenges they face or to build trust by admitting mistakes. We

urge leaders across policing to recognise the true scale of the changes needed and the benefits of open dialogue with citizens, notwithstanding that some operational details will need to remain confidential. (Paragraph 81)

37. *We recommend that the NPCC, College of Policing, Home Office and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners formally consider whether a professional “duty of candour” might drive greater transparency in policing. We consider that, while this would not be enough on its own to drive the culture change needed, it would help set the direction of travel towards a presumption of openness.* (Paragraph 82)
38. There was widespread agreement among our witnesses that neighbourhood work was the bedrock of policing. But too often it is side-lined by abstractions or otherwise undermined, for example where officers are taken away from their usual duties to respond to emergency situations, or the actions of non-territorial squads undermining the trust built up by local teams. (Paragraph 86)
39. Neighbourhood policing does not simply mean an increased police presence in communities. It has to be accompanied by community engagement where community members are treated as active participants whose concerns are genuinely responded to. Community engagement should, however, not be left to neighbourhood officers. Instead, it is core to the work of all policing with a public-facing role. (Paragraph 87)
40. *We recommend the College of Policing and individual forces maximise efforts to make neighbourhood policing a recognised specialism. Initial and on-going training for all public-facing personnel should incorporate communication, de-escalation and engagement skills.* (Paragraph 88)
41. Use of stop and search powers is particularly controversial and has a wide-ranging impact for the Met in particular. But this is not an issue that other forces can afford to ignore. Disproportionality in stop and search across policing damages community relationships. Our report on “*The Macpherson Report: twenty two years on*” drew attention to the evidential gap on the effectiveness of stop and search in reducing serious violence crime. That evidence is still lacking. (Paragraph 97)
42. *We are concerned at the duration of the investigation following the supercomplaint on section 60 searches. We welcome the Home Office’s recent commitment to better communication around section 60 searches, along with moves to support more consistent local scrutiny. We strongly support His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service’s recent recommendation for further primary research to quantify the deterrent value of stop and search and the causes of disproportionality in its use. This research should examine the impact on trust and confidence that stop and search has so that officers can make evidence-based decisions on how best to deploy it.* (Paragraph 98)
43. Policing should provide an effective and compassionate service to victims and survivors. But it cannot provide the level of specialisation that “by and for” services can, nor cater as effectively for those victims and survivors who do not wish to report a crime or engage with the police. (Paragraph 102)

44. *When commissioning victim services, Police and Crime Commissioners should be mindful that not all victims will want to report crime or have trust and confidence in the police. By and for services may provide a more tailored approach and ensure that all victims and survivors have equitable access to crucial support. (Paragraph 103)*
45. *The National Race Action Plan contains admirable aspirations. Stakeholders need to ensure they are realised speedily. We recommend the NPCC commit to a clear timeframe for the next iteration of the plan and adopt an “accept or explain” response to ISOB’s recommendations. (Paragraph 110)*
46. Victim and survivor care is one of the basics that policing has to get right. We agree that failure to prioritise the needs of victims and survivors in the past has undermined trust and confidence in policing today. We are pleased to see that an interim Victims’ Commissioner has finally been appointed. It is, to us, wholly unacceptable that the position was vacant from September 2022 until October 2023. The Government has explained that the recent appointment is temporary in order to “enable a new recruitment campaign to be launched which better reflects the new responsibilities the role will have once the Victims and Prisoners Bill is passed.” We invite the Government to explain in its response to this report why an interim commissioner could not have been appointed a year ago. (Paragraph 112)
47. *We urge the Government to expedite recruitment of a permanent new Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales, so that victims and survivors do not face such a long wait without a representative again. We recommend policing proactively publish and interrogate data on outcomes and victim satisfaction to measure the impact of a renewed focus on supporting victims. (Paragraph 113)*
48. Policing needs to show rather than tell women and girls that cultural change has taken place. It can start by providing a consistently excellent service to victims and survivors of VAWG. The availability of officers with the right skills and sensitivities is a crucial part of this. (Paragraph 119)
49. *We repeat our previous recommendation, made in our report on “The investigation and prosecution of rape”, that the Government strongly encourage forces without specialist police rape and sexual offence teams to put such teams in place and with sufficient resource, including capacity for ongoing training and development. (Paragraph 120)*
50. All victims need to feel safe in coming forward to the police and be confident in reporting potential criminality. The Government’s alternative proposals do not go far enough to address the concerns of migrant victims and survivors who may be unsure of what will happen to them after prosecution, or if a prosecution does not proceed through no fault of theirs. (Paragraph 123)
51. *We restate the previous Home Affairs Committee’s recommendation from its 2018 report into Domestic Abuse, that “immigration status must not bar victims of abuse from protection and access to justice.” We concur with the Women and Equalities Committee’s recommendation that the Government “establish an appropriate firewall-type mechanism between the police and the Home Office to prevent data sharing for the purposes of enforcing immigration rules against victims of abuse.” As that Committee*

*said, any information sharing from the police with Immigration Enforcement on victims should only be in exceptional circumstances for the purposes of assisting in the safeguarding of the individual or acting against their abuser. (Paragraph 124)*

### Prioritising roles and functions

52. Officers, staff and citizens alike deserve and require a shared national understanding of the role and mission of the police, and the basic functions that policing should get right all the time. (Paragraph 131)
53. *We recommend the Home Office, working together with key partners, set out its vision for the basics that the public nationwide have the right to expect from policing. This may reflect the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, College of Policing and NPCC’s Policing Vision 2030, but will also focus on how those objectives may be perceived in the public mind. (Paragraph 132)*
54. Crime and demand patterns change over time. Policing priorities need to reflect this these changed contexts. We are not convinced that the 43-force model facilitates an effective strategic response to change especially as forces develop different initiatives that do not always align. The understandable lack of appetite for major changes to that structure intensifies the need for the centre to provide the basic building blocks for an effective service. It therefore cannot be right that the Police Allocation Formula remains outdated. If a long-term funding settlement is not possible, commissioners and forces should at least have the information they need to make medium-term financial plans. (Paragraph 137)
55. *Multiple bodies are involved in setting the strategic direction of policing both locally and nationally. However, the Home Office must provide a strong “strategic centre” and take responsibility for providing policing with the resources it needs to succeed. As a first step, the Home Office must urgently review the Police Allocation Formula and update it where necessary, setting out points for future review in advance to facilitate effective planning by PCCs and forces. (Paragraph 138)*
56. *We recommend the Home Office monitor the effect of changes in response to non-crime hate incidents and crime recording more broadly, so that adverse impacts are quickly identified and the effect on public trust and confidence tracked. (Paragraph 141)*
57. Private industry, particularly social media platforms and the mobile networks, must play its part in “designing out” fraud. We plan to revisit the crucial area and the right balance of responsibilities in our inquiry on this topic. (Paragraph 150)
58. *We support the commitment in the Government’s Fraud Strategy to “make the tech sector commit to protect their customers through legislation and voluntary commitments” and “help banks slow down suspicious payments.” We urge the Home Office to deliver on those commitments as soon as possible. For example, a new online fraud charter was to be delivered by the end of Summer 2023. We expect to see this by the end of 2023 at the latest. (Paragraph 151)*

59. Policing faces challenges in delivering its core mission. Simultaneously it has become “the service of last resort for people in crisis.” We agree with the National Police Chiefs’ Council and College of Policing that tackling this mission creep “requires cross-Government working.” (Paragraph 155)
60. The police should work effectively with other services without having to compensate for lack of resources elsewhere or absorb demand that should rightly sit with others. We understand that often police will not be the right professionals to intervene in mental health situations. We believe profoundly that people with mental health issues should receive expert care from the right professionals, rather than needlessly coming into contact with police officers who already face a range of demands aligned to their core mission. We are concerned however that there are risks associated with challenging other services to step up without providing them with sufficient resources to do so. Simply shifting unrealistic demand onto other services will not represent overall policy success for the Government. Moving to a new model may save police time but we should also expect to see “non-crime demand” outcomes improve across the system because the right professionals are responding, as well as improved policing performance in the core areas of preventing, investigating and detecting crime. (Paragraph 161)
61. *The Right Care Right Person model appears to have been successful in reducing demand on police in Humberside. We recommend that, as it is adopted across the country, the Home Office carefully evaluate the impact of its adoption on both policing time and overall performance, publishing its first findings a year on from the adoption of the National Partnership Agreement.* (Paragraph 162)
62. *We recommend the Home Office also work with the Department of Health and Social Care to evaluate the impact of RCRP on wider outcomes, for example, for those in mental health crisis who might previously have been dealt with by the police and be prepared to take remedial action where necessary to support other service providers. This evaluation should include any impact on the workload, wellbeing and safety of policing colleagues as well as partners in health and social care.* (Paragraph 163)
63. *If Right Care Right Person is to succeed as a national approach, it is crucial that those frontline health and care services who will be expected to step up receive the resources they need to do so. As Government makes funding settlements across these services, it must ensure that those resources are in place.* (Paragraph 164)
64. Policing has a key role in crime prevention, but greater clarity is needed about what that role is and where police responsibilities end and those of others begin. The Government has to allow policing to prioritise its purposes and functions in the sound knowledge of its key roles. (Paragraph 167)
65. *We recommend the Government set out in its response to this report its vision for policing’s role in crime prevention.* (Paragraph 168)

### A workforce fit for the future

66. A police service that fails to attract, retain and progress diverse officers will be unable to demonstrate that it can meet the needs of diverse communities. While

a representative workforce is crucial, we cannot rely on numerical representation alone to drive far-reaching cultural change. Instead, officers, staff and communities need to see evidence of processes, actions and outcomes that are fair, inclusive, and enhanced by meaningful two-way communication. (Paragraph 173)

67. *Police and Crime Commissioners should hold forces to account on efforts to recruit, retain and progress a broadly representative workforce across all ranks.* (Paragraph 174)
68. *Senior officers should actively support staff organisations representing groups and consider the full range of tools at their disposal to ensure that forces reflect the community they serve.* (Paragraph 175)
69. Whilst the National Police Wellbeing Survey, along with surveys carried out by PFEW, provide useful information on police wellbeing and morale, we would also like to see these complemented by data from mandated exit interviews. (Paragraph 178)
70. *We recommend the Home Office complete implementation of the Police Covenant within six months.* (Paragraph 179)
71. *We recommend the Home Office work with partners to create a mechanism to collect data on staff and officer views on police culture, wellbeing and morale. This would, for example, provide an annual picture on confidence to whistle blow on unacceptable behaviour.* (Paragraph 180)
72. It is no longer sufficient that individual forces design their own workforce plans and strategies in isolation. Crime crosses force boundaries and requires specialist officers and recruits with unique skills. Following the end of the uplift programme, it must be a priority of the Government to set out how it intends to work with forces to deliver an effective workforce strategy that will enable the Police to adequately meet the challenges of the future. (Paragraph 189)
73. *We recommend the Home Office set out a workforce plan and strategy for policing over the next ten years as a matter of urgency. The plan should address officer and staff numbers and skills. Particular attention should be placed on recognised areas of shortage. The plan should be subject to periodic review and impact analysis, with the first of these completed and published by 31 December 2024.* (Paragraph 190)
74. We are concerned that the status of NCA staff as civil servants with different pay scales to policing increases the challenge of recruiting and retaining the right people. We are not convinced that it is feasible to recruit 400 entirely new fraud specialists. (Paragraph 191)
75. *We recommend the Home Office, working collaboratively with forces and the NCA, create a sustainable pipeline of fraud specialists, with fair pay scales that will encourage retention.* (Paragraph 192)
76. We recognise that training of local officers needs to be shaped by local considerations. However, citizens should be able to be assured that all officers share basic skills, and that approaches are broadly similar nationwide. (Paragraph 195)



77. *We recommend the Home Office empower the College of Policing to mandate learning curricula and essential Continuous Professional Development. This could lead to development of a Licence to Practise as part of the wider Fitness to Practise model we have discussed.* (Paragraph 196)
78. Strong leadership is crucial, especially given the current high proportion of inexperienced officers. We welcome the College of Policing's commitment to underpinning the future of police leadership. (Paragraph 197)
79. *Policing must continue its investment in leadership, especially at sergeant level. These training elements should be embedded within the workforce plan we have recommended.* (Paragraph 198)
80. The esteem afforded to police officers should reflect the complexity of skills and knowledge needed to do the job well. Given the Government's general enthusiasm for degree apprenticeships, and the Home Office's previous view that the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship was not deterring officers from applying, we find the rethink in this area surprising. (Paragraph 201)
81. *The Home Office should take care that its determination to keep a non-degree route open into policing is not in conflict with attempts to build the profile of policing as a highly skilled profession, and does not create more inconsistency with the recruitment, competency requirements and training of other entry routes. We recommend the Home Office investigate further the impact of making a degree a mandatory requirement first on police officers' recruitment and retention and, secondly, on the potential impact on policing's reputation. We also recommend that the Home Office keep under review the wider impacts of its decision to retain a non-degree entry route. We recommend all three of these elements of research and analysis be commenced within the next three months.* (Paragraph 202)

### The wider criminal justice system

82. As the police and CPS bicker over where the burden of investigation and paperwork should lie, victims and survivors lose out. We understand the rationale for DG6 and we note that the CPS consulted forces and the NPCC when designing the updated guidance. (Paragraph 212)
83. *Now that DG6 has been in place for almost three years, we recommend the CPS review its implementation and impact, consulting stakeholders before proposing changes that will better reflect an appropriate balance between the need for effective early investigation and proportionality in resource consumption. We understand that there is already "work ongoing" in this area, and that the piece of work we recommend here may now come under the auspices of the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences.* (Paragraph 213)
84. *We urge the Home Office to accelerate the timetable for the Independent Review of Disclosure and Fraud Offences.* (Paragraph 214)

85. *We recommend the CPS and NPCC review the process for police obtaining early advice from prosecutors before full case files are prepared or submitted and charging decisions made. Where possible, we recommend this work draw on local examples of existing good practice. (Paragraph 215)*
86. Lengthy and inefficient redaction processes and protracted investigations are neither effective nor fair on either victims or suspects. The handling of case files needs to comply with data protection laws. However, ensuring that the requirements are proportionate and that forces have the digital capacity to meet such requirements efficiently is an urgent issue that needs addressing. More needs to be done to pilot solutions and get the balance right. (Paragraph 219)
87. *We recommend the Home Office expedite, with urgency, its work with the Attorney General's Office and CPS to identify potential solutions to the lengthy and resource-intensive redaction process in case file preparation. This should include piloting a "redaction bubble", consideration of any necessary changes to data protection regulations and consultation with HMICFRS on harnessing existing good practice. Forces with the poorest digital capabilities should be prioritised for the pilots and outcomes formally evaluated. We expect initial piloting to be completed within 12 months. (Paragraph 220)*
88. *We second HMICFRS' recommendation that the Home Office lead a review of the digital forensics budget and identify where need is greatest. The review should encompass future funding needs at both force level and centrally. It should provide a basis for a national strategy to bring the service into the 21st century in terms of digital forensics. We recommend the Home Office launch and commence implementation of the national strategy within 12 months. (Paragraph 221)*
89. Broadening police powers to charge without recourse to the CPS is not the solution to case backlogs in the courts. (Paragraph 225)
90. *We recommend the Home Office work, in collaboration with the NPCC, to put more incentives in place for alternative disposals to charging and prosecuting individuals in court, where they have been proved effective and better fit with victims' needs and wants. If alternative disposals can speed up the delivery of the justice to which victims and survivors are entitled, while reducing court backlogs, everyone benefits. (Paragraph 226)*

# Formal minutes

---

**Wednesday 25 October 2023**

## **Members present:**

Dame Diana Johnson, in the Chair

Simon Fell

Carolyn Harris

Marco Longhi

## **Policing priorities**

Draft Report (*Policing priorities*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

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

Paragraphs 1 to 226 agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Annex agreed to.

*Resolved*, That the Report be the Fifth Report 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 8 November 2023 at 9.00am.

## Witnesses

---

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

### Wednesday 2 November 2022

**Dr Rick Muir**, Director, The Police Foundation [Q1–19](#)

**Martin Hewitt QPM**, Chair, National Police Chiefs' Council; **Andy Marsh QPM**, Chief Executive, College of Policing; **Festus Akinbusoye**, Prevention Lead, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners [Q20–41](#)

### Wednesday 14 December 2022

**Sir Mark Rowley QPM**, Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service [Q42–103](#)

### Wednesday 18 January 2023

**Andy Cooke QPM DL**, His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services [Q104–169](#)

**Harvi Khatkar**, Chief Superintendent, Vice President, Police Superintendents' Association; **Steve Hartshorn**, National Chair, Police Federation of England and Wales [Q170–208](#)

### Wednesday 1 February 2023

**Kirsty Brimelow KC**, Chair, Criminal Bar Association; **Richard Atkinson**, Deputy Vice President, Law Society; **Zoe Byrne**, Services Director, Victim Support [Q209–257](#)

### Wednesday 1 March 2023

**Baljit Ubhey**, Director of Strategy and Policy, Crown Prosecution Service; **Gregor McGill**, Director of Legal Services, Crown Prosecution Service [Q258–310](#)

**Nicole Jacobs**, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales; **Jessica Egelton**, Policy and Public Affairs Manager, Refuge [Q311–327](#)

### Wednesday 15 March 2023

**Sophie Linden**, London Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime [Q328–379](#)

**Tom Whiting**, Interim Chair and Director General, Independent Office for Police Conduct; **Katie Cashell**, Director of Strategy and Impact, Independent Office for Police Conduct [Q380–411](#)

**Abimbola Johnson**, Chair, Independent Scrutiny and Oversight Board [Q412–426](#)

### Wednesday 22 March 2023

**The Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB**, Leader of the Casey Review into the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service; **Sarah Kincaid**, Lead Reviewer, Baroness Casey Review; **Neil O'Connor CBE**, Policy Adviser, Baroness Casey Review [Q427–459](#)

**Tuesday 25 April 2023**

**Rt Hon Chris Philp MP**, Minister for Crime, Policing and Fire, Home Office; **Rachel Watson**, Director of Policing, Home Office; **Sarah Swinford**, Director of Crime Reduction, Home Office; **Lynne Abrams**, Deputy Director, Interpersonal Abuse Unit, Home Office

[Q460–554](#)

**Wednesday 26 April 2023**

**Sir Mark Rowley QPM**, Commissioner, Metropolitan Police Service

[Q546–597](#)

## Published written evidence

---

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

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

- 1 ADF UK ([POP0039](#))
- 2 Association of Convenience Stores ([POP0028](#))
- 3 Association of Police and Crime Commissioners ([POP0083](#))
- 4 Brabin, Tracy (Mayor of West Yorkshire, West Yorkshire Combined Authority) ([POP0041](#))
- 5 British Association for Shooting and Conservation ([POP0029](#))
- 6 Centre for Women's Justice ([POP0075](#))
- 7 Charman, Sarah (School of Criminology, University of Portsmouth); and Gilmour, Paul (School of Criminology, University of Portsmouth) ([POP0082](#))
- 8 City of London Police Authority Board ([POP0049](#))
- 9 College of Policing ([POP0052](#))
- 10 Cooke QPM DL, Andy (His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services, His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services) ([POP0092](#))
- 11 Cooper, Dr Simon (Director of Criminal Law, Lecturer in Law, School of Law, The University of Essex) ([POP0056](#))
- 12 Crown Prosecution Service ([POP0101](#))
- 13 Denney, Matthew ([POP0079](#))
- 14 Devon and Cornwall Police and Crime Commissioner ([POP0055](#))
- 15 Disabled Police Association ([POP0018](#))
- 16 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0100](#))
- 17 Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales ([POP0090](#))
- 18 Dover, Professor Robert (Professor of Criminology, University of Hull) ([POP0064](#))
- 19 End Violence Against Women Coalition ([POP0088](#))
- 20 Fitzpatrick, Mr Jack Simon (Equality Diversity and Inclusion Researcher, Liverpool John Moores University) ([POP0011](#))
- 21 Henry Jackson Society ([POP0044](#))
- 22 Home Office ([POP0097](#))
- 23 Home Office ([POP0074](#))
- 24 Hughes, Baroness Beverley (Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester, Greater Manchester Combined Authority) ([POP0014](#))
- 25 Independent Advisory Panel on Deaths in Custody ([POP0071](#))
- 26 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0096](#))
- 27 Independent Office for Police Conduct ([POP0067](#))
- 28 Independent Victims' Commissioner for London ([POP0047](#))

- 29 Johnson, Dr Derek (Assistant Professor, Northumbria University); Wilson, Professor Tim (Professor, Northumbria University); Brants, Professor Chrisje (Professor, Northumbria University); Jackson, Mr Adam (Associate Professor, Northumbria University); and Davies, Ms Gemma (Associate Professor, Durham University) ([POP0038](#))
- 30 Labour Exploitation Advisory Group (LEAG) ([POP0024](#))
- 31 Latin American Women's Rights Service ([POP0013](#))
- 32 Llywelyn, Dafydd (Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dyfed-Powys) ([POP0107](#))
- 33 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) ([POP0104](#))
- 34 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) ([POP0058](#))
- 35 Melville, Lewis Rees; Taylor, Katie; Woodhead, Alex; Walker, Emma; Jones, Thomas; Firmstone, Jack; Higgs, Natalie; Winterbottom, Amelia; and McArdle, Abbie ([POP0022](#))
- 36 Metropolitan Police Service ([POP0086](#))
- 37 Millikin-Walker, F ([POP0016](#))
- 38 Missing People ([POP0070](#))
- 39 National Association of Independent Advisory Groups ([POP0098](#))
- 40 National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs ([POP0099](#))
- 41 National Association of Legally Qualified Chairs ([POP0085](#))
- 42 National Association of Muslim Police ([POP0046](#))
- 43 National Police Autism Association ([POP0076](#))
- 44 National Police Chiefs' Council ([POP0023](#))
- 45 National Police Chiefs' Council; and College of Policing ([POP0001](#))
- 46 National Police Sikh Organisation ([POP0077](#))
- 47 Neighbourhood Watch Network ([POP0084](#))
- 48 Office of the Nottinghamshire Police & Crime Commissioner ([POP0019](#))
- 49 Office of the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for North Yorkshire ([POP0017](#))
- 50 One Small Thing ([POP0040](#))
- 51 Operation Encompass ([POP0091](#))
- 52 Philp, Chris (Minister for Crime, Home Office) ([POP0102](#))
- 53 Police Federation of England & Wales ([POP0089](#))
- 54 Police Now ([POP0087](#))
- 55 Police Superintendents' Association ([POP0073](#))
- 56 Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner for Essex ([POP0009](#))
- 57 Pupils 2 Parliament ([POP0027](#))
- 58 Rawson, Mike ([POP0080](#))
- 59 Refuge ([POP0051](#))
- 60 Rights of Women ([POP0054](#))
- 61 Runnymede Trust ([POP0081](#))

- 62 Savigar-Shaw, Dr Leanne (Lecturer in Policing, Staffordshire University); Metcalfe, Dr Lauren (Head of Department, Society, Crime and Environment, Staffordshire University); Ackerley, Mr Ian (Course Leader, Policing and Criminal Investigation, Staffordshire University); Mustafa, Dr Rizwan (Regional Course Director, Institute of Policing, Staffordshire University); and Walton-Williams, Dr Laura (Director of Business & Enterprise, School of Justice, Security and Sustainability, Staffordshire University) ([POP0066](#))
- 63 A serving police officer ([POP0063](#))
- 64 Social Market Foundation ([POP0045](#))
- 65 Solace ([POP0048](#))
- 66 Southwark Council ([POP0037](#))
- 67 StopWatch UK ([POP0050](#))
- 68 The Children's Society ([POP0078](#))
- 69 The Police Foundation ([POP0035](#))
- 70 Transform Justice ([POP0026](#))
- 71 UNISON ([POP0094](#))
- 72 UNJUST C.I.C ([POP0033](#))
- 73 Victim Support ([POP0068](#))
- 74 Wearing, Mr Michael ([POP0004](#))
- 75 West Midlands Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner ([POP0030](#))
- 76 Women in Prison ([POP0072](#))
- 77 Women of Colour in Policing ([POP0095](#))
- 78 Youth Justice Board ([POP0069](#))



# 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	Channel crossings, migration and asylum	HC 199
2nd	Asylum and migration: Albania	HC 197
3rd	Drugs	HC 198
4th	Terrorism (Protection of Premises) draft Bill	HC 1359
1st Special Report	The Macpherson Report: twenty-two years on: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report of Session 2021–22	HC 274
2nd Special Report	Spiking: Government Response to the Committee's Ninth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 508
3rd Special Report	The investigation and prosecution of rape: Government Response to the Committee's Eighth Report of Session 2021–22	HC 507
4th Special Report	Channel crossings, migration and asylum: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 706
5th Special Report	Asylum and migration: Albania: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 1818

## Session 2021–22

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Violence and abuse towards retail workers	HC 141
2nd	The UK's offer of visa and settlement routes for residents of Hong Kong	HC 191
3rd	The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on	HC 139
4th	Appointment of the Chair of the Gangmasters and Labour Abuse Authority	HC 814
5th	The Windrush Compensation Scheme	HC 204
6th	Police Conduct and Complaints	HC 140
7th	Appointment of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary and Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Fire & Rescue Authorities in England	HC 1071
8th	Investigation and prosecution of rape	HC 193

Number	Title	Reference
9th	Spiking	HC 967
1st Special Report	Violence and abuse towards retail workers: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 669
2nd Special Report	The UK's offer of visa and settlement routes for residents of Hong Kong: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 682
3rd Special Report	The Windrush Compensation Scheme: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1098
4th Special Report	Police conduct and complaints: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1264

### Session 2019–21

Number	Title	Reference
1st	Home Office preparedness for Covid-19 (Coronavirus): Policing	HC 232
2nd	Home Office preparedness for Covid-19 (Coronavirus): domestic abuse and risks of harm within the home	HC 321
3rd	Home Office preparedness for Covid-19 (coronavirus): immigration and visas	HC 362
4th	Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 (Coronavirus): institutional accommodation	HC 562
5th	Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 (coronavirus): management of the borders	HC 563
6th	Appointment of the Independent Chief Inspector of Borders and Immigration	HC 1024
1st Special Report	Serious Youth Violence: Government Response to the Committee's Sixteenth Report of Session 2017–2019	HC 57
2nd Special Report	Home Office preparedness for Covid-19 (coronavirus): domestic abuse and risks of harm: Government Response to the Committee's Second Report	HC 661
3rd Special Report	Home Office preparedness for Covid-19: coronavirus: policing: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 660
4th Special Report	Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 (coronavirus): immigration and visas: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 909
5th Special Report	Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 (coronavirus): institutional accommodation: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 973
6th Special Report	Home Office preparedness for COVID-19 (coronavirus): management of the borders: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 974