



Home Office

Front Line Review Stocktake Report

Progress on Key Deliverables and Next Steps

January 2023



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Foreword

From the Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire



The Front Line Review (FLR) was a unique project designed to seek feedback directly from frontline officers and staff and learn about their lived operational experiences. It was the first time that the Home Office had engaged with the front line in such a way, enabling them to tell us what they really thought of the job they did and what changes they thought were necessary to improve policing as a whole. We remain grateful to the officers and staff who gave their time to the Review.

The responses from the front line provided invaluable evidence on their perspectives on how they were managed, the support they received towards wellbeing and professional development and their innovative ideas for change. The Home Office and wider policing partners committed to delivering positive change based on this evidence and as such this report outlines the significant progress that has been made in recent years to implement the Review's six main recommendations.

Although the FLR project has now closed, its legacy lives on. From the College of Policing's Front Line Innovation Capability (Recommendation 1) enabling national decision makers to engage more effectively with the front line, to the stronger national focus on police leadership, professional development and wellbeing, the FLR project has ensured that those delivering policing on a daily basis are able to influence national change. One of the most significant impacts of the FLR project has been the development of the Police Covenant. The Covenant is a recognition by government, policing and society as a whole, acknowledging the sacrifices made by those who work or have previously worked in our police forces. It is intended to ensure that officers, staff, volunteers and their families are not disadvantaged as a result of their service in the police and seeks to mitigate the impact that this may have on daily life. It was clear from the FLR feedback that working in policing can have an impact on wellbeing. We have listened to the results of the FLR and, as the Covenant policy develops, we will continue to address wellbeing concerns raised by the front line.

The Purpose of this Report

The Front Line Review (FLR) was published on 10 July 2019 and its findings highlighted areas of concern to frontline police officers and staff in England and Wales. It proposed six key measures to reduce inappropriate demand on the police, support their wellbeing and give them a stronger voice in decision making. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) reports formed the foundation of the FLR evidence. They outlined the findings from 28 face-to-face workshops with front line officers that were held across England and Wales. The Review was also informed by direct engagement between the Home Office (Ministers and officials) and the front line, social media engagement and academic research contributions. All FLR reports can be found at the following link: [Policing front line review - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/reports/2019/07/10/policing-front-line-review)

At the time of publication, the Home Office made a commitment to publish an 'FLR Stocktake Review'. In light of this commitment, this report outlines progress against delivery of the Review's recommendations. Over the last few years, great progress has been made to implement the six main recommendations of the Review by working closely with our policing partners.

A Ministerial stocktake meeting took place on 8 March 2022, which was attended by National Police Chief's Council, the College of Policing and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), where the progress made on the FLR recommendations and the future direction of this work was agreed. Further detail is set out in this report. Progress was noted by the Police Covenant Oversight Board on 23 November 2022, attended by the Police Superintendents' Association, Police Federation of England and Wales, HMICFRS, NPCC, the Welsh Government, College of Policing ('the College'), Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC), and the Chief Police Officers' Staff Association (CPOSA).

Recommendation 1: 'The Front Line Innovation Project'.

The Commitment and Rationale:

- The FLR found that there was a feeling of disconnect between the front line and senior / national decision makers, coupled with a profound scepticism about the ability of the front line to inform change and improvement.
- To address these concerns, Recommendation 1 provided a government commitment to create a space for the front line to directly influence innovation, improvement and the development of local and national policy that impacts on frontline delivery. Mirroring successful work conducted in other sectors, the College has established a national capability to support the co-creation of solutions with the front line and to embed this process into policing.
- One of the aims of the College's innovation capability is to ensure policing can proactively utilise and value the professional expertise of the front line by directly engaging them in solving the problems that matter most to them.

Background and Key Achievements:

- The College has been supporting forces to develop their innovation capability. Specifically, the College has:
 - Set up an innovation network which currently consists of almost 100 innovation leads from across all 43 Home Office forces, Police Scotland, British Transport Police, Civil Nuclear Constabulary and, most recently, forces in Australia and New Zealand.
 - Delivered over 30 innovation force roadshows attended by thousands of operational officers and staff attended these events.
 - Undertaken a survey of ideas during Covid to identify local innovations that could be shared nationally. These were shared through knowledge sharing events involving forces across England and Wales.
 - Developed a knowledge sharing template where officers and staff can share innovative practice. These will be housed in a new searchable knowledge sharing repository.

Next Steps:

- The College is taking a comprehensive approach to innovation, which acknowledges the links with employee engagement, wellbeing and leadership identified within the FLR evidence. The work of the College's national innovation capability will remain an area of interest for those working on the Police Covenant and continued progress on innovation will complement and support the delivery of Covenant priorities and aims.

This is in light of the cross-over with sector-wide efforts to improve wellbeing, promote diversity, aid retention and strengthen the concept of leadership throughout all ranks (by listening to and responding to the 'front line voice'). In addition to the sharing of ideas and practice, innovation is also about improving and future proofing policing to support system and culture change from within.

Recommendation 2: 'Balancing Operational Demands and Individual Needs'.

The Commitment and Rationale:

- The FLR evidence highlighted that the front line was not afforded sufficient time or space for 'core activities' which positively impact on their wellbeing, such as time for decompression; adequate debriefing; discussions with colleagues; training and development; counselling; physical activity; and time with line managers for personal development and performance reviews.
- To address this, Recommendation 2 aimed to ensure that the operational system achieves the right balance between meeting demand and supporting the individual. A Ministerial challenge was made to Chiefs to consider building in essential time for core activities within working patterns which positively impact on frontline wellbeing and support.

Background and Key Achievements:

- In his **5 July 2019 letter to Chiefs** the former Policing Minister, Nick Hurd, challenged them to ensure (with the support of the Front Line Innovation Project) that the frontline workforce is provided with sufficient time to manage their wellbeing needs and to proactively highlight areas where we could do more to help manage internal demand.
- Prior to the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic, action on this workstream was led by individual Chief Officers within their own forces, with some inviting the College Front Line Innovation team to host 'Co-Creation Workshops' to identify the best frontline ideas for local implementation, including ideas to improve wellbeing.
- The Home Office fully recognises the fact that Chiefs and forces have had to focus on urgent national priorities such as policing the pandemic and assisting with the police uplift programme. However, this remains a key priority for policing and work continues to ensure that the police workforce is provided with sufficient time and resources to support their wellbeing. A new workstream has been established within the NPWS to accelerate innovations which specifically address 'hindrance stressors' i.e., barriers that prevent meaningful work. The programme will bring together the Home Office, CoP, HMICFRS and NPCC and will be progressed as a Police Covenant priority.

Next Steps:

- Ensuring the right balance between meeting organisational demands and those of individuals remains a key area of interest, in light of the increasing national focus on police officer and staff wellbeing overall. The National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS) have explored the links between wellbeing and shift working through its '**fatigue and shift pattern project**', to develop the evidence base on how shift patterns

affect fatigue and the wellbeing of police officers and staff. The NPWS has rolled out a series of programmes and pilots to support officers and staff in this area, including:

- A fatigue and shift work awareness study developed with experts from Washington State University.
 - Better sleep webinars – a series of bespoke online webinars for policing developed with one of the leading sleep scientists in the UK.
 - Design and development of national guidelines for police forces in England and Wales.
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- Ensuring that the police workforce is provided with sufficient time for wellbeing activity and identifying and addressing the specific demands of shift work will remain a key area of interest for those working on the Police Covenant and is important in ensuring the success of the Police Uplift Programme.
 - Themes under this workstream will remain relevant in the development of the College's National Leadership Centre for Policing, with a key role for NPCC in driving this work forward in forces and ensuring national consistency. This includes embedding Continuous Professional Development (CPD) as a standard part of working life for all officers and staff. This is also an important factor in retention and ensuring that all officers and staff can fulfil their full potential, including those recruited under the uplift programme.

Recommendation 3: 'Management of External Demand'

The Commitment and Rationale:

- The ONS evidence to the Review showed that there was a profound frustration felt by the front line regarding unnecessary demands on their time, including certain aspects of externally generated Mental Health demand which they perceived should be the responsibility of partner agencies.
- In response to this, Recommendation 3 gave a Ministerial commitment to provide good practice guidance to enable policing to manage more effectively cases that should not involve the police, commencing with better guidance on 'safe and well checks'.

Background and Key Achievements:

- In March 2021, the College published the good practice guidance document, 'Demand Management - Safe and Well Checks and Repeat Callers' to enable policing to more effectively manage cases that should not involve them. The guidance focuses on ensuring a better and more appropriate response to the public rather than the police simply declining to attend. Chiefs have been asked to consider and promote this approach within their forces for the benefit of both members of the public and police officers.
- Some forces have already implemented this approach whilst others are actively reviewing application by other forces and have established peer networking around this. The application of this approach allows for policing demand to be remodelled and concentrated to other areas appropriate to policing.

Next Steps:

- The guidance has now been delivered and the specific recommendation is therefore complete. However, mental health demand remains a key concern in the sector and the NPCC and College of Policing Mental Health leads are looking at what can be done to share examples of good practice around mental health demand management.

Recommendation 4: 'Management of Internal Demand'

The Commitment and Rationale:

- The FLR Evidence highlighted frustrations caused by unnecessary demands on time that are seen to get in the way of core policing. These include internally generated demands, such as disproportionate administration, overly bureaucratic processes, ineffective IT and difficulties in sharing best practice and learning.
- Recommendation 4 provided a Ministerial challenge to Chiefs to identify and address unnecessary internally generated demand within their forces and with national support to tackle systemic issues from the Home Office and other partners.
- The aim of this recommendation was to ensure Chiefs seized the opportunity the FLR provided to address this issue in a more coordinated way.

Background and Key Achievements:

- In his 5 July 2019 letter to all Chiefs, the former Policing Minister Nick Hurd challenged them to commit to *"identify and address these issues locally and where there is a need for national action, flag that directly to me and I will commit to working with you to address it"*.
- The former Policing Minister also committed to ensuring that Chiefs could "leverage the work of the Front Line Innovation Network to resolve local issues and share national solutions".
- As with Recommendation 2 above, prior to the start of the Covid-19 Pandemic action on this workstream was led by individual Chief Officers within their own forces, with some inviting the College Front Line Innovation team to host 'Co-Creation Workshops' with front line officers and staff.
- The Home Office fully recognises the fact that Chiefs and forces have had to focus on urgent national priorities such as policing the pandemic. However, the Ministerial challenge to Chiefs remains a key priority for policing. Work to reduce any unnecessary internally generated demand which has a negative impact on the police workforce should continue.

Next Steps:

- Dr Les Graham et al's academic contribution to the FLR1 highlighted that reducing unnecessary work-related demands ('hindrance stressors') would be beneficial for police officer and staff wellbeing. Should new barriers be identified, these will be raised

¹ [Collaborative Research into Workforce Factors, Behaviour and Service Delivery in Policing: Overview of Findings and Insights \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

with the Home Office and consideration will be given to including them under the HMICFRS PEEL inspection framework.

- This is a key area of interest to the Police Covenant as it develops. There is a role for Chiefs in addressing unnecessary internal demand and the impact it has on wellbeing. However, this also impacts on police leadership in terms of ensuring officers and staff at all ranks and grades are being empowered to identify internal problems and suggest options for change and improvement.
- The NWS are looking at existing force-led work that addresses wellbeing hindrance stressors and how solutions could be scaled. The national wellbeing survey is run annually and alongside other surveys such as staff association surveys will allow progress with wellbeing to be monitored and the potential identification of any new hinderance stressors.
- A new workstream has been established within the NPWS to accelerate innovations which specifically address hindrance stressors and service improvement issues affecting the public. The programme is due to begin in January 2023 and run for 12 months.

Recommendation 5: 'Wellbeing, HMICFRS Oversight'.

The Commitment and Rationale:

- The requirement to better support the wellbeing of front line officers and staff was a central theme of the FLR evidence. The FLR steering group was clear that appropriate HMICFRS oversight would be required to assist in holding policing to account for addressing the wellbeing concerns raised by the front line.
- In response to the findings from the FLR, HMICFRS committed to review the way that it inspects how well police forces support staff wellbeing.

Background and Key Achievements:

- HMICFRS's most recent PEEL inspection framework (2021/22) has been reviewed and updated to enable a broader look at how the 43 police forces in England and Wales are considering wellbeing and inclusion. The PEEL inspections have also moved to an intelligence-led, continual assessment approach rather than the annual PEEL inspections used in previous years. This gives HMICFRS a comprehensive and ongoing understanding of force performance across the areas covered by the framework – including wellbeing.
- The current questions on wellbeing within PEEL address a wide range of factors including how forces understand the wellbeing of their workforce and use this understanding to develop effective plans for making continuous improvements where needed. The inspection framework also looks at how effectively workforces support the wellbeing of different sections of the workforce including in control rooms and high-pressured investigation roles. It also reports on workforce wellbeing as part of some of our thematic inspections.

Next Steps:

- HMICFRS has delivered on its FLR commitment to review and develop its framework to look at how effectively forces support the wellbeing of their staff and whether there is adequate provision in place that meet their individual needs. Findings get reported through force inspection reports and as part of national reporting including through the HMIC's annual assessment of the State of Policing.
- It remains the responsibility of Police and Crime Commissioners, Chief Constables and the wider policing sector to respond to HMICFRS findings and make continuous improvements to identify needs and support workforce wellbeing.
- HMICFRS have been invited to sit on the Police Covenant Oversight Board and it will remain a key priority of the Police Covenant to work with HMICFRS as it provides the independent inspection, monitoring and reporting necessary to hold Chiefs to account for delivering positive change for their workforce.

Recommendation 6: 'Providing a National Evaluation Mechanism for Wellbeing Provision'.

The Commitment and Rationale:

- The requirement to better support the wellbeing of front-line officers and staff was a central theme of the FLR evidence.
- In response to this, Recommendation 6 gave a Ministerial commitment to provide the front line with a direct means to evaluate national and local progress on wellbeing, working with police staff associations.

Background and Key Achievements:

- In June 2020 the NPWS published the results of its first 'National Police Wellbeing Survey' to assesses the current state of wellbeing across all 43 police forces in England and Wales and establish how people are feeling at work.
- This was also built on to include a separate survey on inclusion, which is an important aspect of wellbeing.
- A pre-deployment mental health and resilience training for new recruits was devised and has been put into place.
- The most recent iteration of the Wellbeing survey was launched in October 2021. The results are currently being analysed and expected to be released in the spring. A new survey was released for 2022.

Next Steps

- The National Police Wellbeing Survey remains a vital tool to access the current state of wellbeing and inclusion in policing. At the national level the evidence it provides enables the NPWS to effectively prioritise and target improvement activities in key areas and provide support to individual forces. It is expected that forces also address the key themes locally (with the support of the NPWS if needed).
- The new Chief Medical Officer has a number of workstreams under the Covenant, and there is a complementary work with the Royal College of GPs that will identify issues particular to police officers and staff.
- The evidence from the annual surveys remains a key source of data for the Police Covenant Oversight Board who will draw on the survey's findings (and other relevant sources of data) to monitor progress in relation to wellbeing and inclusion in policing.

Conclusion

FLR Outcomes:

- The Home Office has worked closely with wider policing sector partners to meet our collective commitment to deliver the Review's main recommendations, and the following have been delivered:
 - Recommendation 1: 'The Front Line Innovation Project'
 - Recommendation 3: 'Management of External Demand'
 - Recommendation 5: 'Wellbeing, HMICFRS Oversight'
 - Recommendation 6: 'Providing a National Evaluation Mechanism for Wellbeing Provision'
- Although the FLR project (and all related monitoring and governance) has now closed, and the specific recommendations above are complete, work relating to those recommendations continues and will be monitored in future under Police Covenant governance arrangements to ensure that we continue to make progress in these important areas
- Work on specific projects continues against the following FLR Recommendations to embed wellbeing and excellent leadership at the heart of policing and free up frontline time for core policing activities:
 - Recommendation 2: 'Balancing Operational Demands and Individual Needs'
 - Recommendation 4: 'Management of Internal Demand'
- These recommendations have transferred into active work strands under the Police Covenant.