



Home Office

# **From Local to National: A New Model for Policing**

January 2026

CP 1489





Government of the United Kingdom  
Home Office

# **From Local to National: A New Model for Policing**

Presented to Parliament  
by the Secretary of State for the Home Department  
by Command of His Majesty

January 2026

CP 1489



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## Foreword from the Home Secretary

In 1828, Sir Robert Peel told Parliament: “The time is come... when we may fairly pronounce that the country has outgrown her police institutions.”

Nearly two centuries later, those words might have been spoken today. In recent years, the world has changed rapidly and dramatically, but policing has not kept pace.

This White Paper sets out overdue reforms to policing in this country. Taken together, they are the most significant modernisation in nearly 200 years.

To argue policing is broken, as some have, is an exaggeration. Last year, the police made over three quarters of a million arrests, up 5 percent on the year before. Some of the most serious crimes are now falling. Knife crime is down by 5 percent, with knife homicides down nearly 20 percent. Murder in our capital is at a historic low.



Yet across the country, things feel very different. We face an epidemic of everyday crime. The crimes that tear at the fabric of our communities – like shoplifting, theft and anti-social behaviour – often go without consequence. Criminals know this. In the years since 2010, shop theft has risen by 72 percent, and phone theft by 58 percent.

Meanwhile, crime itself is evolving. Criminals are operating with more sophistication than ever before, within this country, across our borders and in the online world. Serious and organised crime is growing, and nine in every ten crimes now has a digital component.

Under this Government, the work of reforming policing has already begun. This Government has restored a focus on neighbourhood policing, eroded under the last Government. We have set a target of 13,000 more neighbourhood officers by the end of the Parliament, with the first 3,000 in place by March of this year. However, more significant and structural reform is required if we are to address both the volume and changing nature of modern crime. It is time to modernise what remains the last, great unreformed public service.

This White Paper sets out a new model for policing to ensure policing in this country is fit for the modern world, driven by two goals. Firstly, ensuring local police forces are equipped to make their local communities safer. And secondly, introducing a new approach to national policing that protects us all.

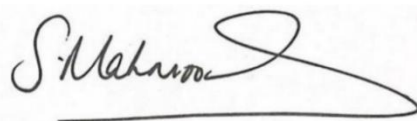
We will establish a National Police Service. In time, this will handle all national policing responsibilities, creating a world-class force focused on counter-terror, serious and organised crime and fraud. At the same time, the new force will lift the burden of delivering national responsibilities from local forces, ensuring that their focus is entirely on policing their streets.

Structural reform of our existing forces is long overdue. The 43-force model, nearly unchanged in 60 years, is no longer fit for purpose. Some forces are too small to handle complex investigations or major incidents. Duplication of support functions draws money away from neighbourhood policing. To ensure the sacred bond between the public and their police is strengthened, we will create new Local Police Areas within each force, bringing policing closer to the communities they serve. The precise number and nature of each force will be subject to a review that will report back in the summer of this year.

This White Paper also sets out further modernisation of policing. We will ensure that every force is adopting the latest technology to make policing both more effective and efficient. Some forces are already adopting new technology to great effect, such as Live Facial Recognition. But others lag behind, using analogue methods to fight crime in this digital age.

For too long, force performance has been allowed to vary across the country. This White Paper restores Government's historic role setting standards and holding forces to account for their performance. We will restore national targets for police forces and set minimum standards that forces must abide by. Where performance falls, Government will act. In the most extreme cases of leadership failure, we will restore the Home Secretary's power to dismiss a Chief Constable.

These are, without question, major reforms. They represent the most significant changes to policing in this country in nearly 200 years. But the volume and nature of crime in this country demands we adopt a new model for policing, ensuring local forces protect their communities, and national policing protects us all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Mahmood', with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

**Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP**

# Police Reform – Executive Summary

1. Policing needs reform if it is to tackle the crimes that blight local communities and threaten our national security. We will put more officers on the beat in neighbourhood policing and we will strip away the bureaucracy that prevents the police from focusing on the public's priorities. We will create a more consistent service by holding the police to account for delivering a set of Local Policing Guarantees, backed up by new powers to intervene where forces fall short. We will focus local forces on local crime, while strengthening our ability to tackle serious and organised crime and threats to national security by creating a new national force, the National Police Service. We will save money and strengthen specialist crime fighting capabilities by reducing the number of police forces. We will equip the police for the future with a modern workforce and the best technology to catch criminals. We will reform policing so that local forces protect your community, while national policing protects us all.
2. Police officers and staff work hard every day to keep us safe. However, police performance as measured by detection rates and levels of victim satisfaction has declined and is highly inconsistent across the country. Public confidence in the police fell from 79% in 2015/16 to 67% in 2024/25<sup>1</sup>. Crime is changing radically: fraud alone now makes up 44% of all crime<sup>2</sup> and 90% of crime<sup>3</sup> today has a digital element. Without reform, the gap between the threats we face and the ability of the police to protect the public will grow ever wider.
3. These problems have arisen because:
  - i. Policing has become too distant from local communities, with the percentage of people reporting that they never see the police on foot patrol in their area rising from 25% in 2010/11 to 54% in 2024/25<sup>4</sup>.
  - ii. The way we organise policing is based around 43 local police forces and an incoherent mix of national organisations. This has not changed to keep pace with the modern world.
  - iii. Between 2010 and 2024 the government stopped setting clear national standards and lost focus on holding the police to account for delivery.
  - iv. Policing has fallen behind the criminals, lacking the capabilities to protect our communities from radically changing threats.

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<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) [Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 24 January 2026)

<sup>3</sup> Association of Police and Crime Commissioners and National Police Chiefs' Council (2020), [National Policing Digital Strategy 2020-2030.pdf](#) (viewed on 24 January 2026)

<sup>4</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales – Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 21 January 2026)



4. To address these problems we cannot ‘tinker around the edges’ or implement piecemeal change. This White Paper therefore sets out the most radical programme of police reform in 200 years. It aims to create a police service that is 1) **more rooted in local communities and focused on their needs**, 2) **more coherent** in the way it is organised, 3) **more consistent** in achieving high standards, and 4) **more capable** in terms of its workforce, technology, use of data and ability to prevent crime. This White Paper commits to the following:

### **Better policing for local communities**

5. **We will re-energise neighbourhood policing**, by delivering 13,000 more officers into neighbourhood roles. We will deliver visible local policing, with officers embedded in communities, focusing on local issues, and restoring public confidence.
6. **We will remove the barriers that prevent the police from focusing on what matters to the public.** We will clear away bureaucratic barriers, such as those linked to crime and incident recording standards. We will modernise legislation, such as the Public Order Act 1986, to ensure that the police are clearer about where the line stands between freedom of speech and criminality. We will roll-out Artificial Intelligence (AI) powered tools and software to automate manual processes, saving the police valuable time that can be redirected towards serving the public.
7. **We will strengthen police governance to ensure it is better placed to deliver for local people.** While individual Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)<sup>5</sup> have made an important contribution to serving their communities, the model has not lived up to expectations. Having a system of police governance that is separate from the existing structures of local government has created unnecessary silos. Mayors and local government leaders are better placed to promote joined-up working to cut crime. We will therefore abolish PCCs, replacing them with directly elected mayors, and where mayors do not yet exist, with Policing and Crime Boards made up of local council leaders. This new system of police governance will reintegrate policing back into the system of local government in England and Wales, enabling greater collaboration across local services.

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<sup>5</sup> From here on, references to PCCs should be taken to include PFCCs, Mayors with PCC functions (including Combined Authority Mayors and Combined County Authority Mayors). London has its own special arrangements. The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime is the local policing body for the metropolitan police district, while the Court of Common Council remains the police authority for the City of London police area.

## **A stronger policing system**

8. **We will radically reform the way that policing is organised so that it is set up to succeed in a rapidly changing world.** Policing is and will remain a local public service, with our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee ensuring the police are focused on local people's concerns. However, local policing will be better supported by a much more coherent organisational structure regionally and nationally.
9. The current force structure has been in place for 60 years but is no longer fit for purpose. Having 43 separate police headquarters, each providing back-office functions to local policing, means we are wasting money that could be reinvested in the frontline. Fewer forces would provide more effective specialist services in areas like major crime and firearms, while also being better able to deal with surges in demand and major incidents. **Over this Parliament and the next we will radically reform the structure of policing, significantly reducing the number of police forces.**
10. Under this streamlined structure, responsive local policing will be guaranteed through Local Policing Areas (LPAs) sitting under local police commanders delivering on priorities set locally. The LPAs will deliver the policing that the public are most likely to call upon: emergency response, local crime investigation and neighbourhood policing at a consistent standard across England and Wales. Our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee will ensure that the public will experience stronger, visible and more responsive policing.
11. We will immediately set up an independent review of police force structures, which will report in the summer. The review will examine the optimal configuration of police forces and the best approach to implementation.
12. **We will also radically reform the national tier of policing by creating a new police force: the National Police Service (NPS).** There are currently too many organisations overseeing different elements of policing, none of whom have the necessary powers to drive change. The NPS will bring together existing national bodies, including the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the College of Policing, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and Counter Terrorism Policing (CTP), into a single organisation with a clear mandate and the powers to get things done.

13. The NPS will do four things:
  - i. Provide a single source of strategic leadership for the police service, replacing the confused mix of existing institutions.
  - ii. By setting stronger national standards, it will ensure a more consistent service is received by the public regardless of where they live. The NPS will be empowered to set mandatory standards in areas such as professional practice, training, technology, data and workforce planning.
  - iii. Provide local policing with better enabling and support services. It will deliver a new national forensics service. Efficiencies will be realised by buying technology and equipment nationally, delivering savings that will be reinvested in the frontline. The NPS will provide a platform for developing new technologies and deploying them more quickly across the country. It will deliver a national workforce strategy to ensure we are developing the right mix of officers and staff to meet future needs.
  - iv. Strengthen our ability to tackle terrorism and serious and organised crime. Criminals are agile and unrestricted by geographic boundaries. We need an organisational platform that gives the police the same degree of agility. By bringing together the NCA, CTP and the nationally focused capabilities within the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU) into a new national police force, we will be better able to share technology, intelligence and people across the range of serious threats we face. In this new system local police forces will be more focused on serving their local communities, while the National Police Service will protect us all.
14. These reforms to our policing system have significant consequences for the way policing is funded. Therefore, **we will review the police funding formula and the distribution of police funding**. This will be undertaken once the implementation of reform is underway so that the new formula reflects the new police force structures. In the interim, we will work in partnership with policing to explore the structure and scope of the police funding settlement and consider what steps can be taken in the short term to better align funding allocations with the Government's policing priorities

### **Consistently high standards**

15. **We will raise performance and standards across the board to deliver a consistently high level of service.** Better use of data across the system, collected under a new Police Performance Framework, will enable the Government to spot trends early and drive improvement, making evidence-based decisions to protect the public. We will establish a set of national policing guarantees, showing the public what they can expect from the police force no matter where they live. This will be supported by a small number of targets to ensure that the police deliver a consistent level of service.

16. Robust data, captured once, and a consistent sector-wide picture of performance will help stamp out poor performance and drive-up standards across the country. Where forces head towards poor performance, it will be promptly identified, and clear support mechanisms will be put in place to deliver rapid improvement. We will introduce new turnaround teams to support forces which are struggling and there will be stronger levers for the Home Secretary and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) to drive improvements.
17. **We will raise individual standards in policing to deal with the issues of criminality and misconduct we have seen in recent years.** We have already introduced new regulations to strengthen the vetting, misconduct and performance systems, including a new power for Chief Constables to remove those officers who fail to maintain vetting. We will introduce further legislation to place vetting standards on a statutory footing and strengthen the basis upon which forces can suspend police officers who are under investigation for domestic abuse or sexual offences.

### **Modern capabilities**

18. **We will develop a well-led workforce with the skills to deal with future threats.** In recent years there has been an excessive focus on the number of police officers employed rather than the outcomes achieved for the public. This has led to officers being put into back-office roles, sitting behind desks rather than being out on the beat. We will change this approach. Instead of being paid to employ an overall number of officers, forces will be incentivised to deliver more officers into neighbourhood policing, with more police out on the beat where the public want them.
19. A new national workforce strategy will ensure we develop a police workforce with the skills needed to tackle current and future crimes. We will bring in more people with specialist skills and experience in other sectors, through the first multi-route specialised pathway into policing. In order to ensure policing is well led we have asked Lord Blunkett and Lord Herbert to carry out an independent review of police leadership at all levels, which will report in summer 2026.
20. To support the learning and development of police professionals and to accredit them for their skills, we will introduce a Licence to Practise for police officers, renewing the office of constable for the 21st century. We will work with the National Police Wellbeing Service to support the physical and mental wellbeing of our officers, staff and volunteers to tackle the causes of stress, trauma and illness in the police workforce.

21. **We will equip the police with the data and technology they need to keep pace with criminality and provide the best possible service to the public.** By introducing a new National Centre for AI in Policing (“Police.AI”) and investing £115 million over the next 3 years, we will create a platform for identifying, testing and then scaling AI technology, as well as enabling Chief Constables to deploy AI responsibly and in a way which builds and maintains public consent. Our investment will mean we can catch more criminals, speed up investigations, reduce the administrative burden on policing and give victims and witnesses a better service. We will also fund 40 new Live Facial Recognition (LFR) vans, as part of a nationally coordinated LFR capability, to intercept violent and sexual offenders in high crime areas across the country. In all cases, we will give the police the resources and expertise to deploy AI in an ethical, robust and responsible way, supported by a new regulatory framework with strong oversight and accountability. Through Police.AI we will also create a public facing registry of the AI being deployed by police forces and the steps they have taken to ensure the reliability of tools before being used for operations.
22. Modern technology has the potential to link data sources and analyse these in seconds rather than weeks, spotting patterns of offending and dangerous behaviour. Forces are already innovating in this way, and we will ensure all areas benefit from these cutting-edge approaches. In doing so we will lay the foundations for a next generation national intelligence service.
23. **We will ensure the police and partners have stronger capabilities to prevent crime as well as respond to it.** Although prevention is widely recognised as better than cure, what is missing is a coherent system linking national priorities to local delivery. We will aim to build an effective crime prevention framework across England and Wales, with central government and local areas working together on top priorities. As a first step, we have established a Crime Prevention Unit within the Home Office to better understand national crime trends, support local areas, and share best practice.
24. Locally, we will review the current fragmented landscape of partnerships and bodies to create a more focused approach. Too many young people remain at risk of crime without early intervention. Through the Young Futures Programme, we will identify vulnerable children and connect them to appropriate support. We will also strengthen efforts to prevent online crime and reduce opportunities for theft and fraud. To tackle this evolving threat, we will publish a new Fraud Strategy outlining how we will work with regulators and industry to close gaps and protect the public.

25. Our police service was formed nearly 200 years ago, but the threats facing our communities have changed radically. Without reform, the gap between the crimes we face and our ability to protect the public will grow wider. With the reforms set out in this White Paper we will renew the British model of policing for the 21st century.

# Chapter 1: Case for Change

26. The Government's ambition is to set the police up to succeed, so they can protect the public, both now and in the future.
27. Policing is a job like no other. It demands skill, bravery, and a selfless sense of duty. Every day, police officers, staff and volunteers put themselves in harm's way to keep the rest of us safe. They put the needs and welfare of the public ahead of their own, protecting some of the most vulnerable in society. They serve with distinction, professionalism, and integrity, enforcing the law impartially without fear or favour.
28. However, the system they work in remains much as it was in the 1960s. Since then, the nature of policing has changed dramatically. The demand for police services has grown. Crime now crosses international borders. Public scrutiny has intensified. As a result of these and other factors, an outdated policing system has started to buckle under the strain.
29. The policing model in England and Wales<sup>6</sup> is cherished at home and respected abroad. It was founded on the Peelian principles, which describe a model of policing by consent, whereby the police should work closely with and for the communities they serve. Those principles are as important today as when they were conceived almost 200 years ago. However, it is our contention that while the values that should shape our approach to policing remain the same, the world in which the police operate has changed radically. Our aim in this White Paper is to renew the Peelian model of policing for the very different conditions of the twenty-first century.
30. The Government has already set out plans to improve public confidence in the police and to cut crime through its Safer Streets Mission, which aims to restore neighbourhood policing teams and halve knife crime and Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) within a decade, with a VAWG strategy published on 18 December 2025<sup>7</sup>.
31. We are already taking action by:
  - i. Investing in policing – at the Spending Review the Chancellor committed to a real terms increase in police funding over the next three years. In 26-27, the provisional settlement set out there will be up to £18.3 billion of funding for police forces, which is an increase of £746 million compared to last year.

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<sup>6</sup> Except where noted this White Paper refers to policing in England and Wales, but the government will also work closely with devolved partners in Scotland and Northern Ireland to ensure the effectiveness of policing across the UK.

<sup>7</sup> The Home Office (2025), [Freedom from violence and abuse: a cross-government strategy - GOV.UK](#) (viewed on 22 January 2026)

Despite the challenging fiscal inheritance, the government has prioritised investment in policing, providing close to £2 billion additional funding to police forces since being elected Restoring neighbourhood policing and committing to delivering 13,000 additional neighbourhood policing personnel by the end of the Parliament.

- ii. Tackling the most serious violence, including knife crime and VAWG, with cross-government action to drive down offending, punish those responsible and prevent these crimes from happening in the first place.
  - iii. Boosting standards by enabling forces to remove officers unable to meet vetting requirements.
  - iv. Making sure that every penny spent within policing delivers improvement for the public through a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme, putting around £350 million of savings back into frontline policing.
  - v. Establishing a new Performance Unit in the Home Office to drive-up standards and improve police performance.
32. But we must go further if we want to restore public confidence and cut crime. For the first time in decades, policing leaders and the Government are in agreement on the need for change and have worked together on this ambitious programme of reform.

### **The case for change**

33. Radical reform is required for three reasons:
- i. Public confidence in the police is falling.
  - ii. Police performance has declined and is inconsistent across England and Wales.
  - iii. Crime is changing radically, and the police are struggling to keep pace.

### **Public confidence in the police is falling**

34. Compared to other public institutions, trust in the police is still relatively high<sup>8</sup>. This is to the credit of the hard work and professional commitment of the police and their partners. But the recent trajectory is concerning:
- i. Trust in the police fell from 80% in 2015/16 to 71% in 2024/25<sup>9</sup>,
  - ii. Confidence in local police fell from 79% in 2015/16 to 67% in 2024/25<sup>10</sup>.

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<sup>8</sup> Office for National Statistics (2023) [Trust in government, UK - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>9</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) [Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables - Office for National Statistics](#) this has fallen from 80% in 2015/16 to 71% in 2024-25 (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>10</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) [Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)



35. Without reform, the trust and confidence that communities have in law enforcement risks being eroded, undermining the legitimacy and effectiveness of policing itself.

### **Police performance has declined and is inconsistent across England and Wales**

36. Police performance has declined in recent years. Incidents in which victims reported they were 'very satisfied' with the police declined from 41% in 2015/16 to 23% in 2024/25; while those 'not satisfied' with the police increased from 28% in 2015/16 to 49% in 2024/25<sup>11</sup>.
37. At the same time, there is an unacceptable level of variation in standards around the country that means the public receive a different level of service depending on where they live. In 2024/25 the proportion of people who thought their local police force was doing a good or excellent job ranged from 39% to 62% across England and Wales<sup>12</sup>.

### **Crime is changing radically**

38. Crime has been transformed by the technological revolution and wider changes in society and yet the police have not kept pace. In too many areas the criminals are now ahead of the police.
39. While traditional crime has been on a long-term downward trend, crimes that can be facilitated online, such as fraud and cybercrime, have increased significantly. Furthermore, VAWG and child sexual abuse, are now also recorded in much higher numbers, suggesting improved confidence to bring harms, which we know often go unreported, to the attention of the police.
40. There were an estimated 4,072,000 incidents of fraud in the year ending June 2025, an increase of 14% on the previous year and fraud continues to be the largest crime type (44% of CSEW crime). Sexual crimes recorded by the police increased by 74% between 2016 and 2024<sup>13</sup> and 15% of recorded crime in the year ending December 2024 was flagged as domestic abuse related<sup>14</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) [Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>12</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) [Crime Survey for England and Wales \(CSEW\) estimates of personal and household crime, anti-social behaviour, and public perceptions, by police force area, year ending March 2025 - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>13</sup> Gov.uk (2025), [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables - GOV.UK](#)

<sup>14</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

41. From online crime which is essentially borderless, to improvements in the reporting and detection of sexual offences, the system's capacity and capability is being stretched. Cases are increasingly complex, taking longer to investigate, and victims are losing confidence that justice will be served. Latest estimates suggest that less than half of crime is reported to the police. Of those victims that do report, few (42%) are confident they will receive justice from reporting a crime<sup>15</sup>.
42. Over 90% of crimes are now estimated to involve a digital element<sup>16</sup>, yet police forces struggle to keep pace with rapid technological change. A lack of strategic coordination and funding across forces has hindered their ability to manage growing volumes of digital evidence, resulting in significant demand pressures and a backlog of approximately 20,000 devices awaiting forensic analysis<sup>17</sup>.

### **Diagnosis: policing is not set up to succeed**

43. These problems of falling confidence, inconsistent performance and an inability to keep pace with criminals are caused in turn by 1) a growing gap between the police and local communities, 2) an outdated policing system that is incoherent and fragmented, 3) a failure to set clear national standards and to hold policing to account for delivery, and 4) a lack of the capabilities required (skills, technology, data) to keep pace with changing threats.

### **A lack of focus on the needs of local communities**

44. The fall in public confidence in the police is linked to the decline of visible neighbourhood policing. The percentage of people who reported that they never see police or Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) on foot patrol in their local area rising from 25% in 2010/11 to 54% in 2024/25<sup>18</sup>.
45. Just 11% of people reported seeing police on foot patrol in their local area at least once a week in 2024/25 compared with 39% in 2010/11<sup>19</sup>. The numbers of PCSOs and special constable numbers (FTE and headcount respectively) declined by 57% and 64% respectively between March 2010 and March 2025<sup>20</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> Victims Commissioner (2025), [Annual Victims' Survey 2024](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>16</sup> Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (2020), <https://pds.police.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/National-Policing-Digital-Strategy-2020-2030.pdf> (viewed on 12 January 2026)

<sup>17</sup> Data held by the Forensic Capability Network.

<sup>18</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025) [Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>19</sup> Office of National Statistics, [Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system, England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#) (viewed on 9 January 2026)

<sup>20</sup> The Home Office (2025), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2025> Special Constables have declined by 57% and 64% respectively between March 2010 and March 2025 (viewed on 12 January 2026)

46. In addition, there is evidence that the police have been prevented from focusing on the issues that matter to the public by excessive bureaucracy and outdated laws. Rules around crime and incident recording and criminal justice paperwork have become an increasing burden. The police have also found themselves being sucked into policing online spaces using outdated legislation. Laws written to deal with public disorder on the street are now being applied to deal with online disputes, often involving offensive language. The public have been left wondering whether the police have drifted too far from their core mission.

### **An outdated policing system that is incoherent and fragmented**

47. We have a policing structure that was last reformed in the 1960s, when the basis of the current 43 force model was established. Smaller police forces lack the ability to deliver effective specialist services and to manage major incidents. Many of them lack financial resilience. Police forces are facing common problems but are designing solutions separately several times over, leading to unnecessary spending. Forces purchase local IT systems which operate in silos and cannot interact or share information. This locks away useful data and restricts our ability to make informed decisions at a national level. We are not getting the right information into the right hands at the right time.
48. Criminals move at pace, using the latest technologies and operating with ease across local and international borders. To deal with this requires national action, and yet our fragmented policing structure makes it hard to act in a coordinated way. The system relies on voluntary collaboration, part time national leadership (via local chiefs with national portfolios) and decision making requiring agreement between 86 decision-makers (Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and Chief Constables). At the national level there are several organisations with overlapping remits, none of whom have any real power to drive collaboration between forces.

### **A failure to set clear national standards and to hold policing to account for delivery**

49. Under previous Governments, the Home Office stepped-back from managing police performance. A lack of clarity around national expectations has left both the public and the police confused as to the mission and focus of policing. The absence of high-quality, consistent data across forces is hindering our ability to make informed strategic and operational decisions.

50. We cannot afford missed opportunities to use data to spot trends and produce a richer picture of offenders, victims, and evolving crime patterns. A new approach, with a hands-on Home Office, is needed to improve performance and raise standards.

### **A lack of the capabilities required to keep pace with changing threats**

51. Rather than asking what kind of police workforce is required to keep the public safe in the future, the previous Government focused excessively on how many police officers there were. Police forces were paid simply to maintain officer numbers, which resulted in many officers being put into back-office roles rather than being out on the beat. In the absence of a national workforce strategy insufficient attention has been paid to how policing can attract the specialist skills it requires to deal with more complex forms of crime.
52. The use of new technology, such as facial recognition or AI, varies markedly across forces – with each force making its own decisions and investments. As a result, policing is radically under-utilising technology and data.
53. The police and partners are spending most of their time responding to crime once it has occurred rather than preventing it from happening in the first place. We are not doing enough to use the power of data to target the causes of crime. Crime prevention work remains far too ad hoc, rather than being a core part of the mission of the police or other public services.
54. To address these problems our reforms aim to create a police service that 1) is more focused on the needs of local communities, 2) is supported by a more coherent organisational structure, 3) more consistently delivers high standards and 4) possesses the capabilities required to keep pace with criminals.
55. Sir Robert Peel’s great insight 200 years ago was that policing is at its best when it is done *with* rather than *to* communities. The police and the public need to work together to make our country safe. We believe that this insight is as true today as it was during the Industrial Revolution. The reforms we set out in this White Paper are intended to renew that Peelian model of policing so that it is set up to succeed in the very different conditions of the twenty first century.

## Chapter 2: Better policing for local communities

56. Our aim in this White Paper is to strengthen and re-energise the local tier of policing to make sure it is responsive to local people's priorities. To ensure policing is focused on the needs of local communities we will re-build neighbourhood policing, strip away the barriers that prevent the police from focusing on what matters to the public and radically reform the system of local police governance.

### Part 1. Neighbourhood policing

57. Neighbourhood policing is a powerful antidote to local crime and the scourge of anti-social behaviour, which can blight communities and town centres across England and Wales. When properly resourced and embedded, neighbourhood policing fosters strong relationships between officers and the public, deterring crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and helping people feel safe. Core to this is problem solving, which involves the police, partners and the community working together to address long term issues affecting communities and in turn prevent crime.
58. Moreover, neighbourhood policing is vital for officers to see first-hand the issues affecting the public. Issues like vandalism, public disorder, shop theft, persistent drug-related crime and ASB are more than just a nuisance; they corrode public confidence, weaken community cohesion and fuel further criminality<sup>21</sup>. A strong, visible, locally accountable police presence is essential to tackling these issues head-on and restoring confidence in policing<sup>22</sup>.
59. Over the past decade and a half, visible neighbourhood policing has been diminished and deprioritised, leaving communities more exposed to crime and disorder. In particular, there was a 57% decline in the number of PCSOs between March 2010 and March 2025<sup>23</sup>; PCSOs play a critically important role in providing visible policing, proactive prevention work and community engagement.

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<sup>21</sup> Jackson, J & Bradford, B (2009), [Crime, Policing and Social Order: On the expressive nature of public confidence in policing](#) (viewed on 7 November 2025)

<sup>22</sup> HMICFRS (2024) [HMICFRS, The Policing Response to Anti-Social Behaviour: PEEL Spotlight report, 2024](#) (viewed on 7 November 2025)

<sup>23</sup> The Home Office, (2025), <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-england-and-wales-31-march-2025> Special Constables have declined by 57% and 64% respectively between March 2010 and March 2025 (viewed on 12 January 2026)

60. As a result, communities are too often left with reactive policing that merely responds to crime after it occurs rather than prioritising prevention and early intervention. Neighbourhood policing has been perceived as a discretionary function rather than an operational necessity, resulting in variation in its implementation across forces. Every citizen deserves to feel safe, knowing their local officers are embedded within their communities, engaging with residents, addressing concerns proactively and preventing crime before it escalates.
61. On 10 April 2025, the Prime Minister announced the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (the Guarantee)<sup>24</sup>. The foundation commitments have already been delivered, meaning that every neighbourhood area now has named and contactable officers, as well as a named ASB lead and increased patrols.

We have:

- Delivered the foundation commitments of the **Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee** including that:
  - Every neighbourhood now has **named, contactable officers** dedicated to tackling the issues in their neighbourhood,
  - There are **guaranteed response times** to neighbourhood queries of 72 hours, with the commitment being transparent to the public when they submit a neighbourhood query,
  - Every force has an **Anti-Social Behaviour lead** and has **increased patrols in town centres and other hotspots** based on local demand and intelligence.
- A **neighbourhood policing performance framework** has been published which sets out how we will be monitoring and evaluating the delivery of the Guarantee.

We will go further and by the end of the Parliament, we will:

- Deliver **visible, accessible and community-focused policing**, including delivering 13,000 additional neighbourhood policing personnel in police forces across England and Wales.
- Design **new standards** so that **neighbourhood officers are not routinely abstracted** to other areas.
- Ensure that **shop theft and assaults on shopworkers** will no longer go unpunished by bringing in new powers and providing **additional funding to policing, working with retailers, to take further action**.
- Professionalise neighbourhood policing with **every neighbourhood police officer and Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) completing enhanced additional training**.
- Publish a **dashboard to measure and monitor performance of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee** commitments.

<sup>24</sup> Cooper, Y. (2025), [Home Secretary Letter to Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners](#) (viewed on 13 June 2025)

62. To support the Guarantee the government announced funding of £200 million in 2025-26 to provide an early boost to personnel numbers in neighbourhood policing teams across England and Wales.
63. The Guarantee is being delivered through six pillars:

**Pillar 1: Police Back on the Beat**  
**Pillar 2: Community Led Policing**  
**Pillar 3: Professional Excellence**  
**Pillar 4: Crackdown on Anti-Social Behaviour**  
**Pillar 5: Safer Town Centres**  
**Pillar 6: Volunteering in Policing**

64. Working collaboratively with policing colleagues, we have underpinned the Guarantee with a performance framework<sup>25</sup>. This framework enhances transparency for the public, ensuring data is available for forces to be held to account. Measures outlined in the framework include increasing neighbourhood policing, visible police presence and town centre crime outcomes. The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee Performance Framework measures will operate within the wider Police Performance Framework (see Chapter Four on 'Improving police performance').

### **Pillar 1: Police back on the beat**

65. We will deliver 13,000 additional neighbourhood policing personnel in forces across England and Wales by the end of this Parliament. We are committed to growing neighbourhood policing over the course of this parliament to ensure that, wherever possible, officers are freed up from non-operational roles to visible, pro-active and accessible neighbourhood roles, tackling the issues that matter most to communities. Neighbourhood policing areas will consist of a team of officers and PCSOs dedicated to covering that area and who spend most of their time providing a visible policing presence. By working together to problem solve, relationships with local communities will be built and developed. We will also work with police forces to define and implement neighbourhood areas to ensure they are of a size that makes sense locally and are recognisable to communities. Ultimately we aim to have neighbourhood areas aligned with local council wards.

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<sup>25</sup> The Home Office (2025) [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee performance framework](#), (viewed on 13 June 2025)

66. Neighbourhood policing has faced significant operational pressures, with officers frequently pulled away to cover gaps elsewhere. This is known as abstraction. We will work to ensure that routine abstraction of neighbourhood officers is minimised and will establish a national process to monitor this commitment.
67. A key element of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee is increased patrols in town centres and other hotspots based on local demand and intelligence. The government has worked with forces to trial, develop and strengthen hotspot patrolling over multiple years – we will now work together to ensure that it is embedded as mainstream business as usual, with crime in key hotspots monitored, together with hours of patrolling so that police presence is guided by the data to most effectively reduce key crimes and increase public confidence.
68. Police forces are now providing a 72-hour response time to neighbourhood queries from both communities and businesses. Online contact is complemented by other forms of contact such as via 101 or speaking to officers while they carry out visible patrols. Although many community problems will not be fully solvable in 72 hours, the public has a right to know what action is and will be taken, including action taken alongside local partners.

## **Pillar 2: Community led policing**

69. Every neighbourhood now has named and contactable officers dedicated to tackling issues facing their communities. The details provided to the public are accurate, up-to-date, and reflect the reality of who is deployed on the ground and encountered by the public, including on visible patrols.
70. Police forces are required to ensure they are publishing local neighbourhood policing priorities online and regularly updating these to ensure transparency and accountability. Forces are also now ensuring that communities and businesses have clear, accessible and well-publicised opportunities to engage with their local policing teams both in person and online. To build trust and increase accessibility, officers will also maintain a visible presence in local hubs, schools and community spaces, fostering relationships as approachable community partners rather than solely as law enforcers.
71. We will standardise public contact with neighbourhood teams and adopt digital tools, such as messaging services, to enable meaningful interactions. This will ensure that everyone has opportunities to access reliable communication channels.



### **Pillar 3: Professional excellence**

72. An effective police force requires skilled, well-supported officers who have the right skills and capabilities (see Chapter Five on ‘The future workforce’). However, to date dedicated training has not been provided to neighbourhood policing officers. The Home Office has provided funding<sup>26</sup> to the College of Policing to deliver the Neighbourhood Policing Pathway, a specialist training pathway for officers in dedicated neighbourhood policing roles. The first part of this training, which is digital learning on Community Engagement, Problem Solving and Tackling Anti-social Behaviour, was rolled out in June 2025 during the Neighbourhood Policing Week of Action. The training will help officers build on the core skills they need to tackle the issues communities face every day.
73. We will put in place national standards to underpin what it means to be a neighbourhood officer. These will improve consistency and accountability for communities.

### **Pillar 4: Crackdown on Anti-Social Behaviour**

74. Every force now has a dedicated ASB Lead. These Leads will have oversight of how the force prevents and tackles anti-social behaviour and will be responsible for ensuring that there is effective multi-agency collaboration to identify and address the primary issues of anti-social behaviour in the local area. These leads work with communities to develop local Anti-Social Behaviour Action Plans, with victims at the forefront.
75. Neighbourhood policing teams will be equipped with enhanced powers through the Crime and Policing Bill to tackle persistent anti-social behaviour, working in collaboration with other agencies. This includes the new Respect Order<sup>27</sup>, which will enable courts to ban perpetrators from engaging in harmful anti-social behaviour and can compel offenders to take action to address the root cause of their behaviour, with tough consequences if the Order is breached.

### **Pillar 5: Safer Town Centres**

76. The latest available data<sup>28</sup> shows street crime<sup>29</sup> has seen a small decrease in the last year. Retail crime<sup>30</sup> continues to increase and is now at a record high, with industry surveys reporting how offenders are increasingly using violence

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<sup>26</sup> In the financial year 2025-2026.

<sup>27</sup> The Respect Order is currently being legislated in the Crime and Policing Bill.

<sup>28</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#) (viewed on 7 November 2025)

<sup>29</sup> Defined as Theft from the Person and Robbery of Personal Property.

<sup>30</sup> Defined as shop theft and robbery of business property.

and abuse against shopworkers<sup>31</sup>. In addition, anti-social behaviour continues to be a big concern for the public, with 24% perceiving anti-social behaviour to be a problem in their local area<sup>32</sup>.

77. The Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee will visibly demonstrate to the public that we are collectively tackling criminality and anti-social behaviour in town centres. This started with an intense crackdown to keep town centres safe in summer 2025 through our *Safer Streets Summer Initiative*. Forces increased patrols in town centres and other hotspots, based on local demand and intelligence, tackling key local issues such as anti-social behaviour, shop theft and vandalism.
78. The Winter of Action began on 1 December 2025 and will run to 31 January 2026 across England and Wales. It will focus on retail crime, prolific offenders, and night-time safety - building on the momentum from the summer initiative. The Winter of Action provides a valuable opportunity to deliver visible activity and strengthen partnerships to improve safety. Insights from both the Summer and Winter Initiatives will help inform what long-term policy may be needed to help create and sustain safer town centres.
79. We are bringing in a new offence of assaulting a retail worker to protect the hardworking and dedicated staff that work in store. This also includes the repeal of legislation which makes shop theft of £200 and below a summary-only offence, sending a clear message that any level of shop theft is illegal and will be taken seriously.
80. We will continue to support police in their drive to tackle retail crime, including through the new police and sector-led Tackling Retail Crime Together strategy<sup>33</sup>. We will provide £5 million over the next three years to continue to fund Opal, the National Policing Intelligence Unit for serious organised acquisitive crime to better understand the tactics used by organised retail crime gangs and identify more offenders. We will also invest £2 million over the next three years in the National Business Crime Centre which provides a resource for both police and businesses to learn, share and support each other to prevent and combat crime. And we will provide £100,000 to the NPCC to identify best practice and support their efforts to tackle retail crime.

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<sup>31</sup> British Retail Consortium (2025), [2025 Crime Survey](#), p.8 (viewed on 13 June 2025)

<sup>32</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix tables](#), (viewed on 13 June 2025)  
In the year ending June 2025.

<sup>33</sup> National Business Crime Centre, [Tackling Retail Crime Together | National Business Crime Centre](#) (viewed on 9 October 2025)

## **Pillar 6. Volunteering in policing**

81. Policing has always been supported by the vital contributions of volunteers. Volunteers bring fresh perspectives, skills and increased diversity into policing, while embodying the Peelian principle that the police are the public and the public are the police. As part of our Guarantee, we are committed to increasing the number of volunteers in neighbourhood policing to build a resilient, community-focused policing model.
82. Special constables are central to this ambition. The Special Constabulary is a force of warranted, uniformed volunteer police officers. They provide a visible presence in neighbourhoods, offer additional support at peak times and bring valuable local knowledge and insight, often being local residents themselves.
83. Special constable numbers have declined year-on-year since 2012, down 73% from 20,343 in March 2012 to 5,534 as of 31 March 2025 (headcount)<sup>34</sup>. Our ambition is to stabilise and grow their numbers.
84. The Home Office and policing are working closely to identify ways of achieving this. This includes efforts to attract new special constables, improving and streamlining the recruitment process and better integrating special constables into wider policing. We will work with policing partners and organisations such as the Fire Service and the Armed Forces to assess alternative and innovative volunteering models, learning lessons to inform the continued development of police volunteering.
85. We will also look to expand opportunities for wider volunteering, such as volunteer PCSOs and other Police Support Volunteer roles. These approaches will create more flexible and inclusive pathways for people to contribute, ensuring volunteering reflects the diversity of local communities.

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<sup>34</sup> The Home Office (2025), [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2025 \(second edition\) - GOV.UK](#) (viewed on 12 January 2026)

## Part 2. Removing the barriers that stop the police focusing on the public's priorities

86. It is vital that the police are able to focus on the public's priorities: reducing crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and apprehending those who break the law. Too often the police find themselves fighting crime with one hand tied behind their backs, dealing with excessive bureaucracy, obsolete technology and outdated legislation. The government is determined to strip away the barriers that are preventing the police from focusing on their core mission.

To make sure that officers are free to focus on fighting crime, we will:

- Work with key criminal justice partners to explore how to reduce the burden on policing, including continuing to **support the roll-out of Right Care, Right Person** to all parts of the country.
- Set out a definition of police productivity and work with policing to develop **a core set of Productivity Priorities**.
- Explore how we can **use AI to free up officers** for the front line.
- Work closely with sector partners to **streamline training**, including integrating it into everyday work where possible.

### Less time spent on policing social media debate and reducing unnecessary recording burdens

87. There have been numerous examples in recent years of the police investigating crimes and making arrests following allegations of offensive behaviour online. Many people have felt that the police response to these alleged offences, often involving comments made as part of social media debates, has been disproportionate. To ensure that we are drawing the line appropriately between what is offensive but permissible in a free society and what is criminal, the Home Secretary announced an independent review of public order and hate crime legislation on 5 October. The review will ensure police powers remain fit for purpose, are used consistently, and strike the right balance between protecting the public and upholding the right to lawful protest.
88. For understandable reasons the police are a highly regulated profession. However, it is important to continually assess whether the rules and regulations surrounding their work are proportionate and to strip away unnecessary burdens.
89. Over time there has been a more stringent focus on compliance with national standards for crime and incident recording. This followed police failings to support vulnerable victims. While this focus was legitimate, there are concerns

it has led to a risk averse approach leading to unnecessary recording and time wasted on form filling. We are reviewing the proportionality of current crime recording standards as part of the work looking at offensive behaviour online.

90. The College of Policing and NPCC have undertaken a review of how the police record 'non crime hate incidents' to assess whether these practices are proportionate to the threats communities face and whether there are alternative ways for the police to get an accurate picture of community tensions. Following the publication of an interim report in October 2025, the government will respond to the final recommendations made by the College and NPCC when they are received.
91. Another area of extensive paperwork in policing comes from the requirements of the criminal justice system. In the months ahead we will work with the Ministry of Justice and the Crown Prosecution Service (alongside the Attorney General's Office) to examine changes that could reduce the burden on policing. As part of this work, we will look at a number of areas including the disclosure regime and redaction, the use of out of court resolutions, charging and joint police-prosecution performance metrics. We will do this alongside consideration of any new or emerging evidence, such as the implications of the Independent Review of Disclosure and Sir Brian Leveson's recommendations for criminal court reform.

## **Improving Productivity**

92. Efforts to improve productivity in policing have so far been held back the lack of a streamlined process for identifying best practice, inconsistent approaches to rolling out things that work across the whole police service, and an inability to consistently measure productivity benefits. This was highlighted by the recent National Audit Office report into Police Productivity<sup>35</sup>.
93. The Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (see Chapter Three on 'The National Police Service') is focused on tackling these foundational issues, with a target of freeing up of thousands of hours of officers' time by 2028-29. To achieve this we will:
  - i. Set out a definition of police productivity that can form part of our new Performance Framework so we can measure how well forces are doing.
  - ii. Develop a set of Productivity Priorities and provide resource to support the roll out of these innovative solutions based on what works locally. This will include

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<sup>35</sup> This was also highlighted by the [Policing Productivity Review](#), published November 2023.

- the much more widespread deployment of AI across policing (see Chapter Five on 'Unleashing the Power of Our People Through Data and Technology').
- iii. Support the Centre for Police Productivity within the College of Policing. They will build on their recent work to support police forces through fast-tracking proven innovations.
  - iv. Continue our Data Reform Project (see Chapter Five on 'Unleashing the Power of Our People Through Data and Technology') which will make sure officers spend less time searching for data and information.

### **Simplifying training**

- 94. Good quality training is vital to ensuring the highest standards in policing. However, we should also work to ensure training is streamlined and avoids unnecessary repetition.
- 95. The College of Policing is working to ensure training requirements are proportionate and evidence based. As a start, the College is scoping the potential impact of reducing the frequency at which frontline officers are required to attend public & personal safety training (PPST).
- 96. The College is also working to focus training on core skills. For example, through the National Centre for VAWG and Public Protection, it is developing a public protection programme for frontline officers that focuses on the core skills needed to respond across crime types like domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and harassment.
- 97. The College is working on a more work-based approach to initial constable training. Although some classroom-based work will always be necessary, there are real benefits from integrating training into operational work.

### **Getting the right care and support to those in need**

- 98. Police officers spend too much time dealing with issues outside their core responsibilities, such as responding to people with health and social care needs. People in a mental health crisis need professional medical support and this is best provided by healthcare professionals rather than police officers. Failure to deal with this means vulnerable members of the public do not get the support they need and police officers are pulled from dealing with the issues of criminality the public would expect them to be tackling.
- 99. The Right Care, Right Person approach is designed to help ensure that health and social care professionals respond in cases where they have the right skills and training to best meet the needs of the caller. Working in partnership with

health and social care agencies, police will continue to respond where there is a need to deal with a crime that has occurred or is occurring, or to protect people when there is a real and immediate risk of death or serious harm. We continue to support the roll-out of Right Care, Right Person which all territorial forces in England and Wales have either implemented or are in the process of implementing.

### **Part 3. A new system of local police governance**

100. The British model of policing by consent relies on a strong relationship between the public and the police. Within that relationship there is a critical role for local accountability to ensure policing is responsive to local needs and that police forces are delivering effectively and efficiently on behalf of their communities.
101. We want a system of police governance that maintains consistently high standards of oversight, which is joined up with other local services and that the public can trust. Getting the right balance in the tripartite system of oversight of policing between the Home Secretary, local accountability structures and Chief Constables is key to successful policing that delivers for the public. The Home Secretary will play a stronger role (see Chapter Four) to drive performance and standards and we will create new structures to improve the delivery of operational policing (see Chapter Three). Our aim in this White Paper is to strengthen the system of local police governance as part of this reformed system.
102. Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have been responsible for holding Chief Constables to account since they were first elected in November 2012. The idea behind the introduction of PCCs was to build a greater connection between policing and local communities by having a single public official, directly elected by the public, responsible for holding their Chief Constable to account, setting the local police budget and agreeing strategic priorities for their force through their Police and Crime Plan. The model was based on PCCs providing communities a stronger local voice and giving the public a visible local figure to represent their crime and policing priorities.
103. Individual PCCs have worked hard to reduce crime and hold the police to account. However, public understanding of, and engagement with, PCCs remains low despite efforts to raise their profile and there have been criticisms that the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables has not facilitated effective management of police forces. In 2024, the Home Affairs Select Committee said the PCC model should not rely entirely on positive relationships between individual Chief Constables and their PCCs to succeed. Unfortunately, in some forces, there have been tensions in the one-to-one relationship which can be to the detriment of local communities. We address issues around the appointment, suspension and dismissal of Chief Constables below and the need for improved standards of police leadership.
104. We want to seize this opportunity to improve the quality of governance across policing, alongside our other proposals to drive greater consistency and standards across the policing system.



We will:

- **Abolish Police and Crime Commissioners, transferring police governance in 2028 to Strategic Authority Mayors and local council leaders through Policing and Crime Boards.** Over time, these Boards will then be adapted to provide the governance of future fewer, larger police forces.
- **Require every Policing and Crime Board to appoint a Policing and Crime Lead.** This will ensure Boards have the day-to-day support they need to provide dynamic and robust oversight of policing.
- **Improve the process of appointing, suspending and dismissing Chief Constables** so that it is fair, transparent and has the confidence of the public and policing.
- **Engage with the Welsh Government and Welsh policing and criminal justice partners on what the desired governance end state for policing is in Wales** to ensure it reflects the different partnership and governance arrangements.
- **Set out what functions Policing and Crime Boards and their supporting secretariats should have.** This will reduce the cost of corporate governance and bring greater consistency as Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners have grown based upon PCC wishes.

105. The Government will abolish the PCC model at the end of PCCs' current term of office in May 2028 and transfer police governance functions to existing local government structures. Functions will transfer to Strategic Authority Mayors wherever possible, or to elected council leaders where it is not, through Policing and Crime Boards.
106. The Government's long-term ambition is to have fewer, larger police forces (see Chapter Three on 'Police force structures'). An Independent Review of police structures (see Chapter Three on 'Police force structures') will give further consideration to the governance of merged forces, including ensuring the principles of strong local accountability are maintained.
107. We believe that transferring oversight of policing to local government has many advantages, not least because Strategic Authority Mayors and council leaders sit across a range of policy areas and budgets. This makes them better positioned to promote collaboration across services such as health, employment support and housing to prevent crime.

108. Policing and Crime Boards will comprise the Strategic Authority Mayors and/or council leaders so that all the force area is represented by elected individuals. Each board will also have co-optees to provide additional skills and experience. Furthermore, we will mandate each board to appoint a Policing and Crime Lead, akin to a Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, who can provide day to day accountability.
109. The governance principles of Policing and Crime Boards can be scaled to cover any expanded force area and Boards covering merged forces will include upper tier elected local government leaders in the force area and Strategic Authority Mayors. They will also appoint a day to day lead for policing and crime.
110. As part of our work to strengthen local policing, we will ensure that accountability is rooted in local communities. Boards and Mayors will hold the Chief Constable to account at the force-level, but will set each Local Policing Area in the force area (further detail on which is set out in Chapter Three) their own priorities based upon what their communities need. The force's Chief Constable and the area's local police commander will be responsible for the delivery of these priorities, with oversight from both the Mayor or Policing and Crime Board and the local elected leader of the Local Policing Area. The size, composition and accountability arrangements for Local Policing Areas will be considered further as part of the Independent Review of police structures.
111. We wish to replicate arrangements as far as possible across England and Wales to ensure effective policing across the single jurisdiction. We will work closely with Welsh local government and the Welsh Government, police forces and other partners to ensure these new arrangements provide strong and effective local governance for Wales, recognising the distinct nature of local and regional arrangements.
112. Policing and Crime Boards will have the necessary powers and levers to support their governance role and hold Chief Constables to account for their force's performance. In our final chapter, we state that we will consider further the key role that local policing bodies should play in the crime prevention system to create more streamlined and effective arrangements.
113. Where governance of fire and rescue is currently held by a Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner, this function will be transferred together with policing to successor arrangements in 2028.

## **Transferring Policing to Local Government**

114. Effective governance of policing is vital to uphold performance and increase standards. It is also vital that public services work effectively together to reduce crime and make our communities safer. An unintended consequence of the PCC model has seen policing governed in a silo. We need to enable our public services to work better in collaboration with each other to raise standards, grow partnerships, share outcomes and use the skills and levers to better prevent and respond to crime, drive efficiencies and deliver growth
115. We believe transferring policing to local government – to Strategic Authority Mayors and council leaders – will provide for a better form of local police governance. Both Mayors and council leaders sit across a range of different policy areas and budgets, which means they are better positioned to promote collaboration across services, which is especially important when it comes to preventing crime.
116. Subject to Royal Assent, the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill which is currently before Parliament, will create powers to transfer police governance functions to Mayors by default, where boundaries align, and a power to amend force boundaries at the same time as the transfer of police governance functions to Mayors. This will streamline the process and unlock more opportunities for future transfers of functions.
117. Police governance functions can only be currently transferred to Strategic Authority Mayors where the area of the mayoral combined authority or combined county authority is coterminous with the corresponding police force area. To support the transfer of police governance functions to as many Mayors as possible, we further propose that where a force area is wholly within the area of a Strategic Authority Mayor, that Mayor should become responsible for its governance.

## **Policing and Crime Boards**

118. At the end of PCCs' current term of office in May 2028, where it is not possible to transfer functions to Mayors, the Government will give functions to existing elected leaders who will be brought together through Policing and Crime Boards. We expect these Boards to have broadly the same powers as PCCs and Mayors with PCC functions, including powers to appoint, suspend and dismiss the Chief Constable; set the police force budget and agree the policing precept; and set a Police and Crime Plan for their area.

119. Boards will be scalable depending on the size of the force area, including covering future merged forces. We envisage that these Boards will be made up of Strategic Authority Mayors and/or council leaders from the constituting upper tier and/or unitary local authorities in the force area. The local government leaders, who will be crucial to the join up of local services and budgets, will be complemented by independent co-optees who will bring expertise and knowledge in specialist subjects as needed. Boards will appoint a separate Policing and Crime Lead to provide day to day oversight of the force and a secretariat to support them in their work. This is not a return to the bureaucratic, invisible, committee-based oversight of policing that existed prior to PCCs, and Boards will be more agile than previous police authorities.
120. A member of the Board will be appointed as Chair. The Policing and Crime Lead will take on certain duties that in other areas would be performed by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, such as chairing partnerships and making some day to day delegated decisions. We will clarify these responsibilities in statute where appropriate.

### **A stronger and more streamlined system**

121. It is vital that the police are robustly held to account. However, current levels of expenditure on police governance are too high. Given the constraints on the public finances, every penny spent should be delivering value for communities.
122. Corporate governance cost around £93 million in 2023/24<sup>36</sup> employing over 1,000 people. The size of PCC offices varies hugely, with some having more than 40 staff. As we move away from PCCs we must ensure that the system that replaces them costs less with savings reinvested in delivering stronger neighbourhood policing.
123. We expect spending on corporate governance to be significantly reduced and we will work with governance bodies to achieve this. This will include setting out what governance bodies are responsible for and, in doing so, requiring some functions to be stopped or moved elsewhere.

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<sup>36</sup> Figure extrapolated from each PCC's audited accounts for 2023/24

124. We will also consider creating a specific grant for governance which will control spending. We will consider ways to increase the transparency and reporting of governance spending so that local communities can hold their leaders to account. Cancelling future PCC elections will also achieve significant savings to the taxpayer. MHCLG has estimated the cost of PCC elections in 2024 as approximately £87 million<sup>37</sup>.
125. We will explore whether some governance functions provided locally could be more effectively delivered nationally, potentially linked to the governance structure of the National Police Service (see Chapter Three on 'The National Police Service'). This could be more cost effective and could also help to link the local and national levels, providing stronger governance for the system as a whole.

### **Scrutiny and oversight**

126. Those responsible for policing governance are currently under a duty to publish certain information<sup>38</sup> to ensure transparency of their decision making and financial arrangements and enable the public to hold them to account. These arrangements will continue and will apply to new function holders, and we will review them to ensure they require all necessary information to be published.
127. Police and Crime Panels were established at the same time as PCCs to provide both support and challenge and bring some additional balance to a system in which so much power was vested in a single elected official. There have long been questions over their effectiveness as scrutiny bodies and how successful they have been in carrying out a tricky balancing act in both challenging and supporting their PCCs on their decisions and actions<sup>39</sup>.
128. Under our new system, these Panels will no longer be necessary. The support and challenge previously provided by Panels will instead be delivered by the existing overview and scrutiny functions of each Board member's authority. We will not make any changes to scrutiny arrangements in London. We will also discuss with HMICFRS their role in the new system, as well as consider including Policing and Crime Boards within the scope of the Best Value Duty as part of the Local Government Act 1999. Police authorities were subject to this duty before their abolition.

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<sup>37</sup> The final cost of the 2024 PCC elections will not be known until all the claims have been reviewed and settled. The total estimated cost is set out in the relevant Charges Order at £87 million; future savings would likely exceed this figure once inflation and other factors are taken into account. The Charges Order can be found at The Police and Crime Commissioner Elections (Local Returning Officers' and Police Area Returning Officers' Charges) Order 2024.

<sup>38</sup> Requirements are included in The Elected Local Policing Bodies (Specified Information) Order 2011

<sup>39</sup> House of Lords Library (2023), [Police and crime panels: Structure, purpose and powers - House of Lords Library](#) (viewed on 12 January 2026)

## **Victims championing and accountability**

129. PCCs and Mayors with PCC functions play a vital role as the local advocate for victims, ensuring their needs are met and their voices are heard within policing and the wider criminal justice system. We will work closely with other government departments, the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and the Victim's Commissioner to ensure effective support for victims and witnesses, and to address perpetrator behaviour within the new police governance system. Regardless of changes to police governance, we will retain this important focus on victims, with more than half a billion pounds due to be injected into vital support services to help victims and witnesses through the justice process over the next three years.
130. PCCs and Mayors also play a leading role in bringing criminal justice partners together to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the criminal justice system in their force area. Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) are a crucial forum for enabling this collaboration to tackle shared challenges across the system and improve the experience of victims and witnesses. With the Ministry of Justice, who lead on LCJB policy, we will consider how LCJBs should operate and their alignment with future policing structures, in light of our governance reforms and alongside any new or emerging evidence from Sir Brian Leveson's recommendations for criminal court reform.

## **Standards of practice**

131. The public should be able to expect consistency and high standards in how elected representatives exercise their functions on behalf of the public. There will rightly be some local variation in how Policing and Crime Boards operate. However, we believe there is value in setting agreed expectations – for example, on how to hold their Chief Constable to account, their conduct, board arrangements including during periods of absence, complaint handling, the data they should be considering and the partnerships they should be forming – in order to ensure a greater level of consistency.
132. We will work with representative bodies to provide guidance setting out how standards can be raised, including agreeing what areas of practice these standards should cover. We will also drive improvement by introducing legislation allowing the Home Secretary to set standards in relation to how local policing bodies operate.

## **Chief Constable appointments, suspensions and dismissals**

133. The relationship between Mayors and Policing and Crime Boards and their Chief Constable will be vital to the effective oversight of policing. Through changes to the Policing Protocol, we will put on a firmer footing how the relationship should work, ensuring each complement one another and act in the best interests of their local community.
134. We will reform the process for the appointment, suspension and dismissal of Chief Constables to introduce greater fairness, transparency and balance into the process. This will include introducing a requirement for Mayors and Policing and Crime Boards to seek views from His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary before taking any action to suspend the Chief Constable, to give the Chief Constable written notice (including a statement of the proposed grounds for suspending or removing them) and to introduce a time limit/review interval on a Chief Constable's suspension from office. Further reforms regarding the dismissal of Chief Constables are set out in Chapter Four under 'Improving Police Performance'.
135. We will also introduce a national senior appointments panel to help introduce a more consistent approach to the selection and appointment of Chief Constables. This is discussed in Chapter Five under 'The Future Workforce'.

## Chapter 3: A Stronger Policing System

136. Our policing system requires radical re-design. A system designed in the 1960s, based around 43 local police forces, is no longer fit for purpose. Having 43 police force headquarters each providing their own support functions to local policing is ineffective and inefficient. We are wasting money by procuring technology and equipment 43 different ways. Smaller forces often lack the ability to deliver the specialist services they need. Where national action is required, we rely on voluntary collaboration, part time leadership and protracted decision making in which 86 different people (Chief Constables and PCCs) have a veto. The organisations at the centre are fragmented and lack the power to get things done. The results are a system which wastes money, under-utilises technology and data and lacks the agility to keep pace with rapidly changing national and international threats.
137. Working with policing leaders, we have developed a clear consensus on the need for reform. To keep communities safe and respond to fast-changing threats, policing will work as a more coherent system. Local policing will be delivered by LPAs generally at the level of towns, boroughs and cities, responsive to local people and delivering our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. These LPAs will operate as part of larger, more strategic police forces which will provide specialist and support functions. Over this Parliament and the next we will move to a smaller number of forces. This will save money and provide a more effective response to major crime and serious incidents.
138. Nationally we will abolish the plethora of existing central bodies and replace them with a new national police force, the National Police Service (NPS).
139. This will provide strategic leadership, set standards and provide education, equipment and technology to police forces. It will also provide a much stronger response to fast-changing serious, cross-border and online crime. This represents the biggest reform to the way policing is organised in 200 years.



## Part 1. Police force structures

140. The current policing structure in England and Wales, made up of 43 separate police forces, is the product of historical evolution rather than deliberate design. As the demands on policing become increasingly complex and increasingly require collaboration across borders, we cannot continue with an organisational structure established in the 1960s and 70s.
141. At present, forces range in officer numbers from just over 1,000 to more than 8,000<sup>40</sup> (excluding the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)), and crime demand varies significantly from around 40,000 reported crimes in the smallest force<sup>41</sup> (excluding City of London Police) to over 300,000 in the largest (excluding the MPS)<sup>42</sup>. Operational leaders have long highlighted the limitations of the current fragmented model. Maintaining 43 independent forces, each with its own leadership, priorities and infrastructure, wastes money, produces inconsistent levels of service and creates barriers to collaboration.
142. In a world where criminals operate across boundaries, the persistence of 43 silos leaves the public less protected and the police less able to deliver the consistent, high-quality service that communities deserve. Without reform, we will struggle to address the rising tide of cross-border and technology-enabled crime.

We will:

- Stand up an **independent review of force structures**, to design an end-state with policing which will equip forces to deliver high quality public service and tackle modern day crime and threats.
- Reduce fragmentation and inefficiency by **significantly reducing the number of police forces** by the end of next parliament.
- **Simplify the Home Secretary's powers** to alter force boundaries, smoothing the path towards new force geographies.
- Identify opportunities to deliver a **pathfinder merger this parliament**, to make progress towards our ultimate ambition for fewer, larger forces.

<sup>40</sup> The Home Office (2025), [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2025 \(second edition\)](#) - GOV.UK (viewed on 22 January 2026)

<sup>41</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales: Police Force Area data tables](#) - Office for National Statistics (viewed on 22 January 2026)

<sup>42</sup> As of March 2025, Warwickshire Police had 1,141 FTE police officers, against Greater Manchester Police with 8,156 FTE officers"

## **The case for fewer police forces**

143. There are five reasons for moving to fewer police forces. First, the current structure is highly inefficient, with each of the 43 forces having its own headquarters, management teams, operational and business support functions and many specialist capabilities. These costs are particularly high in smaller forces, some of whom are struggling to maintain financial resilience.
144. Second, it is ineffective to disperse specialist policing functions across a large number of police forces. The evidence suggests that concentrating functions such as cybercrime, firearms, major crime and roads policing in fewer 'centres of excellence' will improve learning and development by bringing together expertise and will enable better targeting of resource, with specialist units being deployed across a wider area.
145. Third, the current model results in wide variation in service quality, with victims' experiences and investigative outcomes differing markedly depending on geographic location. Fewer forces will enable higher-quality investigations and more consistent support for victims, helping to bring offenders to justice and rebuild public trust.
146. Fourth, larger forces are better equipped to respond to major incidents and mass-deployment events. Currently, smaller forces routinely struggle to handle major crime investigations or respond to critical incidents, often relying on mutual aid from others.
147. Finally, it is harder to achieve national coordination and collaboration in a system with 86 decision-makers (Chief Constables and PCCs).
148. Moving to a system of fewer police forces will therefore improve policing for the public by: 1) saving money through reduced duplication and management costs, 2) providing a more effective service in areas such as major crime, roads policing and firearms, 3) helping to ensure more consistency in the service the public receive from the police, 4) equipping local policing with a greater ability to surge resource and respond to major events, and 5) making it easier to coordinate and collaborate across forces nationally.

## **Strengthening local policing**

149. Local policing will continue to be delivered through Local Policing Areas (LPAs), tailored to local geographies and communities. These local areas will deliver the majority of the policing the public see and experience - emergency response, crime investigation, neighbourhood policing, and safeguarding our

most vulnerable. We envisage that these LPAs will operate at the level of local towns, cities and boroughs, but the precise geography will be examined by the Independent Review of Force Structures (see below).

150. By moving to a streamlined structure of fewer forces, we can reduce duplication and bureaucracy at higher levels, freeing up resources and capacity for the frontline. The money saved will be reinvested in local frontline policing. This means preserving strong local policing teams that will have more time to focus on what matters most to communities: visible patrols, rapid response, effective problem solving and building trust with residents.
151. In line with our Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, locally officers will remain visible, accessible and responsive. Building relationships, understanding local priorities and delivering the personalised policing service that the public expects and deserves.

### **An independent review**

152. We recognise that mergers are complex and have been attempted before. These proposals for significant structural reform will naturally be of interest to officers, staff and communities. That is why we will take the opportunity to work with policing stakeholders to co-design the right geographies, informed by those who know the system best.
153. To start this process, we will set up an independent review of police structures immediately which will report in the summer. The independent review will examine the optimal configuration of regional police forces and the best approach to implementation.
154. Led by an independent chair, this review will engage closely with policing and other stakeholders, drawing on the expertise and experience of frontline officers as well as operational leaders and other representative bodies. It will examine how police forces across England and Wales should be structured; timing and delivery options, including how to make progress towards an end-state in this parliament; and suitable governance arrangements for fewer larger forces, among other topics.
155. In considering the optimal configuration of police forces and the best approach to implementation, consideration will be given to alignment with other public sector boundaries, including local government and criminal justice. Particular thought will be given by the review to coterminosity with existing and potential Mayoral Strategic Authorities and Foundation Strategic Authorities. This recognises the model of police governance provided by a single mayor being

responsible for oversight of a police force in promoting joined up working to cut crime, reintegrating policing into local government structures and providing that critical local accountability to ensure policing is responsive to local needs.

156. The review's recommendations will inform the final design and delivery of the new forces, ensuring the reform programme is evidence-based and responsive to stakeholder input. The full Terms of Reference of the review will be published, and we expect the review to report in Summer 2026.
157. To make progress towards achieving this ambition, we will simplify the Home Secretary's powers to alter force boundaries. We will also take advice from the independent review on where mergers may be achievable this parliament and deliver these as pathfinders towards the end-state. We will stand up a delivery programme equipped to deliver the full suite of mergers by the end of the next parliament.
158. To achieve this ambitious reform, we will require close collaboration with policing leaders, local partners and crucially police officers and staff. It's only with their practical knowledge and understanding that we can we build a policing system that is sustainable, effective and trusted by the public.

## **Part 2. The National Police Service**

159. To create a police system that is better able to cut crime and provide a consistently high standard of service to the public, we will establish a National Police Service (NPS). The NPS will replace the large number of organisations at the centre of policing with a single national police force. The NPS will do four things:

- i. Provide clearer strategic leadership for the police service, replacing the large number of existing bodies with overlapping remits. It will set strategy, ensure the delivery of national priorities, provide policing with a single source of policy and guidance and constitute a single national voice to improve communication with the public.
- ii. Set stronger national standards, ensuring a more consistent service is received by the public regardless of where they live. In place of the many existing national bodies whose powers are weak and fragmented, the NPS will be empowered to set standards in the national interest on data, technology and training.
- iii. Provide a suite of enabling and support services to local forces. Through national procurement the NPS will buy technology and equipment once rather than 43 different ways, saving money through economies of scale. It will also enable the more rapid deployment of the latest technologies to cut crime and protect the public. This will include a more consistent and resilient national forensics service.
- iv. Strengthen our ability to tackle serious and organised crime and threats to national security. By bringing together CTP, the NCA, and ROCUs into a new national police force, we will be better able to share technology, intelligence and people across the range of serious threats we face. Local police forces will be more focused on serving their local communities, while the NPS will protect us all.

We will:

- Provide a stronger policing system by **establishing a new national police force, the National Police Service (NPS)**.
- Empower the NPS to provide a single source of **strategic leadership** for the police service and **set standards** in areas like data, technology and training.
- Bring together the delivery of national **enabling capabilities** within the NPS (e.g. consolidating delivery and oversight of national IT and commercial services).
- Consolidate accountabilities and decision-making authority for the delivery of police forensics in the NPS and establish the legal mandate to **deliver forensics as a national service** to policing and ultimately benefit victims and the criminal justice system.
- In the final phase expand the NPS to be the single national **operational law enforcement body**, including Counter-Terrorism Policing, the National Crime Agency, Regional Organised Crime Units, and the Senior National Coordinator role for public order policing.

## The case for change

160. The national tier of policing needs reform because:

- i. There are currently too many organisations at the centre, creating overlap and confusion,
- ii. Few of the organisations at the centre have any real powers over local Chief Constables. As a result, the centre is weak and has to rely on voluntary agreement to deliver major programmes or joint operations,
- iii. The delivery of key areas of national coordination, such as in digital, data and technology, are reliant on insufficient part time leadership by local Chief Constables,
- iv. The response to serious and organised crime and threats to national security is strong, but is provided by a range of different organisations, including the NCA, CTP, ROCUs and City of London Police. As threats have evolved and become more interconnected, a more joined-up response is needed.

## **The functions of the NPS**

161. The NPS will provide four functions: strategic leadership, standard setting, enabling and support services, and the operational response to serious, cross-border and technology-enabled crime.

### **Strategic leadership**

162. The NPS will provide policing with a single strategic centre. It will:
- i. Develop a plan to ensure that policing delivers the National Strategic Policing Priorities (see paragraph 188),
  - ii. Use police data and undertake analysis to inform evidence-based policy and better target operational effort in the smartest way,
  - iii. Provide a single home for the development of a strategic approach to workforce planning, learning and development, digital, data and technology, and procurement and efficiencies,
  - iv. Enable more coordination to deliver priorities across the system, by bringing together standards, training and technology to drive improvement,
  - v. Have a strategic foresight function to better enable policing to look ahead and plan for the challenges of the future,
  - vi. Provide policing with a single national voice to improve communication with the public.
163. As part of this development of a stronger strategic centre for policing, the NPS will take on the coordination roles that currently exist within the NPCC. In the new system the NPCC will become a Chief Constables' Council which will continue to provide a representative voice for local police chiefs.

### **Standard setting**

164. The NPS will have a key role in ensuring that policing delivers a consistently high standard of service to the public. Since 2012 much of this function has been performed by the College of Policing. In recent years the College has led on raising professional standards, enhancing police leadership, supporting innovation and promoting evidence as to what works. We will build on this work but integrate it more fully with the rest of policing. The College in its entirety will be brought into the NPS. We envisage that the NPS will have powers to set mandatory standards in areas such as Authorised Professional Practice (APP), learning and development, qualifications frameworks, and digital, data and technology. We will ensure the independence of the standard setting function is supported through the governance and legal foundation of the NPS.

## Enabling and support services

165. The NPS will better equip police officers and staff with the tools they need to discharge their duties, drive efficiencies in the policing system, reduce duplication and improve force interoperability. This will be achieved by taking on responsibility for existing shared services, national IT capabilities and force-hosted national capabilities such as the National Police Air Service. The NPS will host a new national forensics service, standardising the service offered, reducing backlogs and delays in managing vital forensic evidence, and freeing up officer time to better support victims and build confidence across the criminal justice system.
166. We have already mobilised an ambitious Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (PECP) to deliver better value for money in police procurement. The PECP will drive the delivery of significant cashable efficiencies of around £350 million by the end of this parliament, and the NPS will support its long-term sustainability through bringing together enabling services into this single body. It will deliver commercial efficiencies, improved productivity, and new technology capabilities, achieving better savings and services for the public. As part of this Blue Light Commercial and the Police Digital Service will be rolled into the NPS.
167. At an appropriate point, we will migrate other organisations into the National Police Service, including:
- i. The National County Lines Coordination Centre to develop the national intelligence picture, strengthen and co-ordinate the police response to county lines including the violence and exploitation associated with this complex, cross-border issue,
  - ii. The newly established National Knife Crime Coordination Centre, which is focusing on online illegal knife and weapon sites and supply, will move to the National Police Service at a future date.

### Box 1. Spotlight on Forensics

Forensic evidence is vital to prevent crime, prosecute or eliminate suspects, and give victims the justice they deserve. It includes 'traditional' forensic evidence such as DNA and drug analysis, as well as digital forensic evidence like mobile phone photos and messages, emails or computer evidence. We estimate that there are 4000 police forensic practitioners and policing spends approximately £550 million per year on forensics<sup>43</sup>. However, the current, fragmented system where each of the 43 forces decide how to deliver and fund forensics individually means efficiencies of scale are lost, administrative costs are higher than they need be and

<sup>43</sup> Estimated staffing data supplied by the Forensic Capability Network and estimated 2023/2024 financial data provided by police forces.



it is slower than it should be to identify and drive adoption of promising new techniques.

We will consolidate decision making authority for the delivery of police forensics under the NPS and establish the legal mandate for a national lead to deliver all forensics as a service to policing and better support victims and build confidence across the criminal justice system. We will consider how to include wider law enforcement as part of these reforms. This will be taken forward in close collaboration with policing, private and academic sectors, forensic practitioners and criminal justice partners.

Reforming police forensics into a nationally managed capability will allow new technologies and best practices to be rolled out faster and more consistently. This is crucial for digital forensics where the pace of change is relentless. Consolidation will result in a national forensic service that is more responsive to changes in crime and science, resulting in a timely, high quality, impartial and cost effective service for all policing and victims of crime, regardless of which force area they are in.

We will empower the NPS to:

1. Deliver forensic services to police forces and potentially wider law enforcement, empowered with the requisite levers,
2. Work in partnership with police forces and the commercial market to drive efficiency and innovation,
3. Remove inefficiencies that arise from the fragmented current approach including in administration overheads,
4. Drive compliance with the Forensic Science Regulator's code and ensure the efficient delivery of high-quality forensic evidence that engenders the trust and confidence of criminal justice stakeholders.

## Operational functions

168. To enhance coordination, reduce duplication and improve effectiveness, we will gradually migrate the full suite of national police operational functions into the NPS. It will take on the range of operational functions that currently sit with lead forces, coordinated through the NPCC<sup>44</sup>.
169. In its final state, CTP, the NCA and national facing capabilities within the ROCUs will be brought into the NPS. These are mature and well-regarded capabilities that play a critical role in keeping the public safe. We will build on their success by bringing them into closer strategic alignment. This will deliver several benefits:

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<sup>44</sup> The valuable role that the City of London Police fulfil as a lead force for Economic Crime, Fraud, and Cyber will need to be carefully considered in this new model.

- i. With an ever-changing threat picture there is evidence of increasing overlap across different crime types. Bringing these functions together will provide policing with greater agility to keep pace with these threats,
- ii. Bringing together the workforces of these different organisations and networks in a single body will enable greater sharing of people across the threat picture,
- iii. Instead of building data and intelligence capabilities in different places, there should be significant gains from placing them in a single organisational home, and
- iv. It will enable the growing international dimension of these crime types to be managed more coherently, recognising that most other countries deal with terrorism, state threats and serious and organised crime in the same law enforcement body, and improving its ability to act globally to reduce crime locally.

170. We will implement this change in phases, working with CTP, the NCA and ROCUs to agree when the transition of major capabilities should take place. For that transition to take place, the NPS will need to be mature and ready, and operational disruption must be avoided. We would expect that point to be reached early in the next Parliament. We will introduce legislation to enable that change to take place at a future date. In advance of these capabilities coming into the NPS, we will undertake a programme to strengthen joint working across these threat areas.

171. For CTP, a transition into the NPS will be designed to deliver a better response to national security threats, including more flexible resources, shared capabilities and greater interoperability. We will agree an approach which sustains the 'golden thread' connecting the local, regional and national tiers of policing. We will ensure the leadership and governance arrangements in the NPS enables effective management of highly sensitive operational matters so that CTP can continue to work effectively with partners to keep the country safe. The new arrangements will recognise the distinct features of CTP's work to counter threats from terrorists, state actors and others, including the highly sensitive nature of its work and close partnership with the UK intelligence community. The new arrangements will ensure that policing can continue to provide a level of assurance against terrorist and state threats in line with the risk appetite determined by the National Security Council, including through the maintenance of ringfenced budgets where required. Crucially, the new arrangements will also enable CTP to better attract, direct and retain a highly vetted workforce comprised of police officers, staff and secondees. The National Police Service will put CTP on a firm legal footing, ending the opt out nature of collaboration, and ensure that the regional tier of CTP capability is under the direction and control of the National Police Service, reducing complexity in decision making, legal risk and fragmentation of control.

172. For the NCA moving into the NPS offers an opportunity to build on its successes in tackling Serious and Organised Crime (SOC). The NCA is a vital leader in our efforts to tackle SOC, but its work could be strengthened by improving the alignment between national, regional and local priorities, by greater interoperability and technology and capability development with CTP, and by ensuring it has a competitive pay structure. We will agree an approach that sustains a number of the NCA's strengths: its ability to lead the operational system, including its legal powers to task police forces, its role in analysing and presenting the national intelligence picture on serious and organised crime, its legal gateway to receive data and information from Section 7 of the Crime and Courts Act, its experience of working with the private sector to prevent crime and pursue criminals, its provision of an intercept capability and an international network that serve all of policing, a workforce model that brings together talent from all sectors of society, and an ability to work right across the UK. The move of the NCA into the NPS provides the opportunity to apply these strengths, where appropriate, to other crime types.
173. Under the new model, the NPS will include Regional Crime Hubs (RCH). These will contain those capabilities from the existing ROCUs that deal with national and cross border serious and organised crime threats. This will create a single, joined-up system with stronger leadership, clearer accountability, and better use of specialist skills and resources. It means faster, more coordinated action is taken against criminal networks and a safer, more secure future for communities across the UK. In the end state, the NPS's Regional Crime Hubs will be on the same boundaries as the new merged forces and the two will be interoperable and often co-located. We anticipate that the locally-facing capabilities that currently sit within the ROCUs will sit with the merged police forces, but there will be close cooperation between the forces and the NPS in tackling serious and organised crime.
174. Responsibility for fraud, economic and cybercrime will move into the NPS with the NCA, and the NPS will be the lead agency for these crimes. We recognise the specialist expertise of the City of London Police in tackling fraud. It currently hosts Report Fraud and other specialist units and capabilities. Subject to the findings of the independent review of force structures (Chapter Three), we will assess whether these specialist services should transfer to the NPS or could be delegated and continue to be delivered by the City of London Police under NPS direction.

## **National Police Service governance**

175. To ensure that the NPS can take on these key functions, we will establish it as a police force made up of officers and specialist staff who will have the powers they need to deliver their key functions. We will review the workforce model of the NPS to ensure it builds on the best of policing and the NCA, and is fit for the challenges of the future. To that end, it should from day one recognise the accreditations and experience of all officers and specialist staff who form the new service, allow for the designation of the full range of powers, and provide career pathways that promote movement across roles and a 'one workforce' culture.
176. We envisage that, as a police force, it will be led by an operationally independent police officer, known as the National Police Commissioner, who will direct and have control of their officers and other staff, in the same way as a Chief Constable. Given the breadth of responsibilities, the organisation at senior officer level and board representation will have technology and transformation expertise, to ensure the NPS can drive innovation and interoperability across policing. The nature of policing national security threats means that while CTP will be an integral part of the NPS governance structure, there remains a need for a clear leadership figure for CTP activity. They would be appropriately empowered to have direction and control of all CTP activity, and responsive to appropriate governance structures, which enable the protection of national security equities.
177. The Home Secretary will hold the NPS to account for delivery, as she is accountable to Parliament for policing in England and Wales. The Home Secretary will be empowered to issue directions to the NPS to provide assistance to other forces.
178. In order to maintain a strong connection between the local and the national, the voices of local Chief Constables and local police governance bodies should form part of the tripartite governance of the NPS. Operational decisions will rest with the National Police Commissioner.

179. To ensure that the voice of local policing can be used to support the NPS in the exercise of its functions, we will strengthen the decision-making arrangements of the APCC and the NPCC (or their successor bodies) to enable local police governance bodies and Chief Constables to provide a collective view. Relevant representative organisations must be able to make decisions on behalf of their entire membership on appropriate issues. However, these organisations must also have the flexibility to do this in a way which works for them and, most importantly, for their memberships. These steps will ensure the system can continually capture the voices of community policing, incorporating the local voice at the national level.
180. In delivering the National Police Service, the Government will continue to work closely with PSNI, Police Scotland and the Devolved Governments in Northern Ireland and Scotland on counter-terrorism and serious and organised crime, recognising that policing is a devolved matter in those nations.

## **Box 2. Spotlight on public order policing**

As was the case during the summer disorder of 2024, all too often data and intelligence sharing during serious disorder is too slow<sup>45</sup>. The ad hoc, informal nature of mutual aid assistance has, for far too long, been inadequate against the pressures the police face in a serious disorder situation, and the need to mobilise sufficient resource quickly to bring an end to disorder. For policing to be more effective in responding to instances of widespread disorder, we need better coordination across forces.

### *Measure 1: The senior national coordinator for Public Order Policing*

We will introduce a senior national coordinator role for public order policing, with the authority to: 1) maintain, prepare, test and activate the National Mobilisation Plan, 2) determine nationally where to send resources under mutual aid arrangements, 3) require forces to supply resources through mutual aid during disorder, 4) set the strategic plan that forces must follow, 5) activate a requirement for forces to share data into NPoCC (National Police Coordination Centre) during extreme disorder situations, and 6) monitor and implement recommendations made by HMICFRS relevant to public order policing.

They will not be responsible for local public order responses, which remain within the remit of Chief Constables, and instead sit at a higher strategic level of oversight, with responsibility for decision making over mobilisation and resourcing within policing.

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<sup>45</sup> [An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024: Tranche 1: An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024: Tranche 2](#)

The role of the senior national coordinator for Public Order Policing will reinforce the distinction between public order policing and counter-terrorism policing, with the NPS operational structure maintaining a separation between the two and being governed accordingly.

We will work with policing to resolve the question of accountability at the local level when national coordination requires resources to be moved elsewhere on mutual aid; as well as national accountability for the decisions taken by the senior national coordinator role.

*Measure 2: Enhancing the National Police Coordination Centre*

In a widespread disorder incident, it is critical that the NPoCC and the NPCC have a clear, live picture, so that the policing response is timely, coordinated and proportionate. We will work closely with the senior national coordinator role to ensure that measures to strengthen the centre of public order policing are effective and deliverable within reformed structures.

It is essential that the police have the tools they need to tackle disorder effectively. We will provide £2.75 million of new funding for a new NPCC data cell and enhanced capabilities to strengthen the NPoCC's intelligence, investigation, and co-ordination. The new data cell will collect, analyse, and share relevant data to enhance situational awareness for policing and the Home Office. The NPoCC will move into the NPS at an appropriate point. This work to enhance the NPoCC's capabilities will build upon other activity to improve intelligence sharing and management through a refresh of the National Intelligence Model. Our ambition is to work with partners across government to deploy the latest tools and techniques to obtain, analyse and exploit intelligence data.

### **Part 3. Police Funding**

181. The Government recognises that transforming policing will require investment. That is why since being elected the government has invested close to £2bn additional funding to police forces, and announced real terms increases in funding for policing across the Spending Review period.
182. A new policing system will require a new system of police funding. The current funding system is complex, outdated and the product of legacy decisions rather than strategic design. The changes to police governance, force mergers and the creation of the NPS will require a new approach to allocating funding that aligns with these new structures. We will therefore revise the police funding system in line with the reforms set out above, and ensure the Police Funding Settlement is better configured to deliver the Government's priorities for policing.
183. There have been several calls to review the police funding formula and we recognise those concerns. To maximise the value the public gets from the funding the government provides for police forces, it needs to be allocated fairly and effectively. In the last twenty years, the nature of demand on the police has evolved and the crimes the police are fighting has changed. Funding for core policing functions has also become increasingly complex, making it more challenging for forces to plan for the longer term.
184. Where previous Governments failed to deliver on repeated promises to reform police funding, we will not shy away from this reform. We intend to review the police funding formula and the distribution of funding to local forces. To reflect a new policing system, this must be done following the implementation of policing reforms and in a way that reflects the force-level impacts this will have. The new policing structures will take time to implement and a future funding formula review will take into account those new structures.
185. In the interim, our first priority must be to maintain a robust police funding system which offers the correct incentives, provides clear lines of accountability, ensures the best possible use of public money and above all maintains the safety of the public. We will work in partnership with policing to explore the structure and scope of the police settlement and consider what steps can be taken in the short term to better align funding allocations with this Government's policing priorities. This will include looking at further consolidation and simplification of grants, reviewing grant conditions and the purpose of core funding for policing.

# Chapter 4: Consistently high standards

## Part 1. A more active Home Office

186. The Home Secretary is ultimately responsible to Parliament for cutting crime, protecting the public and upholding national security. Given these responsibilities, the public expects the Home Secretary to actively support the police to deliver on national policing priorities and to mitigate risks to public safety and national security threats. The Home Secretary will provide policing with active leadership which includes setting a clear strategic direction and using new and existing intervention powers where necessary to drive improvement.

We will:

- **Set clear National Strategic Policing Priorities** and streamline direction-setting documents to provide clear strategic direction for the policing system, linked to measurable outcomes and targets embedded in a new Performance Framework.
- Fundamentally reform the Policing Protocol to **articulate the roles and responsibilities of all policing leaders** within the reformed system.
- Solidify the boundaries of **operational independence** and clarify the appropriate use of the Home Secretary's **powers to intervene** to support improvement within policing where necessary.

## Setting Direction

187. Policing leaders' efforts to drive improvement across the system are currently fragmented between disjointed priorities set across different products. This includes the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) which sets out what, in the Home Secretary's view, are the national threats and appropriate national policing capabilities to counter those threats. While Chief Constables and PCCs must 'have regard' to the SPR, the current oversight mechanisms provide limited assurance that the SPR is being implemented and monitoring of force progress against it is limited. This affects the Home Office's ability to drive progress and hold forces to account. Greater central direction must be provided to give police leaders clarity on priorities.



188. We will fundamentally reform the priority-setting landscape by establishing a single set of 'National Strategic Policing Priorities' (NSPP) issued by the Home Secretary to unite policing around a single vision for improvement and reduce unacceptable variation in standards. The NSPP will integrate the national threats and capabilities set out in the SPR, alongside other key strategic priorities that require a greater level of local focus, such as the Safer Streets Mission. The NSPP will bring clarity to the fragmented landscape of priority setting, provide policing and the public with a clearer set of national priorities, while recognising that local policing bodies will have local priorities to focus on.
189. We will introduce a duty to comply with the NSPP which will be reinforced by embedding measurable priority outcomes within a new Performance Framework (see paragraph 202), alongside other metrics that demonstrate good performance within policing.
190. We will ensure that the NSPP is comprehensive and supports policing to take a coordinated approach to delivery. In addition to setting national priorities, the NSPP will provide policing with guidance on how system leaders and forces are expected to drive these priorities forward. It will reference the data and transparency principles needed to develop best practice and improve performance, and signpost other crime specific strategies.

## **A Whole System Approach**

191. The Policing Protocol sets out how the governance relationships and responsibilities within policing should work. To facilitate an effective whole system approach to delivering improvement, we will work with policing leaders to overhaul the Policing Protocol, extending its remit. The new Protocol will:
- i. Distinguish the roles and responsibilities of every policing leader and outline how they should work together to drive improvement to provide a clear articulation of the expectations of them in the reformed policing system.
  - ii. Reinforce the expectation that relevant policing leaders have a duty to comply with the NSPP when creating their body's strategy to ensure alignment in work across the system.
  - iii. Set a clear expectation that the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), the College of Policing (later NPS) and HMICFRS should continue to work closely together on thematic issues affecting policing and that they should have regard to other bodies' recommendations. We will also work with HMICFRS to extend its monitoring portal to collate and monitor not only its own recommendations, but also those of the IOPC and the standards and guidance set by the College of Policing (later NPS).

- iv. Reflect the Home Secretary's role in providing stronger direction from the centre to drive the improvements needed across policing.
- v. Clarify the appropriate use of the Home Secretary's intervention powers.

## **Operational Independence and Intervention Powers**

192. The operational independence of the police is a longstanding and fundamental principle of British policing. It ensures that Chief Constables, who are to perform their role without fear or favour, maintain direction and control over their police force<sup>46</sup>. HMICFRS has identified the need for greater clarity on the boundary of police operational independence and appropriate external influence or accountability<sup>47</sup>.
193. Chief Constables must be empowered to do the difficult job of keeping people safe, and be assured that no elected official will direct them on whether or how to conduct an operation or intervene in the investigation of a crime. The new Protocol will ensure that operational independence is maintained, while providing the public with assurance that, where necessary, the Home Secretary will provide direction and support to drive improvements in performance, address systemic challenges and respond to public safety and national security risks.
194. To achieve this, the Home Secretary requires the right set of powers to intervene in the policing system where necessary. We will strengthen powers to intervene in performance<sup>48</sup>, standards, and data<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>46</sup> Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act (2011), [S. 2 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act](#)

<sup>47</sup> HMICFRS (2024), [An inspection into activism and impartiality in policing - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#) (viewed on 4 November 2025)

<sup>48</sup> See Chapter Four on Improving Police Performance and Chapter Three on 'Chief Constables appointments, suspensions and dismissals'.

<sup>49</sup> See Chapter Five 'Unleashing the power of our people through data and technology'.

## Part 2. Improving police performance

195. Policing is a unique and essential public service that relies on the dedication and courage of thousands of officers and staff. While the public are grateful to them for all that they do, they also have high expectations of those whose duty it is to keep them safe.
196. However, these expectations are not always being met. Public confidence in the police, while higher than in other parts of the public sector<sup>50</sup>, has fallen<sup>51</sup>. Victim satisfaction<sup>52</sup> has also declined. The Government has confirmed a real terms increase in police spending power over the next three financial years and it is vital that this investment is accompanied by a clear focus on improving performance and public trust within a system that maximises public value and is underpinned by transparency, accountability and legitimacy.
197. We will reform the police performance landscape, establishing system-wide performance standards to ensure that all police forces across England and Wales are delivering high-quality and consistent services for local communities. Better comparative performance information available to forces and local policing bodies will enable them to use their resources to operate as efficiently and effectively as possible. A more active, 'hands on' Home Office will set a clear strategic direction from the centre and work in partnership with police organisations such as HMICFRS and the College of Policing (later the NPS), to have greater grip and oversight of the performance landscape, driving improvements and directing support and intervention to where it is needed.

### The current performance monitoring landscape

198. Delivering the Safer Streets Mission requires better oversight of force-level and system performance, underpinned by good quality data and robust performance management. However, the current performance management system is fragmented and, without sufficient sector join-up and coordination, there is limited ability to assess or compare overall performance or identify areas for longer-term improvement.

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<sup>50</sup> Eurobarometer data (2025), [Eurobarometer: Standard eurobarometer data](#) (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>51</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables - Office for National Statistics](#), Table s4 (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>52</sup> Office for National Statistics (2025), [Crime in England and Wales: Annual supplementary tables - Office for National Statistics](#), Table s13 (viewed on 21 January 2026)

199. The limited availability of high-quality, consistent data between forces makes reporting or performance analysis across forces or at government level extremely challenging. Without sufficient capability and capacity to analyse, interpret or use performance data, the system can neither make informed strategic or operational decisions nor identify and deliver wider performance improvements.
200. We will address these fundamental weaknesses, transforming the performance landscape to provide stronger oversight, scrutiny and grip of police performance combined with earlier support to address problems. We will provide a clearer understanding of where forces are performing well or need to improve and will strengthen the levers to support forces to achieve the necessary change.

### **Our vision for the future**

201. The Government is committed to taking a more active leadership role in police performance. It will work in close collaboration with the police service to drive up force-level and system-wide standards and performance to deliver for victims of crime and the wider public.

We will:

- Implement a **new Police Performance Framework** to provide a shared picture of comparative force performance, taking account of the wider landscape and the activities of partner organisations, where possible.
- Introduce a **new tiered performance system** to identify and support improvement within under-performing forces, with appropriate mechanisms for earlier support and intervention where performance is declining or of concern, as well as identifying areas of best practice. These mechanisms will range from increased support from the College of Policing, the embedding of 'turnaround teams' and, in the most severe cases, new powers for HMICFRS to take action with failing forces backed up by the exercising of Home Secretary intervention powers where required.
- Set up a **new Home Office Police Performance Improvement Unit** that will ensure stronger central Government oversight, the improved ability to hold forces to account on behalf of the public, and support closer working with HMICFRS, the assurance and scrutiny functions of local policing bodies, and the College of Policing to assess police performance and drive improvement.
- Establish **new policing guarantees** that set out the minimum level of service the public can expect to receive from the police wherever in England and Wales they live.

## The new Police Performance Framework

202. We have established a new Police Performance Framework, designed in collaboration with the policing sector, which we are publishing in parallel with this White Paper. It will provide a long overdue shared, consistent picture of crime and policing activity. It will include broad measures to assess and improve police performance and standards across England and Wales, incorporating the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee performance framework to support public safety.

203. The new Police Performance Framework will ensure consistent reporting and analysis of police performance and enable greater oversight of performance to ensure that all forces are delivering the standards that victims and the wider public expect of them.

204. We will explore whether we can gather further data to support local policing bodies (Mayors and PCCs and, in due course, new Policing and Crime Boards) to collaborate with local partners to deliver better partnership working and to achieve better outcomes in areas such as crime prevention and public safety. We will similarly explore whether additions to the framework will support better cross-departmental working within national government to improve public safety outcomes.
205. An initial Police Performance Dashboard will be introduced for the sector early in 2026. The Dashboard will enhance the policing system's ability to self-improve, empowering Chief Constables and local policing bodies to deliver improvements locally by enabling them to analyse transparent, high-quality and operationally significant data. Their ability to understand how their force performs against other forces, particularly similar ones, will strengthen understanding of where they are performing well and where they can learn from practice in other forces to improve.
206. The Home Office will publish performance data so that the public can see how their force is performing, compare it to other forces and hold their local policing body to account.
207. Following its introduction, we will develop the Police Performance Framework in close collaboration with the sector addressing gaps in the availability of high-quality, comparable data. We will incorporate further metrics to monitor the measurable outcomes linked to the future NSPP as data quality and consistency allows.

## **New Local Policing Guarantees**

208. The decline of victim satisfaction and public confidence in the police demonstrates that more must be done to ensure forces and policing leaders are held accountable for the level of service provided to the public. We have already established a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee which sets out what communities should expect from their neighbourhood policing team. As set out in Chapter Two, neighbourhood policing teams are now undertaking visible patrols and engaging with residents and business.

209. Following the success of the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, we will establish new Local Policing Guarantees that set out the minimum levels of service the public should expect to receive from their police force wherever in England and Wales they live. These will build on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and cover areas such as how the police will rapidly and effectively respond when the public need them, how victims of crime will be treated in accordance with the Victims' Code of Practice and public protection.
210. The Government will set specific targets for police forces to monitor the delivery of these Local Policing Guarantees through the police performance framework, starting with how rapidly the police respond to the public. Forces will be set a target to answer 90% of 999 calls within 10 seconds – an established standard within policing but one that more than a quarter of police forces in England and Wales failed to meet between September-November 2025 . HMICFRS recommended, in July 2023, that the National Police Chief's Council should agree a standard approach for measuring attendance time and set a national standard. Police do not routinely publish response data but, in the latest assessments by HMICFRS, 30 of 43 forces had an area for improvement or cause of concern related to attendance times. We will set a target for forces to attend 90% of the most serious incidents within 15 minutes in urban area or 20 minutes in rural areas.
211. Further performance targets will be developed as part of future iterations of the Performance Framework in order to support Local Policing Guarantees to the public on other measures such as victim satisfaction, trust and confidence, and public protection, as standards are set and the data is improved.
212. Local policing bodies and chief officers will set local priorities for their areas building on the minimum level of service that forces will be expected to deliver under the guarantees.
213. To ensure forces are meeting standards set out in the policing guarantee, a range of monitoring methods will be used to assess performance against each guarantee. The Police Performance Framework will be used alongside relevant information from HMICFRS' independent PEEL inspections to enable monitor of performance against the policing guarantees and performance targets.
214. The Government will continue to work in collaboration with HMICFRS to ensure the new Police Performance System is being used effectively to address failures to meet the Local Policing Guarantees. As referenced in Chapter Five, work with the wider policing sector will continue to ensure data standards are established where needed and data are of an appropriate quality to inform reporting against targets, as well as to provide assurances that indicators selected will provide an accurate representation of police performance.

215. The Government will ensure that local policing bodies and chief officers take performance targets into account in the delivery of their functions and will take action where they are failing to meet the targets set. This could be through the re-introduction of a legislative power to establish levels of performance for policing priorities, or through the inclusion of targets in the forthcoming National Strategic Policing Priorities.

### **New powers for HMICFRS**

216. HMICFRS routinely inspects forces on their effectiveness and efficiency. While many forces have improved in response to HMICFRS' findings, they are not obliged to accept or implement their recommendations even when they are on significant issues concerning public safety. The Government will strengthen HMICFRS' ability to intervene in failing forces by giving new powers to His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary to issue directions when police forces do not adequately act upon HMICFRS' recommendations. Use of these powers will be with the Home Secretary's agreement, ensuring there are appropriate checks and balances. We envisage these being used only where HMICFRS has identified a significant risk to public safety and forces have not shown sufficient evidence of addressing this concern within a reasonable timeframe. Chief Constables, working to their local policing bodies, will remain responsible for implementing the recommendations.
217. While local policing bodies must respond to HMICFRS' reports, the current system does not give the public adequate transparency on the actions taken to address long-term recommendations. We will therefore take further steps to improve local policing body responses to HMICFRS reports. Local policing bodies should, as a part of their annual reports, include a narrative on any relevant outstanding recommendations and the work they are doing with the force to implement them. To ensure timely transparency, the current duty for local policing bodies to initially respond to reports within 56 days will remain. However, to enable local policing bodies to respond effectively the Home Office will issue guidance on the intended purpose and ideal contents of these responses.
218. There is no duty for other policing bodies to respond to HMICFRS' recommendations, despite their ability to drive positive change in the policing system. We will ensure that others in the sector, including the College of Policing and the NPCC, respond to recommendations.



## **Home Secretary Powers and the Local Government-Style Intervention Model**

219. The success of the new police performance system relies heavily on the cooperation of Chief Constables. Where forces are willing to engage constructively, turnaround support and improvement can be delivered successfully. Yet, in exceptional circumstances when a force persistently fails to improve or refuses to engage with the support offered, the current arrangements may not be sufficient to secure the necessary change or to protect public safety.
220. In cases of persistent and systemic failings, existing levers may fall short. To address this, the Government is going to introduce a local intervention model to policing, like that which is used in other public services. Under such a model, intervention leads may be appointed to take responsibility for turning around failing forces, providing focused leadership and oversight where local arrangements have failed. This approach has been used successfully in sectors such as local government, health and education to drive rapid improvement and restore public confidence.
221. As we announced on 14 January, the Government is reintroducing a power for the Home Secretary to remove a Chief Constable on performance grounds. Unlike other public services, policing does not currently provide for direct intervention by the Secretary of State in the leadership of a failing service. Before 2011, the Home Secretary could require a Police Authority to exercise its power to call on a Chief Constable to retire or resign in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness. This power was repealed by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, transferring the responsibility to Local Policing Bodies. Reinstating such a power would ensure that, where systemic failings persist and local leadership is unable or unwilling to address them, the Home Secretary can take decisive action. This power would be used in cases of serious, persistent and systemic failings or lack of engagement with intervention and support, in line with the new Policing Protocol. The intention is not to undermine local accountability, but to provide a safety net where local mechanisms have failed. The power will include appropriate safeguards, with checks and balances to protect operational independence and local accountability.

## **A new Home Office Police Performance Improvement Unit**

222. We have established a new Home Office Police Performance Improvement Unit, modelled on the Police Standards Unit first established in the Home Office by the then Home Secretary in 2001. The Unit will use high-quality police data to spot trends and drive-up system-wide standards, performance and consistency by delivering early support to forces demonstrating performance concerns. For example, this could include working with the College of Policing (and later the NPS) to co-ordinate peer-to-peer support or deliver intervention packages at a local level, in addition to identifying and building on best practice.

## **A new Tiered Performance System**

223. The Police Performance Framework will provide an agreed consistent picture of performance and a better basis for identifying and understanding performance concerns or positive practice. Forces will be assessed against a broad framework built with policing and HMICFRS inspection evidence that will also enable scrutiny of performance.
224. Where performance issues arise, a new, multi-tiered performance system (set out at the end of this chapter) will assign forces to a tier. This will reflect the level of performance concerns, and the appropriate support and intervention they need. Under this new multi-tiered approach, the Home Office will help forces to get appropriate support early when performance issues arise – e.g. from the College of Policing (later the NPS) or via peer-to-peer support. The Home Office will also ensure that proper scrutiny and intervention, including from or by the Home Secretary, happens for more complex or systemic issues.
225. Chief Constables will continue to have responsibility for maintaining ‘self-improvement’ and be responsible for the performance of their force at all tiers, held to account by local policing bodies. Forces will be escalated up the tiers subject to the severity of their performance issues and the forces’ and/or local policing body’s own success in addressing them adequately and promptly. Any assessment of force performance will consider the operation of the wider public sector and other organisations, which may enable or inhibit police performance.
226. A new Police Performance Monitoring Group overseeing all tiers of the performance system will be established to drive performance improvements, identify and interrogate issues, hold forces to account and identify positive practice. It will be chaired by His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary and will be made up of senior representatives from the Home Office, the NPCC, the APCC, the College of Policing, and the IOPC. In drawing conclusions and deciding on the escalation and de-escalation of a force, the Chair will consider the relevant performance data and evidence, and views and professional

expertise of the other representatives, and decide accordingly. This will be supplemented by HMICFRS' independent assessments of a force's performance to understand its operating context, including its community's unique needs, and the root causes behind performance challenges.

227. Where a force has persistent and serious performance concerns, the Police Performance Improvement Unit may convene a dedicated 'turnaround team', in consultation with stakeholders and the relevant force. This team will have the required skills and expertise to work with the relevant force and local policing body to address the underlying concerns, drawn from the College of Policing (or later the NPS), other forces or elsewhere across the system, and will be specifically designed around the context of that force. They will work with policing leaders to address performance concerns.
228. In exceptional circumstances where performance issues have not been successfully addressed or where widespread systemic failings or severe performance concerns exist, the Home Secretary will use intervention powers<sup>53</sup> to direct appropriate support or interventions in collaboration with the sector. As intervention powers have rarely been used in the past, greater clarity will be provided on when the system might expect these powers to be exercised as part of the tiered performance system, the conditions under which the Home Secretary will consider using them and how the required statutory tests might be met.
229. These arrangements will be adapted as the structure of policing in England and Wales evolves, as outlined in Chapter Three.

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<sup>53</sup> As set out in the Police Act 1996 and Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001

## Summary of the new tiered performance system

### Level 4 (Special Measures)

*Where force performance failings are very serious and there is insufficient evidence or confidence that the steps being taken to address them are having the desired effect. Forces will be subject to Special Measures and statutorily required to act on HMICFRS recommendations and may be subject to Home Secretary intervention powers.*



### Level 3

*Where forces have (i) a single, critical, enduring issue, (ii) widespread and/or systemic performance concerns, or (iii) fail to demonstrate meaningful improvements. Chief Constables will develop improvement plans and proposals for targeted support and intervention provided by the performance system.*



### Level 2

*Where forces have (i) enduring, low-level, non-systemic issues, (ii) receding issues which require oversight, or (iii) multiple, minor issues and Chief Constables and Local Policing Bodies can 'self-access' or request enhanced support from the performance system to prevent deterioration.*



### Level 1

*The default position for all forces. Forces may have minor, mitigated concerns but an overall positive trajectory to manage these as they seek to continuously improve. No action or intervention is required from the performance system. Chief Constables and Local Policing Bodies can request support from existing and new sources, where they identify performance concerns locally.*

## Part 3. Raising Individual Standards

230. All communities rightly expect the highest standards from the police officers tasked with keeping them safe. Everyday our police officers embody qualities such as courage, teamwork and a commitment to public service. This should be recognised and celebrated. However, high-profile incidents of police misconduct and criminality have brought to light evidence of persistent negative behaviour in policing. Many cases have highlighted discriminatory attitudes and behaviours such as misogyny, racism and homophobia. Multiple reports have pointed to systemic issues in police culture which enable such behaviours. While some of these reports have been force specific<sup>54 55</sup>, national reviews<sup>56</sup> have found a culture of apathy and/or intolerance in some areas, including behaviours like misogyny<sup>57</sup>.
231. Such findings may have contributed to the decline in confidence in the police since 2017/18<sup>58</sup>. Negative internal cultures can also result in a de-motivated workforce and a poorer level of service to the public, particularly for victims of crime. Positive experiences with the police are one of the biggest influences on public trust, which in turn can influence crime reporting and engagement with policing<sup>59</sup>.

### We will:

- Take **focused action to improve the culture of policing**, reforming the police vetting and misconduct systems and tackling unethical and discriminatory behaviour to improve the public experience of policing and to enable a healthy working environment within it.
- Work with the Independent Office for Police Conduct to **enhance accountability, scrutiny and transparency in the police complaints and misconduct system**; amending the current Governance structure and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in investigations.

<sup>54</sup> The IOPC (2022), '[Operation Hottan learning report](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>55</sup> Casey, L (2022-3), '[The Baroness Casey Review](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>56</sup> HMICFRS (2022), '[An inspection of vetting, misconduct, and misogyny in the police service](#)'

<sup>57</sup> Angiolini, E (2024) '[The Angiolini Inquiry Part 1 Report](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>58</sup> The Office for National Statistics (2025) '[Perception and experience of police and criminal justice system. England and Wales - Office for National Statistics](#)

March 2025 dataset, for the year ending March 2025 (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>59</sup> Home Office (2023) '[Public perceptions of policing: A review of research and literature](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

## **Vetting and misconduct**

232. A career in policing attracts some of the very best in our society. However, it can also attract those who seek to abuse the powers and privileges that come with the office of constable. This is why a strong vetting and oversight regime is vital to identify those who are unsuitable to be police officers. There must be clear standards for forces which ensure they focus on identifying individuals who could be a risk to the public, and particularly the most vulnerable. That is why we will, for the first time, introduce national mandatory vetting standards. We are also working with policing to deliver technological advancements which alert forces in real time to any warning signs about serving police officers.
233. Where adverse intelligence is identified, whether through vetting or complaints made by colleagues or the public, it must be acted on, and where officers fall well short of expectations, they must be dismissed. The Government has made it an absolute requirement for officers to hold vetting clearance, and enabled forces to dismiss those who fail vetting checks. We have also tightened up the police misconduct and performance regimes, introducing a presumption of dismissal for any officer found to have committed gross misconduct, and streamlining processes for dealing with unsatisfactory performance or attendance. We intend to go further still and introduce requirements for Chief Constables to suspend officers where they are under investigation for domestic abuse or sexual offences.

## **Strengthening the IOPC and reforming the system**

234. The IOPC investigates the most serious incidents, complaints and allegations of misconduct against the police. It also handles reviews of complaints, death and serious injury matters. The IOPC plays a key role in increasing confidence in policing; a robust, independent watchdog is crucial in overseeing and ensuring confidence in the police complaints system.
235. To increase the effectiveness, governance and efficiency of the organisation, the IOPC is carrying out a radical transformation programme. This aims to drive up productivity, meet increased demand for the IOPC's services, and lead to the completion of more high-quality, timely reviews and investigations. It is underpinned by a strong focus on the IOPC's users, including complainants, families, police officers and staff and aims to secure their trust and confidence. Alongside this, the IOPC is working with the Government, policing and others to help ensure the wider misconduct system works as efficiently as possible.

236. The IOPC must be accountable and transparent. That is why we are working to support it while it undergoes its transformation programme.
237. To ensure that the IOPC's governance arrangements are in line with usual practice for Government arms' length bodies, we will legislate to introduce a separate statutory chair of the IOPC's board of directors. The Director General will remain a Crown appointment and single head of all operational decision making. In the longer term and once the IOPC's transformation programme is well underway, we believe that a separate chair will bring value. It will shore up the corporate structure and assist the board in providing corporate governance and supporting the Director General's leadership of the organisation.
238. We must make sure resources are used as effectively as possible. To ensure reasonableness and proportionality in case handling and free up vital IOPC resource, we will provide the IOPC with a greater degree of discretion to decide whether it investigates Chief Officer cases, while ensuring the most serious matters continue to be independently investigated.
239. To enhance transparency, and reflecting a Home Affairs Select Committee recommendation<sup>60</sup>, we will encourage the IOPC to call to account those responsible for delays more proactively and will require the IOPC to be more transparent in explaining where delays occur during investigations.
240. Policing stakeholders have raised concerns about delays to investigations and the processes which follow investigations. These delays can have an impact on officers, victims and complainants. We must change this. That is why we have already announced plans to commission an independent review of timeliness in the end-to-end process of the police misconduct system.
241. The Government is also taking forward work to implement important measures from the recent police 'accountability review'<sup>61</sup>. These include new legislation to align the threshold for the referral of cases by the IOPC to the CPS with the threshold for the referral of cases by the police to the CPS. They also include new legislation to allow the IOPC to send cases to the CPS where there is sufficient evidence prior to the completion of their final investigation report. Separately, we are placing the IOPC's victims' right to review policy on a statutory footing. And, following recommendations from the Police 'Accountability Rapid Review', the Government is changing the legal test for the defence of the use of force in police misconduct cases from the civil law test to the criminal law test.

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<sup>60</sup> Home Affairs Select Committee (2022) '[Police Conduct and Complaints](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>61</sup> Home Office (2024) '[Factsheet on the government's policy package on police accountability](#)' (viewed on 6 October 2025)

242. We will not stop there. We have listened to policing leaders, the IOPC's own Director General and others, who have called for us to go further in reforming the systems and thresholds used for holding the police to account for their actions, including greater reforms of the IOPC. We have noted concerns that the wider systems could avoid duplication and be clearer for the police and public alike. We will broaden the scope of the review of timeliness to address more fundamental issues such as how cases are referred to the IOPC and the interaction between the misconduct, courts and coronial systems. We will look again at the thresholds for investigating misconduct and whether these are too low resulting in cases coming into the system that might be better dealt with via performance management processes. We will work with the IOPC, policing, legal and victims and families' groups to carry out this root and branch review, to develop our approach and ensure we have got the balance right.
243. We will ensure that we have a strengthened watchdog which the public can be confident will deliver.

### **Improving organisational culture**

244. While strong processes to identify and remove those who are not fit to serve are crucial, we also require positive workplace cultures to support the highest standards.
245. Strong, ethical leadership at every rank is the most important factor in ensuring a culture in which high standards are recognised and rewarded and adverse behaviour is identified and tackled early. This is discussed in further detail in Chapter Five - 'The future workforce'.
246. We are taking a range of measures to create a healthy organisational culture in policing:
- i. An updated Code of Ethics for policing was published in 2024, providing a statutory lever through which Chief Constables must promote and support ethical and professional behaviour within their forces<sup>62</sup>,
  - ii. The College of Policing is applying the latest thinking from behavioural science to help forces diagnose problems with their culture and take action,
  - iii. Government and policing are implementing recommendations from Part 1 of the Angiolini Inquiry<sup>63</sup>. Part 2 of the Inquiry is ongoing and considering further aspects of police culture<sup>64</sup>, and,

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<sup>62</sup> College of Policing (2024) '[Code of Ethics](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>63</sup> The Angiolini Inquiry was commissioned following the murder of Sarah Everard by a then-serving Metropolitan Police Service officer in 2021. Part 1 of the Inquiry was published in February 2024 and examined the previous career and conduct of the officer.

<sup>64</sup> A first report under Part 2 of the Inquiry was published on 2 December 2025 and focussed on the prevention of sexually motivated crimes against women in public spaces.



- iv. The NPCC and the College of Policing have developed a new culture and inclusion strategy supported by a standard and framework to demonstrate what is expected of forces and support them to track progress.

247. It is important that forces reflect the diverse communities they serve, and ensuring an inclusive workforce is also important in creating a healthy culture. The Government actively supports the work of the Police Race Action Plan and the NPCC's work on misogyny and homophobia as part of its wider Diversity, Equality and Inclusion portfolios. Alongside this, the new National Centre for Violence Against Women and Girls and Public Protection, launched in April 2025, will play a vital role in rebuilding trust and confidence in policing by promoting consistent standards and driving cultural change across all forces. We will hold policing to account for delivery of these plans through the new Performance Framework.

# Chapter 5: A more capable police service

## Part 1. The Future Workforce

248. Policing is about people, not least those who serve within the police workforce. Our hard-working police professionals protect communities every day, often putting themselves in harm's way to keep the rest of us safe. They are motivated by a vocation to serve, often in testing conditions. They deserve our thanks and support.
249. A resilient police workforce with strong leadership, a focus on performance and standards and a positive culture is essential to support policing in cutting crime and securing public confidence.
250. Despite the hard work and dedication of our police professionals, the police workforce is not set up to succeed. The previous government took a wildly inconsistent approach, cutting the number of police officers by 20,000 after 2010 and then after 2019 trying to rapidly recruit 20,000 (net) more officers<sup>65</sup>. From 2019 they measured success purely by the overall number of police officers. The pressure to maintain numbers led to forces recruiting officers and, in some cases, putting them in roles that didn't require their warranted powers, for example in back office roles. Rather than being out on the beat, police constables have increasingly been sat behind desks. This is wrongheaded and enormously inefficient.
251. Instead, this government is embracing radical reform. Success will no longer be defined by the overall number of officers but by the results the police achieve for the public. By strengthening neighbourhood policing, we will put more police officers back on the beat, where the public want them. We will bring in more specialists to investigate complex crimes. We will strengthen police leadership at all levels, and we will introduce a Licence to Practise for police officers to raise standards and promote a stronger culture of professional development. Finally, we will do much more to support the health and wellbeing of police officers and other police professionals.

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<sup>65</sup> Home Office, (2025), [Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK](#) (viewed on 22 January 2026)

We will:

- **Create a modern workforce**, where chief constables have greater flexibility to recruit and retain those with the skills required to tackle the threats we face and where more police officers are back on the beat in local communities.
- **Deliver a national workforce strategy** to ensure we have a police workforce with the skills to meet current and future demands. This will include recognising allied police professionals, non-warranted specialists, with stronger career pathways.
- **Strengthen police leadership by mandating national leadership standards, reforming the process for appointing chief constables** and responding to the recommendations of the **Police Leadership Commission** chaired by Lords Blunkett and Herbert.
- Introduce a **Licence to Practise** for police officers to raise standards and promote professional development.
- Give **greater flexibility** around entry and exit for the workforce, by developing the first multi-route specialised pathway that **supports entry into policing at different ranks**.
- Make improvements to **workforce culture through improved support, development and leadership**, especially at the first line management level.
- Use the Police Covenant to deliver a **package of wellbeing support and mandate national wellbeing standards** to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of the police workforce.

## One police workforce

252. Every member of the police workforce, whether or not they are a police officer, plays a role in keeping the public safe. For too long the measure of success has been on officer numbers alone. This approach has meant that, to balance budgets, forces have had to make cuts to vital roles – like analysts and forensic experts – just when we need them most.

253. Crime is changing fast. Modern crime demands new skills: spotting misinformation, tackling deepfakes, and responding to threats powered by AI. Criminals are getting smarter, and our response must be smarter still. To keep ahead we need officers working with Crime Analysts to use data that predicts hotspots and prevents crime before it happens. We need Digital Forensics Specialists recovering hidden evidence from computers and smartphones, helping to secure justice for victims of fraud and exploitation. We need Cyber Investigators tracking down online scammers and disrupting criminal networks operating on the dark web.
254. What really matters is how well policing responds and protects communities. We will no longer pay forces to sustain a certain number of officers, which, in some cases, has led them to put officers in back office roles. Instead, we will fund police forces to put more officers into neighbourhood policing, out on the beat where the public want them. We will give chief officers the flexibility to build a workforce that meets the needs of their communities. We will ensure greater parity between police officers and non-warranted policing professionals. And we will measure success not by the numbers of officers employed but by the outcomes achieved for the public (see Chapter Four – ‘Improving Police Performance’ on our new performance system).

### **Workforce strategy and planning for the future**

255. For the first time, we will design a national workforce strategy for policing, developed in collaboration with strategic partners. This single, centrally agreed workforce strategy will be sophisticated enough to be tailored to local needs, driving best practice, efficiency and effectiveness.
256. Police professionals in specialist and support roles working alongside warranted officers already play a vital role in the delivery of police services including by answering emergency calls, analysing intelligence and supporting victims. The workforce strategy will enable us to recognise and utilise the skills of these allied police professionals.
257. Forces need a better understanding of their workforce. This includes a better idea of how police officers and other police professionals feel about their work, the stressors they face and available support, so the right decisions on workforce wellbeing can be made. We will work closely with policing to ensure they have the data they need, and will use a mandated, nationally led police workforce survey to inform this, with a focus on driving improved wellbeing and productivity.

258. The strategy will remain under continual review to ensure flexibility and will consider the requirements of priority areas such as VAWG and neighbourhood policing. The strategy will ensure that we:
- i. Get the right balance of generalist and specialised police officers and other police professionals, including across priority areas such as VAWG,
  - ii. Build a clearer picture of future demands and how we can ensure police training and skills meet those demands,
  - iii. Build an understanding of the resource and skills pipeline and its financial impact, ensuring we deliver the correct shape and size of the workforce,
  - iv. Enable improved productivity by looking at how we can reduce the numbers on restricted duties, off sick or suspended,
  - v. Build stronger career pathways in policing, including examining the pathways in and out of policing and across law enforcement, including for technical and specialist roles,
  - vi. Explore how to use volunteers and special constables better,
  - vii. Take a more flexible approach to the overall workforce, and,
  - viii. Consider how to make the pay structure for policing more effective, including how policing opportunities compete with the wider employment market.

### **More Direct Entry through a new Specialist Pathway into Policing**

259. Policing must remain a competitive employer to attract the best people. We need a more flexible employment model that attracts a range of people, skills and experience from other sectors and specialisms.
260. The workforce strategy insights will equip us to deliver a new and agile recruitment pathway into policing. We will build on, and learn from, previous models to open up new forms of Direct Entry into policing and explore the option of renewing the Direct Entry Inspector programme, linked to a fast-track route to superintendent. We will work with the sector to develop this model into the first multi-route specialised pathway that supports entry into policing at different ranks to deliver leaders with specialist skills in areas of need. The pathway will deliver a flexible recruitment model, while offering entry into policing at more senior ranks to attract those who are mid-career in other sectors who have transferable specialist skills. This recruitment model will improve diversity by opening a new opportunity for individuals with different experiences and from different backgrounds who may not have otherwise accessed a career in policing.

## Strengthening leadership

261. A well-led workforce will have trust in its leaders, a strong public service motivation and a focus on what works. Previous leadership reviews and reports have pointed to concerns around the quality, quantity and diversity of talent in the pipeline for senior appointments in policing<sup>66</sup>. There is a lack of consistency, fairness and transparency in senior appointments and a limited pool of candidates who meet the requirements for senior leader roles. Police at all levels need to be able to develop skills earlier in their career to enable them to develop and progress.
262. The College of Policing has prioritised work on leadership reforms as part of its National Centre for Police Leadership<sup>67</sup>. National leadership standards have been developed at five levels which set the benchmark for knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours<sup>68</sup>. These standards are supported by a five-stage leadership development programme which is beginning to be integrated into new specialist programmes such as the Neighbourhood Policing pathway. The College of Policing has also delivered a National Talent Development Strategy and a two-year Fast Track Inspector to Superintendent Programme. The College of Policing is currently piloting new promotion processes to sergeant and inspector ranks linked to leadership standards.
263. However, leadership standards are not currently mandatory<sup>69</sup> and there are no standardised national promotion processes for appointment to Chief Inspector or superintending ranks. This has led to a lack of national consistency across forces. This is why we will set out national leadership development programmes as a requirement to access selection processes and promotion opportunities at each rank. This will ensure officers seeking promotion demonstrate that they have the right leadership skills and meet the required standard for senior ranks.
264. Alongside the introduction of mandated national leadership standards, the further development and mandation of the College of Policing's Professional Profiles will drive-up standards in priority areas such as VAWG, crime and neighbourhood policing.
265. But the issues here go beyond the standards framework. To look at how we can further strengthen police leadership we have established a Police Leadership Commission chaired by Lord Blunkett and Lord Herbert. This is

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<sup>66</sup> College of Policing, (2025) '[Leadership Review](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>67</sup> College of Policing '[Leadership](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)

<sup>68</sup> College of Policing (2025), '[Enhancing leadership capability](#)', pages 8 – 9

<sup>69</sup> Currently only Chief Constable leadership standards are effectively mandated in this way as in [The Police Regulations 2003](#)

considering police leadership at all levels of the service to identify the barriers to delivering and maintaining effective leadership across the service. The Government will respond to the Commission's recommendations after they are published later this year.

266. We will work with the sector to develop a standardised central appointment panel to support the selection and appointment of Chief Constables. The panel will provide an objective, professional voice and ensure processes are rooted in consistent standards and guidance is followed. It will also support greater central development of a senior workforce planning function within the College of Policing (and later the NPS) to help provide a sufficient range of candidates for Chief Constable posts and ensure forces are equipped to meet future leadership needs. The senior appointments panel will shortlist candidates for Chief Constable appointments, which will need to be considered by the local PCC or Mayor (and, under the new model, Policing and Crime Boards) in coming to their final decision.
267. More can be done to strengthen Chief Officer development and broaden experience prior to becoming a Chief Constable. Moving between forces or gaining external experience should be encouraged. However, previous requirements for Chief Constable applicants to have served in more than one force were restrictive. We will explore reintroducing an external experience requirement at a much earlier stage in an officer's career and as part of development plans tailored to individual and organisational needs. This could involve a requirement for officers to have completed one or more placements in another organisation at any point prior to becoming a Chief Officer. At mid-career stage, this would offer greater opportunity for prospective police leaders to develop their leadership skills, gain new perspectives and learn from other partner organisations.

### **Better Opportunities for Professional Development**

268. Policing has long lacked a culture of continuous professional development that is present in other sectors. Everyone working in policing deserves a clear structured pathway in which to progress and develop as a professional.

269. There is no clearly defined, nationally consistent framework in place for police professional development and there is inconsistency in standards of performance management. This can mean that there is some uncertainty about what is expected of individuals and teams, how they will be supported and what opportunities exist for development and career progression<sup>70</sup>.
270. We will explore creating a digital training passport for officers and staff, which will enable better monitoring and oversight of learning and development, nationally and at force-level, ensuring national standards are clearly set out in one place and are actively monitored to ensure that they are being met.
271. Building on existing leadership and supervision standards, we will mandate a national performance management framework. This framework will provide clear guidance for supervisors on how best to prioritise regular conversations with the people they lead on topics such as performance management, professional development, mentoring, wellbeing and promoting behaviours that align with leadership standards and the Police Code of Ethics.

## **Licence to Practise**

272. To support learning and development further, we will introduce a Licence to Practise for police officers. Police officers hold a unique position of public trust through the historic office of constable, a role rooted in the principles of integrity and impartiality. Holding a Licence to Practise will signify the importance of holding the office of constable and serve as an assurance that officers have the right support and development in place to uphold the expectations of the office. A Licence to Practise will be underpinned by regular and consistent wellbeing and development checks, and clear career pathways.
273. We recognise that we will not be able to introduce a Licence overnight. We will look at the best pathways to implementation and consult extensively with the service. The College of Policing already provides accreditation and licensing for some specialist areas. We will seek to build on this in stages, bringing together core elements of training and development that all officers are required to complete, mandating essential leadership training and development and exploring standards in priority areas such as VAWG and neighbourhood policing.
274. A Licence to Practise offers many long-term benefits and, once developed, it will act as an enabler for embedding a culture of continuous professional development in policing. It will enable officers to identify the core training and

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<sup>70</sup> The Office for National Statistics (2019), '[Home Office Police Front Line Review: Workshops with police officers and police staff](#)' (viewed on 21 January 2026)



development they are required to complete, plan for further development and record this in an effective way. Crucially line managers and police leaders at all levels will have the ability to check that officers have been provided with the skills and support to improve resilience and act confidently, safely and effectively. It will also provide the public with greater assurance that each member of the police workforce is supported and equipped to meet the expectations of professionalism, operational capability and integrity.

## Supporting wellbeing

275. The prevalence of post-traumatic stress disorder and other trauma-related mental health injuries in the police workforce is well evidenced in literature and sector-led surveys<sup>71</sup>. This is largely due to the repeated exposure to traumatic incidents, high-pressure environments and the cumulative stress of frontline duties<sup>72</sup>. We are clear that police wellbeing must be prioritised to ensure a motivated and thriving workforce. Improving wellbeing has been shown to improve culture, productivity and the quality of service to the public<sup>73 74</sup>.
276. The National Police Wellbeing Service (NPWS), within the College of Policing, already provides evidence-based guidance and resources and is helping forces to identify where there is most risk of impacts on their workforce. The public disorder observed in August 2024 highlighted the need for greater national consistency in police health and wellbeing provision, including in post incident support<sup>75</sup>.
277. To consolidate standards set out in the National Police Health and Wellbeing Strategy, we will work closely with the NPWS and the Chief Medical Officer for Policing to set national mandatory standards in policing wellbeing provision, including an enhanced trauma support package and occupational health.
278. Alongside this, the NPWS has developed a range of products dedicated to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of the police workforce. In addition, we will:
- i. Support the national rollout of NPWS's Mental Health Crisis Line, putting it on a sustainable footing and making it available to the whole workforce,
  - ii. Expand provision of psychological risk assessments from 75,000 to 140,000 per year to protect more of the police workforce,

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<sup>71</sup> Graham, L, Plater, M, & Brown, N (2023) '[Summary of Policing: Key Issues and Common Themes](#)'

<sup>72</sup> Graham, L, Plater, M, & Brown, N (2023) '[Summary of Policing: Key Issues and Common Themes](#)'

<sup>73</sup> Graham, L and others (2019), '[Research into Workplace Factors, Well-being, Attitudes and Behaviour in Policing](#)'

<sup>74</sup> Ordon, G, Dewar, L, Cameron, A (2019), '[Leadership, wellbeing, professional development and innovation for the police front line: an evidence review](#)'

<sup>75</sup> His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (2024), '[An inspection of the police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024: Tranche 1](#)'

- iii. Mandate protected time for trauma and suicide prevention training for all new recruits and supervisors to further strengthen resilience,
- iv. Ensure every force has implemented a trauma tracker allowing forces to proactively monitor and track levels of exposure to traumatic events and intervene early,
- v. Develop a proof of concept for a new innovative trauma intervention informed by effective, evidence-based psychological therapies,
- vi. Introduce a national standard on welfare support for those facing an investigation to ensure consistent and empathetic care across forces.

279. A police workforce that is served well by staff associations is necessary for officers to feel motivated and supported. The Government notes the recent review of the Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) chaired by Baroness Bousted and recognises the widespread concerns about the PFEW in respect of its performance, culture, transparency and effectiveness in representing its members. We want to see a strong staff association that provides an effective voice for police officers. We expect to see clear plans and rapid, demonstrable improvement in the PFEW's operation. In the absence of such improvements, this Government stands ready to bring forward reforms to ensure that the interests of rank-and-file officers are properly, effectively and robustly represented.

280. We will look at ways to actively strengthen the Police Covenant including the requirements on government and on forces, including, if necessary through legislation.

## **Part 2. Unleashing the Power of Our People Through Data and Technology**

281. In policing, getting the right information into the right hands at the right time can mean the difference between life and death. Information is the currency of good policing, and it must be fully utilised to keep the public safe. This means getting the latest technology into the hands of highly skilled officers and staff, enabling access to up to date and accurate data. It means fully exploiting the potential of the AI revolution, while staying true to the Peelian principles of policing by consent. This section sets out how the Government will work with policing to do just that.
282. Criminals are increasingly using the power of AI to perpetrate harm. Offenders are now able to create AI generated content (such as 'deepfakes') that facilitate crimes like child sexual abuse, VAWG and fraud. Advances in AI are likely to result in more opportunities for criminals to create illegal content, find and communicate with victims, conduct online transactions and scale up their operations.
283. This growing challenge places a premium on successful policing adoption of AI. Yet policing's current data and technology infrastructure is fragmented, with aging systems, manual processes and poor data quality slowing down investigations and diverting time from frontline duties. Different forces have different operating systems, standards and processes. This limits national coordination, makes it harder to scale up innovation and ensure wider adoption and leads to duplicated costs and effort.
284. Meanwhile, rapid advances in technology and AI, combined with increasing volumes of data, are placing greater demands on systems. As opportunities to commit crime grow and investigations become more complex, policing may find itself unable to keep pace with changing threats.
285. To meet this moment policing needs national leadership in how we develop and deploy technology, greater consistency in the recording, sharing and analysis of data and a culture of responsible innovation so that successful local initiatives can be rolled out at scale.

286. A reformed system is an essential step in unlocking the potential of technology, data and AI in policing. The new NPS, as set out in Chapter Three, will support this ambition. By delivering police digital, data and technology infrastructure in a coherent and strategic manner at the national level for the first time, the NPS will ensure that officers and staff have access to the best available technology and insights. Ultimately this will deliver smarter operational policing and save officer time, helping them focus on tackling crime and keeping the public safe.

We will:

- **Invest £115 million** over the next 3 years to enable the rapid and responsible **adoption of AI and automation technologies by the police**. This will include the creation of a new National Centre for AI in Policing, known as **Police.AI**.
- **Roll out the use of Live Facial Recognition (LFR) technologies**, including 40 new LFR vans to be deployed in town centres across England and Wales.
- Create a **bespoke legal framework for the use of technologies** like facial recognition, to enable safer, more efficient and consistent use of transformative technologies.
- Create a **public register of the AI in use** by Police forces.
- **Simplify the governance of data** by creating a single decision-maker for policing to take decisions on national datasets, improve efficiency and improve consistency across forces.
- **Establish clearer accountability for policing data** and how it is shared.
- **Work with policing to define specific national standards for police data and data quality requirements**, and where appropriate, mandate these.
- **Work with forces to understand the barriers to technology adoption** and provide support to encourage responsible AI adoption and raise police capability.

## **Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to reduce crime and keep the public safe**

287. The Government is determined to ramp up use of AI across the public sector, including policing, to improve efficiency and effectiveness. We are committed to supporting the police to adopt AI responsibly, at pace and scale.
288. We have already begun to support police to make responsible use of AI, with over £50 million allocated to date in areas such as facial recognition, deepfake detection and the automation of force control room operations and support service tasks. This is beginning to free up officers from administrative tasks to be on the frontline and catch more wanted suspects. We have developed guidelines on what responsible adoption of AI by the police looks like, which have been published by the College of Policing. We have also taken steps to support the police to develop and test deepfake detection tools to tackle criminal misuse of AI.
289. However, the potential benefits of AI and automation to policing are significant, and we need to go further to deliver on its potential. We are therefore planning to invest over £115m over the next three years to support the rapid and responsible development, testing and rollout of AI tools across all 43 forces in England and Wales.
290. This will be spearheaded by the creation of 'Police.AI', a new National Centre for AI in Policing, that will be charged with having a laser-focus on using AI to catch more wanted criminals, speed up investigations, improve the experience of victims and witnesses and make the police more productive, freeing up officers from support services to be on the frontline. Police.AI will also provide operationally independent Chief Constables with the evidence and resources they need to ensure the AI they are using has proven benefits, is backed by robust scientific evidence and is maximising accuracy while minimising bias. While AI driven technologies should not replace the role that police officers and staff play in protecting the public, access to cutting edge tools, with proper ethical frameworks in place, and the resources to test AI models before they are used will enable smarter more targeted operations and reduced paperwork.
291. To deliver its mission, Police.AI will have three core functions:
- i. A new AI Lab will focus on building, testing and assuring AI models and tools for use in a policing context, taking steps to increase model accuracy and usability (e.g. by providing model tuning resources and prompt guides).
  - ii. An AI enablement function will support forces to take practical steps to adopt AI that works.

- iii. A strategy, oversight and coordination function will provide public facing communications on police AI use, including publishing and maintaining a registry of the AI tools the police are using and the steps they've taken to test and evaluate them before deployment.
292. We will set up Police.AI to begin delivering from Spring 2026, and work will begin immediately with policing leaders to recruit its top team. For Police.AI to be successful, we know there is a need to bring in talent and expertise from across police forces as well as from the outside and to develop a culture relentlessly focused on improving public safety outcomes. Once the NPS has been set up, we will transition Police.AI into it.
293. It is expected that in its first year Police.AI will focus on some of the biggest administrative burdens facing policing – including disclosure, analysis of CCTV footage, production of case files, crime recording and classification and translating and transcribing documents. This will free up 6 million policing hours each year (equivalent to 3,000 FTE)<sup>76</sup> while also ensuring victims and witnesses get a faster service.
294. Further examples of the use of AI within policing include the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme (TOEX). Their Capabilities Environment provides police forces with access to time-saving tools, some of which are AI-enabled. To date over £42 million of opportunity savings have been made through use of the tools, and over 33,000 investigator hours are estimated to have been saved with one tool alone (transcription).
295. In addition to Police.AI, we will also be continuing action that we've already started in three areas: facial recognition, AI-enabled audio-visual file redaction and robotic process automation.

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<sup>76</sup> This is a high-level estimate derived through applying an estimated average hours saved per pound spent metric on AI interventions in policing to the level of spending announced. This metric was compiled based on a range of existing AI pilots and deployments across police forces, primarily those associated with redacting and triaging files. It is difficult to forecast the precise benefits deriving from the level of spending announced primarily because i) Chiefs are operationally independent and can decide how they deploy the resources freed up as a result of AI and automation and ii) each force has a different baseline position. For this reason, the estimate should be taken as a rough approximation of magnitude.

296. Facial Recognition technologies are already helping the police to catch known criminals. Following the successful roll out of ten new LFR equipped vans last year, we will extend the use of LFR to help identify those wanted by police including for serious violent and sexual offences. We will be investing in facial recognition capabilities and the responsible adoption of these. This will include over £26m on development and delivery of a national facial recognition system and £11.6m on LFR capabilities and national coordination of these. 40 new LFR vans will be available to support the police in town centres and high crime hot spots across the country.
297. In order to give police forces the confidence to adopt technologies like LFR, we will create a bespoke legal framework, subject to the responses received in the consultation which launched on 4 December. This will ensure technologies can be adopted confidently and consistently by the police and will provide guardrails for innovation. It will give the public clarity, by ensuring they know when, where and how the police can use these technologies.
298. We are providing investment to support forces to adopt new audio visual redaction technologies. Technology to semi automate redaction of sensitive data from evidence such as CCTV and Body Worn Video has developed significantly. Tools are now available which we estimate can deliver up to 60% time saving for officers redacting casefiles if used as part of an efficient operational process. We estimate that efficient use of audio-visual redaction automation technologies could release 11,000 police officer days nationally per month, which is equivalent to 550 police constables per year on the frontline across forces in England and Wales<sup>77</sup>.
299. We will continue to invest in Robotic Process Automation, which uses software to automate tasks otherwise undertaken by officers, such as internal data reporting, crime filing and combining data entries relating to the same individual. Over the last few years, the Home Office has funded a pilot that is now helping over 25 forces. Benefits data shows that investing in Robotic Process Automation software can do the work of 10 officers for the cost of one, by automating processes and running them 24/7, freeing up staff and officers for other duties. Our programme is already saving the taxpayer more than it costs to run, and we will ensure all 43 forces have access to this technology.

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<sup>77</sup> These figures were included in the Audio Visual Multi-Media (AVMM) redaction report shared with all forces in England and Wales by the Accelerated Capability Environment (ACE) and the Home Office, following engagement with forces and suppliers on policing's requirements and current market options for audio and visual multimedia (AVMM) redaction. Estimates have been calculated using data on investigations where files are sent to the CPS for a charging decision. This excludes those that are redacted and not sent to CPS / dropped. The 60% time saving was estimated through benchmarking current AVMM redaction practices in several forces and comparing against redacting the same footage using enhanced tooling and capability combined with an optimised efficient operational process. Days/ FTE calculations are based on 20 x 7.5hr working days / shifts per calendar month.

300. Policing reform provides an opportunity to identify efficiencies, better leverage AI and other technologies for nationally consistent public contact capabilities which will improve ease of access for the public to policing and help to build trust and confidence while supporting forces to manage demand with greater efficiency.
301. Policing and the Home Office are committed to delivering digital contact channels which supplement existing telephony channels, creating greater choice for the public and recognising the societal shift toward digital interactions and self-service where appropriate. Examples of progress in this area include the national availability of online crime reporting for non-urgent incidents and the national rollout of video call response for victims of non-emergency domestic abuse.
302. Home Office and policing are delivering pilots of a new Portal where victims can exchange secure, 2-way messages with the officer in command of their investigation, delivering a personalised response pathway which alleviates the need to call the police for case updates. We are also piloting the use of AI-assisted operator services in force control rooms to support callers in receiving the correct support more rapidly, call handlers in completing administrative tasks and identifying risks and supportive interventions in real-time.
303. A handful of local forces have recently introduced AI chat bots which create efficiencies in triaging non-urgent online queries into policing. The proposed reforms to policing and creation of Police.AI will support local innovations of this kind to be scaled nationally if they prove successful.

### **Data driven policing**

304. Up to date and accurate data and information is a precondition for effective policing in the age of AI. Data comprises facts, evidence and operational information: the foundation of police knowledge. It helps identify offenders, tackle crime, keep victims updated, allocate resources effectively, monitor performance and identify trends and patterns.
305. With the rapid growth of intelligence sources and the increasing sophistication of criminal activity, the need for smarter, faster intelligence sharing has never been greater. AI and other emerging technologies offer new opportunities to understand and respond to crime, but only if the underlying data is accessible, consistent and well managed. Operational officers and staff must be able to rely on high quality information when making difficult decisions, and the public must be confident that this is the case.



306. Better, responsible use of data can enable more sophisticated analytics, helping to build a clearer picture of offenders, victims, geographical concentrations (hotspots) and crime patterns. It can support smarter resource allocation and show what actions work to prevent crime and keep the public safe.

### **Spotlight on data-driven policing**

Effective policing relies on timely, accurate information. Today, data is often fragmented across 43 forces and recorded in different formats. This makes it harder to share, analyse, and act on insights. We are introducing some key proposals to change that:

#### ***Measure 1: New technology to integrate data nationally***

Forces receive frequent, duplicative data requests from across policing, the Criminal Justice System, and government. These often require manual searching, diverting limited resource away from frontline priorities. A centralised approach to data integration and exploitation would reduce this burden, improve insight and support smarter operational decision making.

Police data is often kept within individual force systems, making it hard to use effectively. At a local level forces need to be able to integrate their systems so that officers can access everything they need easily without having to log into multiple systems, and nationally key data needs to be shared and used widely.

We are working with the NPCC to deploy new technology to integrate data both locally and nationally. To make this work we will set up a new National Data Integration and Exploitation Service, which will transition into the NPS alongside other national systems. This service will both issue guidance to and support local forces in their own procurement – and procure new solutions to integrate data nationally, allowing policing to effectively share data between forces and with the centre.

#### ***Measure 2: Mandated national standards***

Using, managing and sharing data in a consistent way across policing is essential for making decisions based on accurate and timely information. The current landscape lacks national coordination. Each force makes its own decisions about technology and data, creating a 'patchwork quilt' of different systems, standards and processes. This makes it harder to share information, scale up innovation and creates unnecessary costs and effort.

To fix this, we will work with policing to create a framework for mandating clear national data standards in a timely way, to improve how data is collected, recorded and used across England and Wales, and make sure these standards are applied across all forces and the systems they use. This will further support existing legal and ethical frameworks, ensuring data is managed responsibly and proportionately, and maintaining public confidence.

In addition, this will provide the necessary statutory powers to ensure the delivery of Recommendation 4 of Baroness Casey's National Audit into Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse, which recommended that the collection of ethnicity data in such cases should be mandated.

*Measure 3: A single, national decision-maker*

We will also create a single policing decision-maker with authority over key national datasets (such as the Police National Computer). We expect this role will sit within the NPS and will make managing these datasets simpler and more consistent. It will also make data sharing across government and the criminal justice system easier and more efficient, enabling central direction to be issued on how to apply to share and use personal data, to drastically reduce the time taken to share datasets where appropriate, while maintaining security and public confidence.

*Measure 4: Data Sharing*

Following from the improvements that this government introduced through the Data (Use And Access) Act 2025, we are working with police to remove all unnecessary barriers to sharing data.

This includes ensuring that police have the confidence and can identify an appropriate legal basis to share data with other partners where this is in the public interest, and simplifying the internal processes for reaching such decisions.

We will also require all police forces to share data into designated national datasets to reflect their vital importance in ensuring that all police forces have the information they need to carry out their functions.

Together, these measures will strengthen policing's data foundations – unlocking better intelligence and stronger collaboration.

307. Alongside this work to improve policing's data foundations, we will continue supporting the establishment of a National Data and Analytics Office to provide central leadership on data management, ensuring that decision-makers across policing have the skills and support they need to get the most out of their data.

308. Our police reform programme set out in this White Paper will for the first time enable proper national leadership of the digital, data and technology infrastructure available to police officers and staff up and down the country. It will mean that data is collected, kept up to date and shared more consistently and to common standards. It will mean exciting local innovations in AI-powered technology can be tested nationally and where they work rolled out at scale. Increasingly we will be getting the right information to the right people, using the right technology at the right time. And that will mean the police are better able to keep the public safe.

### **Part 3. Smarter crime prevention**

309. The most effective way to cut crime is to stop it happening in the first place. Without successful crime prevention, citizens are put at risk, and both the police and the criminal justice system will struggle to manage the high volumes of offending.
310. Police have always had, and will continue to have, a critical role in prevention. However, effective prevention goes beyond policing. We need a multi-agency problem solving approach which looks at the drivers of crime and tackles them through the full range of tools and data at our disposal – from improvements in street design to early intervention and support for young people at risk of being drawn into criminality. These interventions rely on local authorities, schools, health partners, the private sector and national regulators as much as the police.
311. Effective crime prevention is both possible and an area where England and Wales have been innovators for many years. There is widespread evidence of what works – held by the College of Policing on crime prevention and the Youth Endowment Fund on the reduction of serious violence amongst young people. This is further evidenced by Home Office programmes such as Violence Reduction Units, which prevent young people from being drawn into violence, and the County Lines Programme which reduces knife crime by closing violent and exploitative drugs lines. Some forces have also won prestigious awards for their problem solving work, like Leicestershire’s disruption of night-time economy violence around their town centre McDonalds which won the prestigious 2025 Goldstein Award.
312. This considerable knowledge, expertise and best practice on crime prevention must be systematically integrated. National priorities and central analysis of crime patterns must translate to strategic local delivery in key crime hotspots, and successful local practice must be identified and scaled to new areas.
313. We will tackle this over the coming years by building a more integrated and effective crime prevention system across England and Wales. Central government and local areas will work together to deliver on our top prevention priorities, sharing data and insights (in line with the ambition set out in the previous section on ‘Unleashing the Power of Our People Through Data and Technology’) to ensure clarity of purpose and better coordinate action.
314. The Home Office remains committed to developing and delivering the Emergency Services Network (ESN) through the Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP). ESN will provide fast, secure voice,

video and data services over the 4G network, giving first responders immediate access to life-saving information, images and data during live incidents and emergencies.

315. The network will enable police forces to access the latest products and applications as technology progresses, allowing them to select tools and solutions that best meet their evolving operational needs.
316. Meanwhile, the Home Office will continue to support the existing mission-critical communications platform, Airwave, ensuring its reliability, security, and operational sustainability until the full transition of the last live users to ESN is complete.

We will:

- Take a **stronger lead on crime prevention** by:
  - Delivering an integrated crime mapping system for England and Wales,
  - Testing and learning crime prevention interventions in these areas,
  - Establishing more effective crime prevention partnerships at the national level, and
  - Providing clearer strategic direction on crime prevention.
- Take steps to create a **clearer and more effective local landscape for crime prevention**, including to:
  - Reduce the flow of young people into crime through delivery of the **Young Futures Programme**,
  - **Bring together the prevention tools of policing**, with those of local government and local communities in the most streamlined and effective manner possible,
  - Strengthen the **link between the centre and local areas** on crime prevention,
  - Break down silos and improve spreading of **best practice**.

### **A stronger Government lead on Crime Prevention**

317. We are increasing government focus on crime prevention and have established a new Crime Prevention Unit in the Home Office, focused on better understanding national crime problems and working with local areas to more effectively tackle them and spread best practice. Early priorities will be to:
- i. Deliver an integrated crime mapping system for England and Wales – which will map crime trends and work to build in additional data sets (for example from health and education) to better identify opportunities for prevention and support collaboration with local partners. This mapping system will be shared with local

areas so there is a consistent picture of the key crime challenges we face, with an initial focus on knife crime.

- ii. Test and learn crime prevention interventions to improve practice. Once key crime concentrations are identified we will work with local areas to jointly develop innovative and impactful interventions using a problem solving approach in which partnerships will be key. The new NPS will enable us to build a better strategic national data picture to inform more targeted preventative work.
- iii. Establish more effective crime prevention partnerships at the national level. While most delivery and innovation in crime prevention is local, many of the blockers that need to be removed are at the national level. We will establish crime prevention partnerships with key agencies such as other government departments, regulators and the private and voluntary sectors.
- iv. Provide clearer strategic direction on crime prevention. We will clearly set out the Government's key Safer Streets prevention priorities, utilising the latest data, while also ensuring they inform the development of the new NSPP.

318. We need to ensure the public protect themselves against threats from new technology like AI. For example through initiatives like the 'Stop! Think Fraud' campaign. By working in partnership with technology companies and the financial sector we can address the online enablers of fraud and other crimes ranging from cybercrime to county lines and organised immigration crime.

319. A new Fraud Strategy will set out a comprehensive set of actions and a partnership approach to preventing fraud. The Strategy will describe the actions we will take to tackle the scourge of fraud across law enforcement, government, agencies, regulators, industry, civil society and international partners.

320. We are determined to reduce the flow of young people into crime and the successful work of the Violence Reduction Units and Serious Violence Duty Partnerships have demonstrated that this is achievable. Alongside continuing to invest in this work, we are delivering the Young Futures programme, consisting of Young Futures Hubs and Prevention Partnerships. As part of this initiative, the Government is piloting, Young Futures Panels in selected areas across England and Wales and continuing to invest in a public health approach to crime prevention. These panels aim to identify, assess and refer children at risk of being drawn into crime to tailored support services. A 2024 Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) report highlighted the missed opportunities to prevent children from being drawn into crime and these pilots will help us learn how to

address those gaps more effectively, with 53 panels operational since November 2025<sup>78</sup>.

- 321. Led by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Young Futures Hubs will be rolled out from March 2026. These will bring together services to improve access to opportunities and support for young people at community level, promoting positive outcomes and enabling them to thrive. Each Young Futures Hub will meet three outcomes of increasing opportunities, improving mental health and wellbeing and reducing crime.
- 322. At the same time we are reviewing the wider landscape in which Prevention Partnerships will operate to make it more streamlined and effective.

### **A clearer and more effective local landscape for crime prevention**

- 323. Strengthening prevention at the local level is vital. Effective local crime prevention requires strong cooperation across multiple partners, including the ability to share data and insights.
- 324. However, the current prevention system in England and Wales is fragmented, with varying effectiveness among partnership bodies, overlapping responsibilities linked to different governmental priorities and inconsistent funding approaches over multiple decades. This has led to a complex landscape that risks reducing accountability, transparency and partnership effectiveness.
- 325. Over the coming years we will simplify this prevention system and increase its effectiveness. The abolition of PCCs in 2028 makes it essential to consider the role of local policing bodies and local partners in the crime prevention system. This will also be informed by wider changes such as the establishment of NPS and the local government reform agenda. Any changes will reflect the unique Welsh context, recognising devolved responsibilities, the role of Public Service Boards and the unique partnership landscape in Wales. Violence Reduction Units and Community Safety Partnerships have played an important role in the local crime prevention landscape. As we review the future of local prevention work we will seek to build on their strengths while creating a system that works more effectively as a whole.

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<sup>78</sup> Gov.UK, Multi-agency responses to serious youth violence: working together to support and protect children, Part 2: What do our findings mean for multi-agency work and frontline practice with children? [Multi-agency responses to serious youth violence: working together to support and protect children - GOV.UK](#) (Viewed 19 January 2026)

326. In reviewing the local crime prevention landscape our guiding principles will include:
- i. Integrating the prevention tools of policing, with local government and local communities. This should enable the full range of local interventions – moving beyond enforcement to include wider opportunities in housing, education and town centre design.
  - ii. Strengthening the link between national and local areas on crime prevention by improving shared understanding of key crime concentrations and how to manage key cohorts. For example, working with health partners to tackle substance misuse driving prolific offending. Together, we will deliver effective local solutions while advancing national efforts to remove barriers to progress.
  - iii. Improving the dissemination of best practice. Local areas regularly develop innovative and effective approaches to crime prevention, but this best practice often does not spread to other areas. Improving links between the centre and local areas will support more systematic adoption.
327. England and Wales have a reputation as a world leader in crime prevention, and crime prevention is a core part of our police service's mission. By supporting the police to target prolific offenders and high crime locations and undertake problem solving work through stronger neighbourhood teams, we will reassert the preventative role of the police. By doing more to support young people at risk we will prevent them from falling into a life of crime. By taking greater strategic ownership of crime prevention locally and nationally we will make it everybody's business to work together to reduce crime.



# Summary of proposals

## Chapter 2: Better policing for local communities

### Part 1: Neighbourhood policing

We have delivered the foundational commitments of the **Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee** and will go further and by the end of the parliament, we will:

- Deliver **visible, accessible and community-focused policing**, including delivering 13,000 additional neighbourhood policing personnel in police forces across England and Wales.
- Design **new standards** so that **neighbourhood officers are not routinely abstracted** to other areas.
- Ensure that **shop theft and assaults on shopworkers** will no longer go unpunished by bringing in new powers and providing **additional funding to policing, working with retailers, to take further action**.
- Professionalise neighbourhood policing with **every neighbourhood police officer and PCSOs completing enhanced additional training**.
- Publish **dashboard will be published to measure performance focused on the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee commitments**.

### Part 2: Removing the barriers that stop the police focusing on the public's priorities

To make sure that officers are free to focus on fighting crime, we will:

- Work with key criminal justice partners to explore how to reduce the burden on policing, including continuing to **support the roll-out of Right Care, Right Person** to all parts of the country.
- Set out a definition of police productivity and work with policing to develop **a core set of Productivity Priorities**.
- Explore how we can **use AI to free up officers** for the front line.
- Work closely with sector partners to **streamline training**, including integrating it into everyday work where possible.

### Part 3: A new system of local police governance

We will:

- **Abolish Police and Crime Commissioners, transferring police governance in 2028 to Strategic Authority Mayors or local council leaders through Policing and Crime Boards**. Over time, these Boards

will then be adapted to provide the governance of future fewer larger forces.

- **Require every Policing and Crime Board to appoint a Policing and Crime Lead.** This will ensure Boards have the day-to-day support they need to provide dynamic and robust oversight of policing.
- **Improve the process of appointing, suspending and dismissing Chief Constables** so that it is fair, transparent and has the confidence of the public and policing.
- **Engage with the Welsh Government and Welsh policing and criminal justice partners on what the desired governance end state for policing is in Wales** to ensure it reflects the different partnership and governance arrangements.
- **Set out what functions Policing and Crime Boards and their supporting secretariats should have.** This will reduce the cost of corporate governance and bring greater consistency as Offices of Police and Crime Commissioners have grown based upon PCC wishes.

### **Chapter 3: A Stronger Policing System**

#### **Part 1: Police force structures**

We will:

- Stand up an **independent review of force structures** to design an end-state with policing which will equip forces to deliver high quality public service and tackle modern day crime and threats.
- Reduce fragmentation and inefficiency by **significantly reducing the number of police forces** by the end of next parliament.
- **Simplify the Home Secretary's powers** to alter force boundaries, smoothing the path towards new force geographies.
- Identify opportunities to deliver a **pathfinder merger this parliament**, to make progress towards our ultimate ambition for fewer, larger forces.

#### **Part 2: The National Police Service**

We will:

- Provide a stronger policing system by **establishing a new national police force, the National Police Service (NPS).**

- Empower the NPS to provide a single source of **strategic leadership** for the police service and **set standards** in areas like data, technology and training.
- Bring together the delivery of national **enabling capabilities** within the NPS (e.g. consolidating delivery and oversight of national IT and commercial services).
- Consolidate accountabilities and decision-making authority for the delivery of police forensics in the NPS and establish the legal mandate to **deliver forensics as a national service** to policing and ultimately benefit victims and the criminal justice system.
- In the final phase expand the NPS to be the single national **operational law enforcement body**, including Counter-Terrorism Policing, the National Crime Agency, Regional Organised Crime Units, and the Senior National Coordinator role for public order policing.

### **Part 3: Police Funding**

We will:

- **Review the police funding formula and distribution of police funding** locally as part of implementing significant changes to the policing system.
- Recognising this will take time, **in the interim we will work in partnership with policing to explore the structure and scope of the police settlement** and consider what steps can be taken in the short term to **better align funding allocations with this Government's policing priorities**.

## **Chapter 4: Consistently high standards**

### **Part 1: A more active Home Office**

We will:

- **Set clear National Strategic Policing Priorities** and streamline direction-setting documents to provide clear strategic direction for the policing system, linked to measurable outcomes and targets embedded in a new Performance Framework.
- Fundamentally reform the Policing Protocol to **articulate the roles and responsibilities of all policing leaders** within the reformed system.

- Solidify the boundaries of **operational independence** and clarify the appropriate use of the Home Secretary's **powers to intervene** to support improvement within policing where necessary.

## **Part 2: Improving police performance**

We will:

- Implement a new **Police Performance Framework** to provide a shared picture of comparative force performance, taking account of the wider landscape and the activities of partner organisations, where possible.
- Introduce a new **tiered performance system** to identify and support improvement within under-performing forces, with appropriate mechanisms for earlier support and intervention where performance is declining or of concern, as well as identifying areas of best practice. These mechanisms will range from increased support from the College of Policing, the embedding of 'turnaround teams' and, in the most severe cases, new powers for HMICFRS to take action with failing forces backed up by the exercising of Home Secretary intervention powers where required.
- Set up a new **Home Office Police Performance Improvement Unit** that will ensure stronger central Government oversight, the improved ability to hold forces to account on behalf of the public, and support closer working with HMICFRS, the assurance and scrutiny functions of local policing bodies and the College of Policing to assess police performance and drive improvement.
- Establish **new policing guarantees** that set out the minimum level of service the public can expect to receive from the police wherever in England and Wales they live.

## **Part 3: Raising individual standards**

We will:

- Take **focused action to improve the culture of policing**, reforming the police vetting and misconduct systems and tackling unethical and discriminatory behaviour to improve the public experience of policing and enable a healthy working environment within it.
- Work with the Independent Office for Police Conduct to **enhance accountability, scrutiny and transparency in the police complaints and misconduct system**; amending the current Governance structure and ensuring efficiency and effectiveness in investigations.

## Chapter 5: A more capable police service

### Part 1: The future Workforce

We will:

- **Create a modern workforce**, where chief constables have greater flexibility to recruit and retain those with the skills required to tackle the threats we face and where more police officers are back on the beat in local communities.
- **Deliver a national workforce strategy** to ensure we have a police workforce with the skills to meet current and future demands. This will include recognising allied police professionals and, non-warranted specialists, with stronger career pathways.
- **Strengthen police leadership by mandating national leadership standards, reforming the process for appointing chief constables** and responding to the recommendations of the **Police Leadership Commission** chaired by Lords Blunkett and Herbert.
- Introduce a **Licence to Practise** for police officers to raise standards and promote professional development.
- Give **greater flexibility** around entry and exit for the workforce, by developing the first multi-route specialised pathway that supports entry into policing at different ranks.
- Make improvements to **workforce culture through improved support, development and leadership**, especially at the first line management level.
- Use the Police Covenant to deliver **a package of wellbeing support and mandate national wellbeing standards** to supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of the police workforce.

### Part 2: Unleashing the Power of Our People Through Data and Technology

We will:

- **Invest £115m** over the next 3 years to enable the rapid and responsible **adoption of AI and automation technologies by the police**. This will include the creation of a new National Centre for AI in Policing, known as **Police.AI**.
- **Roll out the use of Live Facial Recognition (LFR) technologies**, including 40 new LFR vans to be deployed in town centres across England and Wales.

- Create a **bespoke legal framework for the use of technologies** like facial recognition, to enable safer, more efficient and consistent use of transformative technologies.
- Create a **public register of the AI in use** by Police forces.
- **Simplify the governance of data** by creating a single decision-maker for policing to take decisions on national datasets, improve efficiency and improve consistency across forces.
- **Establish clearer accountability for policing data** and how it is shared.
- **Work with policing to define specific national standards for police data and data quality requirements**, and where appropriate, mandate these.
- **Work with forces to understand the barriers to technology adoption** and provide support to encourage responsible AI adoption and raise police capability.

### **Part 3: Smarter crime prevention**

We will:

- Take a **stronger lead on crime prevention** by:
  - Delivering an **integrated crime mapping system** for England and Wales,
  - Testing and learning crime prevention interventions in these areas,
  - Establishing more effective **crime prevention partnerships** at the national level, and
  - Providing **clearer strategic direction on crime prevention**.
- Take steps to create a **clearer and more effective local landscape for crime prevention**, including to:
  - Reduce the flow of young people into crime through delivery of the **Young Futures Programme**,
  - **Bring together the prevention tools of policing**, with those of local government and local communities in the most streamlined and effective manner possible,
  - Strengthen the **link between the centre and local areas** on crime prevention,
  - Break down silos and improve spreading of **best practice**.

# Glossary

<b>AI</b>	Artificial Intelligence
<b>APP</b>	Authorised Professional Practice
<b>APCC</b>	Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
<b>CTP</b>	Counter Terrorism Policing
<b>HMICFRS</b>	His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services
<b>IOPC</b>	The Independent Office for Police Conduct
<b>LCJB</b>	Local Criminal Justice Board
<b>LFR</b>	Live Facial Recognition
<b>LPA</b>	Local Policing Area
<b>NCA</b>	National Crime Agency
<b>NPCC</b>	National Police Chiefs' Council
<b>NPoCC</b>	National Police Coordination Centre
<b>NPS</b>	National Police Service
<b>NSPP</b>	National Strategic Policing Priorities
<b>PCC</b>	Police and Crime Commissioner
<b>PCSO</b>	Police Community Support Officer
<b>PECP</b>	Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme
<b>RCH</b>	Regional Crime Hubs
<b>ROCU</b>	Regional Organised Crime Unit
<b>SOC</b>	Serious and Organised Crime
<b>SPR</b>	Strategic Policing Requirement
<b>VAWG</b>	Violence Against Women and Girls







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