



House of Commons
Home Affairs Committee

Policing for the future

Tenth Report of Session 2017–19

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

*Ordered by the House of Commons
to be printed 22 October 2018*

Home Affairs Committee

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Glossary of acronyms

APCC	Association of Police and Crime Commissioners
CEOP	Child Sexual Exploitation and Online Protection Command
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSA	Child sexual abuse
CSR	Comprehensive Spending Review
HMICFRS	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (formerly HMIC)
IIOC	Indecent images of children
IOPC	Independent Office for Police Conduct
JFT	Joint Fraud Taskforce
NAO	National Audit Office
NCA	National Crime Agency
NECC	National Economic Crime Centre
NFIB	National Fraud Intelligence Bureau
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
ONS	Office for National Statistics
PAC	Public Accounts Committee
PCC	Police and Crime Commissioner
PCSO	Police Community Support Officer
PSAEW	Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales
ROCU	Regional Organised Crime Unit

Summary

This wide-ranging report examines changing demands on policing, and considers the extent to which the service is able to meet the challenges that these create. We look first at changing trends in crime and policing and the overarching problems facing the police service in England and Wales, such as funding and investment; then at three specific areas of growing pressure on policing—online fraud, child sexual abuse, and safeguarding vulnerable people; and finally at the wider, cross-cutting reforms that are required.

Our inquiry has found that police officers across the country continue to perform a remarkable and immensely valuable public service, often in the most exacting of circumstances. However, figures on police welfare paint a picture of a service under serious strain, and we conclude that forces are badly overstretched: the number of traditional volume crimes is rising, but the number of arrests and charges brought by the police is falling.

Policing is struggling to cope in the face of changing and rising crimes, as a result of falling staff numbers, outdated technology, capabilities and structures, and fragmented leadership and direction. Without significant reform and investment, communities will be increasingly let down.

We found that:

- Many ‘volume’ crimes, including robbery, theft from the person, and vehicle-related theft, have been increasing sharply after a long period of decline. While recorded crimes have risen by 32% in the last three years, the number of charges or summons has decreased by 26%, and the number of arrests is also down.
- Neighbourhood policing, which is vital to the service’s response to many types of crime, is being eroded: we found that forces had lost at least a fifth of their neighbourhood policing capacity, on average, since 2010.
- Without additional funding for policing, we have no doubt that there will be dire consequences for public safety, criminal justice, community cohesion and public confidence. We strongly recommend that police funding is prioritised in the Autumn Budget and the next Comprehensive Spending Review. The current police funding model is not fit for purpose: it is time to stop kicking the problem into the long grass, and recognise the true cost of policing.

We make a number of specific recommendations about three growing areas of demand: online fraud, child sexual abuse, and safeguarding vulnerable people. Whilst the police and Home Office have worked together very effectively on investment and reform to counter the changing terror threat, in these other areas in which demand is changing, they are struggling to respond. We reach the following conclusions:

- Only a tiny proportion of online fraud cases are ever investigated, and the police response to this form of crime is in desperate need of a fundamental restructure, with investigations undertaken at a national and regional level and local forces focusing on victim support.
- The private sector must do much more to reduce demand on policing from online fraud and child sexual abuse, and we make specific recommendations about the regulation of internet companies, including those taking insufficient action against indecent images of children.
- Police forces are woefully under-resourced for the number of online child abuse investigations they now need to undertake, and the demands created by the management of registered sex offenders.
- The Government should appoint a Commissioner for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse to work across departments and agencies, and who should produce a bold and comprehensive cross-Government strategy on child protection and the prevention of child sexual abuse.
- Forces should be mandated to provide a minimum two-day training course on mental health to all officers and police community support officers (PCSOs), and the Government should use the NHS funding uplift to achieve a significant reduction in the level of police involvement in mental health crisis work.

Drawing on over 90 pieces of written evidence and nine oral evidence sessions, we also reach a number of overarching conclusions about the future of policing in England and Wales, which must be addressed with urgency if the police service is to meet the challenges of the 21st century:

- Forces are failing to meet the challenges of the digital age. Police forces' investment in and adoption of new technology is suffering from a complete lack of coordination and leadership, which is badly letting down police officers, who are struggling to do their jobs with out-of-date technology. We fear that the lack of digital capability has become a systemic problem through the service. The Government should urgently cost and scope a prestigious national digital exploitation centre for serious crime, in time to account for the required funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review.
- Above all, policing is suffering from a complete failure of leadership from the Home Office. As the lead department for policing, it cannot continue to stand back while crime patterns change so fast that the police struggle to respond. Only a central Government department has the clout to drive national partnerships with organisations such as the NHS or with global internet companies, for example.
- Before the end of November, the Home Office should launch a transparent, root-and-branch review of policing, publishing proposals by the end of February, which should focus on the reallocation of responsibilities and capabilities at a local, regional and national level. The Government should also set up

a National Policing Council—a transparent, policy-making body chaired by the Home Secretary—and a National Policing Assembly, comprising all police and crime commissioners (PCCs) and chief constables.

1 Introduction

Background to this inquiry

1. In January 2017, our predecessor Committee launched an inquiry into ‘Policing for the Future’. The Committee issued a call for evidence on a number of issues, including:

- Reforms which might be necessary to ensure that the police service has the ongoing capacity to fulfil its primary task of ensuring public safety, in the face of new and evolving threats and challenges;
- Current and future crime trends, and their implications for policing in England and Wales;
- Police funding levels, efficiency and cost-effectiveness; and
- The role of digital technology in policing, including take-up, risks and barriers to use.¹

We held one oral evidence session before Parliament was dissolved for the 2017 General Election, hearing from academics, think-tank representatives and a then-Chief Inspector from Thames Valley Police, Katy Barrow-Grint.

2. When the current Committee was established, we decided to relaunch this inquiry, and held a further eight oral evidence sessions, along with an informal roundtable event on barriers to innovation and reform in policing. As well as hearing from senior leaders in the police service, including police and crime commissioners and chief constables, we held thematic evidence sessions on online fraud, child sexual abuse, vulnerability and ‘safeguarding’ work, and neighbourhood policing. Earlier this year, we visited the National Digital Exploitation Service, the Counter-Terrorism Internet Referral Unit, and the National Crime Agency (NCA), including the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Command (CEOP).

3. Over the course of the two Parliaments, we and our predecessor Committee received over 90 pieces of written evidence from a wide range of organisations and individuals, and we wrote to all forces to request data on a number of subjects. The results of that exercise are detailed throughout this report, and further information is provided as an Annex. Additional input was provided by two excellent Specialist Advisors, Sir Peter Fahy, former Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, and Bob Atkins, former Chief Financial Officer for the Mayor of London’s Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC). We are grateful to all those who contributed to this inquiry.

Report structure

4. This report is not intended to be a complete review of policing, and we were unable to consider every issue relating to accountability, structures and the police workforce. Instead, it focuses on the changing challenges facing the police and their readiness to respond to them. In order to address both specific areas of rising demand and overarching issues facing the police, it is divided into three sections:

1 Home Affairs Committee news item, [Policing for the future inquiry launched](#), 9 January 2017

- Part I includes this introductory chapter and Chapter 2. It outlines the broad context for our inquiry, and concerns regarding police welfare. The second chapter considers recent crime trends, including the increase in some types of ‘traditional’ volume crime, changes to crime detection rates, changes to police funding, and the current state of neighbourhood policing.
- Part II addresses three specific areas of rising demand examined in detail during our inquiry: online fraud, child sexual abuse, and safeguarding vulnerable people, including mental health crisis work.
- Part III offers recommendations on cross-cutting issues facing policing more generally, including police funding, discussed in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 looks at overarching police technology issues, and Chapter 8 explores police workforce and cultural issues, including key themes emerging from our roundtable event on barriers to innovation and reform. The final chapter considers the role of the Home Office in driving policing policy, and the challenges arising from the 43-force structure.

5. Our extensive inquiry has enabled us to examine a range of issues in detail, painting an overall picture of a police service which still has great strengths, values and expertise, but which is struggling to deal with the fast-changing demands of the 21st century, using systems and structures that have barely changed since the 1960s. We will show that the current structure and funding model for policing in England and Wales is not fit for purpose, and that the Home Office needs to demonstrate far more leadership on crime and policing—particularly in areas where crimes are changing, and where national reform is required.

Police officer welfare

6. This inquiry did not explicitly examine the welfare of the police workforce, but we feel it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge the pressures being experienced on the frontline. The results of the latest Pay Survey by the Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales (PSAEW) and its Northern Ireland counterparts suggested that levels of morale and motivation among its members are decreasing. The proportion of respondents who reported low personal morale increased from 18% last year to just under a quarter in this year’s survey. A majority of respondents who intended to leave the service said that the impact of the job on their family/personal life had a major impact on their decision.²

7. Figures collected by the PSAEW in 2016 showed that half of surveyed superintendents had signs of anxiety and 27% experienced symptoms of depression. Over a third (39%) said that the demands of their job had increased by an “excessive amount” in the past year, and only 40% “agreed that it is acceptable for people to admit errors, be seen as fallible, seek support and admit they can’t cope etc”. Less than a third (28%) said that they had sufficient resources or staff to do their job.³ A Police Federation survey undertaken in 2016 found that 77% of 17,000 respondents worked on rotating shifts—mostly including nights—and 79% felt so fatigued that it interfered with their family life. The most frequent reason for

2 Police Federation, Police Superintendents’ Association and Police Superintendents’ Association of Northern Ireland [Pay Survey 2017– Headline Findings](#), January 2018

3 [Police Superintendents’ Personal Resilience Survey 2016](#): Joint survey of the members of PSAEW, ASPS and SANI, March 2017

working overtime over the previous 12 months was: “There weren’t enough officers on shift in my team/unit”.⁴ The mental wellbeing of respondents was said to be “considerably poorer” than the general adult population and other ‘high stress’ occupations.⁵

8. Since we launched this inquiry, six police officers have lost their lives in the line of duty, including PC Keith Palmer GM, who died while defending the Palace of Westminster from a terrorist attack. On a daily basis, officers are faced with some of the most exacting and upsetting scenarios imaginable, and deal with them with dignity, dedication and commitment to public service. Many people spend the worst hours of their life in the reassuring presence of a police officer: the aftermath of a violent attack, an unexpected bereavement, a mental health crisis, or the anxious wait for a loved one who has gone missing. Policing is a service which, above all, depends on the people who work within it, and if they are not supported then the service will badly decline.

9. We wish to put on record our immense gratitude to police officers, PCSOs, special constables and police staff across the UK for their service. We recognise the immense challenges inherent to any policing role, and the impact of this career on their health, wellbeing and family life. Recent figures on police officer morale and welfare paint a picture of a service under severe strain, which causes us serious concern. The Home Office must do more to protect and promote the welfare of the police workforce, who safeguard all our welfare on a daily basis.

4 Police Federation of England and Wales, [2016 Officer Demand, Capacity, and Welfare Survey](#)

5 Police Federation of England and Wales, [2016 Officer Demand, Capacity, and Welfare Survey](#)

2 Changing trends in crime and policing

Introduction

10. Crime is changing, with new demands on policing emerging, such as online child sexual abuse and digital disclosure. But at the same time, many ‘traditional’ volume crimes are rising, and the police are bringing forward fewer charges for a wide range of offences. This chapter examines recent trends in crime, detection and charging rates, police funding, and the current state of neighbourhood policing, which is the bedrock of British policing.

Crime rates

11. Police-recorded crime increased by 27% between the year ending March 2010 and the year ending 2018.⁶ The Office for National Statistics (ONS) attributes this partly to changes in recording practices, which have been the subject of “ongoing work” by forces over the last three years. It nevertheless suggests that genuine increases in some forms of crime have played a role, along with more victims reporting crime to the police.⁷ In the year to March 2018, compared with the previous year, there was a 24% increase in police-recorded sexual offences and a 23% increase in domestic abuse offences. Improved levels of victim confidence and prominent public discussions about sexual abuse are likely to have played a role in some of these trends.⁸

12. This report considers three areas of rising demand on the police in detail: online fraud (Chapter 3), child sexual abuse (Chapter 4), and safeguarding vulnerable people (Chapter 5). Alongside these emerging or growing challenges, however, there have been increases in a number of offences that might be seen as ‘traditional’ demands on policing. The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), which is generally regarded as a more reliable measure of victimisation, found that most offences (including sexual offences) had not become more common in recent years, and some have been decreasing. However, in the year to March 2018, it also found significant increases in the last year in some forms of traditional ‘volume’ crime, following a long-term downward trajectory in most Western countries, including a 24% increase in robbery, a 16% increase on theft from the person, and a 17% increase in vehicle-related theft.⁹

13. Serious violence is also increasing. The crime survey is not effective at capturing high-harm violent offences (due to their rarity), but in the year to March 2018, a 16% rise in police-recorded knife crime was accompanied by a 14% increase in hospital admissions for assaults involving a sharp instrument,¹⁰ and possession of a knife or sharp instrument increased by 28%. Firearms offences stabilised, but this follows a rise of 31% between 2014 and 2017.¹¹ We have launched a separate inquiry into Serious Violence, which is considering the drivers behind this trend and the effectiveness of the Government and police service’s response.

6 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

7 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

8 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

9 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

10 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

11 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

Detection and charging rates

14. There is strong evidence to suggest that the police are struggling to keep on top of these increased demands. BBC Panorama's *Police Under Pressure*, aired in May, analysed national figures and found that there were 65,000 fewer charges brought in the three years to 2017, despite a 21 per cent increase in recorded crime.¹² Between 2015 and 2018, there was a 32% increase in recorded crime but a 26% decrease in the number of charges or summons., with over 153,000 fewer criminals being brought to justice.^{13,14,15} Three quarters of theft offences were closed without a suspect being identified.¹⁶ A spokesperson for the Police Federation reportedly responded that the figures were proof that policing in the UK was “on the critical list”, adding: “We are sleepwalking into a nightmare”.¹⁷

15. Pressures are also showing in the time it takes the police to respond to calls for service, including emergencies. The latest “police effectiveness” report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Service (HMICFRS—previously HMIC), published in March, said that a quarter of forces were struggling to respond to calls for service in time. In one force, in between 20 and 50 per cent of cases, calls that should have been responded to within 24 hours were not dealt with on time; in another, scheduled appointments (instead of an urgent response) were used in nearly one-third of domestic abuse cases,¹⁸ in contravention of national standards. The NAO reported recently that the proportion of victims who are dissatisfied with the police response is increasing. It also found degradations in some forms of service to the public, including a fall in the arrest rate, from 17 arrests per 1,000 of the population in 2014–15 to 14 per 1,000 in 2016–17.¹⁹

16. Many ‘volume’ crimes, including robbery, theft from the person, and vehicle-related theft, are now increasing at an alarmingly steep rate, after a long period of decline. While recorded crimes have risen by 32% in the last three years, the number of charges or summons has decreased by 26% and the number of arrests is also down. The wider Crime Survey also found recent steep increases in robbery and theft. If these trends continue, the service risks both a serious decrease in public safety and in confidence in the police and the CPS.

Police funding

17. Central Government funding to police forces has reduced by 30% in real terms since 2010–11.²⁰ Overall budget cuts have varied between forces due to additional revenue from council tax (the ‘police precept’), with some forces relying more heavily on central government funding than others; between 2010 and 2015, the average funding reduction across all forces in England and Wales was 18%.²¹ Wages and other personnel costs account for the majority of force budgets, so the size of the police workforce has reduced

12 *BBC News*, [Fewer crimes ending with charges - check your police area](#), 16 May 2018

13 Home Office, [Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2014/15](#), July 2015

14 Home Office, [Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), July 2018

15 ONS, Crime in England and Wales: Appendix Tables: [Year ending March 2018](#)

16 Home Office, [Crime outcomes in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), July 2018

17 *BBC News*, [No-one charged in 9 out of 10 crimes - Home Office](#), 19 July 2018

18 HMICFRS, [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017](#), March 2018

19 National Audit Office, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018 ([HC 1501](#)), 11 September 2018

20 National Audit Office, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018 ([HC 1501](#)), 11 September 2018

21 [Police funding](#), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper 7279, 25 February 2016

significantly. Ring-fenced funding (including for police community support officers—PCSOs) was abolished within the first two years of the 2010–15 Coalition Government,²² and the police workforce reduced by 37,400 between March 2010 and March 2015: a 16% cut in the number of officers, PCSOs and staff.²³ Workforce reductions varied significantly between forces, ranging from a 23% cut in officer numbers in Cleveland to a 1% cut in Surrey, where almost half of the force’s funding comes from council tax revenue.²⁴ Further reductions in recent years have brought the total workforce down to 199,752 (as of March 2018)—an 18% decrease since March 2010.²⁵

18. During the 2015 Autumn Statement, the then Chancellor, George Osborne, committed to protecting the overall police budget over the Spending Review period (2015–2020).²⁶ However, increases in funding have largely been focused on specialised areas of policing, such as child sexual abuse, counter-terrorism and cybercrime, and force funding remains ‘flat’ only if PCCs raise the maximum level permitted from the police precept (2%).²⁷ Any larger increase to the precept requires a local referendum for approval. In addition, the assumption of flat funding does not account for higher-than-expected inflation levels since 2015, including an annual CPI rate of 2.6% in 2017,²⁸ meaning that forces have been experiencing further real-terms cuts to their core funding.

19. The latest efficiency report from HMICFRS found that the majority of forces were “able to demonstrate that they have absorbed budget reductions well and have improved the efficiency with which they operate”, but concluded that “policing is under significant stress”.²⁹ A more recent report by the National Audit Office (NAO) concluded that the Home Office “does not know if the police system is financially sustainable”, and it “cannot be sure overall funding is being directed to the right places”.³⁰

20. Witnesses were clear to us about the significant impact of funding cuts on forces. The Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, Cressida Dick, told us that the service cannot “go on dealing with rising demand and greater complexity forever without having to make some hard choices. You make choices either about reducing the scope of the mission or taking more risk about what you do”.³¹ We return to the subject of police funding in Chapter 6 of this report.

21. Policing is facing both new challenges and rising demand from traditional crimes, yet resources in recent years have been strained, and forces are under considerable stress merely to keep up with existing pressures. Without a change of course, the current trends—fewer officers delivering a wider mission, under increasing demands—will continue, and policing will struggle to attract the talented individuals that it relies on in order to survive.

22 House of Commons Library Debate Pack ([CDP-2017-0212](#)), Funding for community policing, 3 November 2017

23 [Police funding](#), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper 7279, 25 February 2016

24 [Police funding](#), House of Commons Library Briefing Paper 7279, 25 February 2016

25 Home Office, Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2018, Data tables: [Table H3](#)

26 HM Treasury, [Chancellor George Osborne’s Spending Review and Autumn Statement 2015 speech](#), 25 November 2015

27 [Police Grant Report England and Wales 2016/17](#): Written statement - HLWS431, 17 December 2015 and [Police Grant Report England & Wales 2016/17](#): Written statement - HCWS510, 4 February 2016

28 ONS website, [CPIH ANNUAL RATE](#), released 15 August 2018

29 HMICFRS news item, [‘Significantly stressed’ police forces need to continue to change](#), 9 November 2017

30 National Audit Office, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018 ([HC 1501](#)), 11 September 2018

31 [Q462](#)

Neighbourhood policing

22. Earlier this year, the BBC reported that one in seven police posts “axed” over the previous seven years had been “bobbies on the beat”, including 1,500 neighbourhood policing posts and over 4,000 PCSOs.³² PCSOs were introduced in 2002, and have powers sufficient to deal with anti-social behaviour and minor disorder. In July, Suffolk Constabulary confirmed a plan to cut its number of full-time equivalent (FTE) PCSOs to 48, while moving 100 officers into safer neighbourhood teams. The force said that its “demand profile is changing and increasing”, citing ‘county lines’, youth violence and ‘hidden harms’ such as CSA as key challenges. It concluded that “the training, capability and powers of a police constable will be more effective in meeting these challenges”.³³ Similarly, it was announced in October 2017 that Norfolk Constabulary would be the first force to remove its 150 PCSOs from its workforce, appointing 81 officers and 16 staff members instead. Simon Bailey, Chief Constable of Norfolk, reportedly said that the force was experiencing rising demand from “high risk, high harm” cases, and required “a workforce that is able to deal with that”.³⁴

The value and effectiveness of neighbourhood policing

23. Neighbourhood policing encompasses much more than a mere visible presence in communities. Witnesses emphasised the value gained from the ability of neighbourhood officers to work proactively with community partners to solve problems, based on an understanding of the local area and the issues it faces. For example, Andy Higgins from the Police Foundation told us that “the version of neighbourhood policing that I want to see prevail [...] emphasises the importance of having embedded practitioners in the places that need them most [...] for meaningful periods of time, not distracted by 999 calls, investigations, safeguarding and the like”. He said that they “should have a principal remit to develop an in-depth understanding of that place, the people who live there and the risks to them, [...] forming trusting relationships with the people there, using police intelligence and data, and sharing information with partners.”³⁵

24. Alison Hernandez, PCC for Devon and Cornwall and Deputy APCC Lead for Local Partnerships and Policing, offered two moving examples of the sort of trust and affection that good neighbourhood officers can bring to local policing. One Sergeant in Hayle and St Ives, Mike Friday, who was due to be moved to another team, attracted a petition with 6,000 signatures “to tell me they wanted to keep him”, because “he was so passionate about neighbourhood policing, knew everybody and made a difference”. In Falmouth, 6,000 people out of 20,000 in the community “came out” for the funeral of a local PC, Andy Hocking, following his death a few years ago.³⁶

25. The Police Foundation says that visible foot patrols “do not reduce crime rates”, but that they can “improve community relations and reduce fear of crime”.³⁷ Indeed, opinion polls over decades have found consistently high degrees of public support for foot patrol.^{38,39}

32 *BBC News*, [Neighbourhood police: One in seven officers axed were beat bobbies](#), 1 February 2018

33 Suffolk Police and Crime Commissioner, [A local police service for Suffolk's future](#), June 2018

34 *The Telegraph*, [First police force in Britain set to axe all PCSOs amid falling budgets](#), October 2017

35 [Q428](#)

36 [Q424](#)

37 The Police Foundation, [Neighbourhood policing: Past, present and future – A review of the literature](#), May 2015

38 Wakefield A., [The Value of Foot Patrol: A Review of Research](#), published by the Police Foundation, 2016

39 College of Policing, [The effectiveness of visible police patrol](#)

The College of Policing’s ‘What Works’ Centre for Crime Reduction says that a highly-visible police presence can only affect criminality when targeted to high-crime locations.⁴⁰ Communities value the long-term impact of neighbourhood policing, however, including their ability to build relationships, their community prevention work, and their follow-up with repeat offenders.

26. Senior police officers have emphasised the importance of good neighbourhood policing to other specialist areas, including counter-terrorism. Sir Mark Rowley, former National Counter-Terrorism Policing Lead, reportedly said in March that the “bedrock of neighbourhood policing” needs more investment, adding:

The more complex communities are the more important it is for police to have the trust of all elements of society. You only build that trust if you have a close relationship and you only build that with people on the beat. For example, information from communities is critical to spotting some of the volatile individuals who rapidly accelerate from being a disenfranchised, to someone who has a terrorist motivation.⁴¹

27. Similarly, Commissioner Dick described to us the positive impact of neighbourhood officers in Finsbury Park, where a mosque was raided in 2003. Since then, they have built trusting relationships with local people and ensured that “community issues are dealt with extremely fast, extremely well and extremely sensitively”. She told us that neighbourhood officers “glue communities together and glue the counter-terrorist officers to communities”, adding: “I am very concerned if we reduce the numbers of those; I actually think, in certain areas, we need to be doing a lot more work through them [...] with other public authorities to stop people from becoming violent extremists”.⁴²

Multi-agency partnerships

28. Garry Shewan, former Assistant Chief Constable at Greater Manchester Police, made a link between partnership work and crime reduction, telling us that you “have to have a close working relationship” with “all the partners in a place, to understand why crime happens and to come up with long-term solutions.”⁴³ Some forces have adopted models of neighbourhood policing that involve co-locating the police with other public services. In Greater Manchester, for example, Integrated Neighbourhood Teams comprise PCSOs and/or neighbourhood officers working in the same office as a number of other practitioners, such as housing officers and mental health professionals, who work together on multi-agency interventions for individuals who repeatedly come into contact with a range of public services.⁴⁴ In its recent report on neighbourhood policing, the Police Foundation praised these models, but said that they should be considered separately from neighbourhood policing. Officers working within multi-agency teams said that more traditional aspects of neighbourhood policing had been impacted by their role, with one telling researchers: “There’s no patrolling. I mean six weeks I’ve been here and I’ve not even put a cap on and gone walking.”⁴⁵

40 College of Policing news item, [Research shows targeted local policing approach reduces crime](#), June 2017

41 *Evening Standard*, [Police need cash to tackle rise in knife crime, says former Met anti-terror chief](#), 10 July 2018

42 [Q126](#)

43 [Q424](#)

44 The Police Foundation, 2017 Annual Conference: Networked policing: effective collaboration between the police, partners and communities, [Selected conference footage and slides](#)

45 The Police Foundation, [The future of neighbourhood policing](#), May 2018

29. The Foundation recommended that neighbourhood officers or PCSOs should be embedded within places for an extended period of time, develop relationships with a broad range of people living in and frequenting those places, share information and knowledge with local practitioners from other agencies, and develop and implement creative local interventions that respond to their “deep, contextual understanding” of the problem at hand, informed by knowledge about what has been effective elsewhere. The Foundation said that police resources should be shifted, where possible, into local prevention work, but acknowledged that “without additional resources, any success will be limited in scale and vulnerable to unforeseen shifts in priorities and context”.⁴⁶

30. Neighbourhood policing brings immense value to communities, particularly when officers or PCSOs are given the space and time to get to know local people and problems, develop tailored solutions, and build trust in policing. This is central to the British model of policing by consent. It is understandable that forces would be tempted to prioritise reactive, emergency work over proactive problem-solving within communities, but we regard this as a false economy. The relationships built by neighbourhood officers enable problems to be dealt with before they become emergencies, and encourage cooperation with the police at times of crisis. The decline in neighbourhood policing has therefore been a significant loss to communities.

31. We welcome efforts to integrate policing with other public services, including through multi-agency teams based in the same location, which focus on individuals who come into repeat contact with authorities. We are concerned, however, that some forces may see this model as their sole ‘offering’ on neighbourhood policing. There can be no substitute for having officers and PCSOs who are embedded in their local communities.

Impact of police funding reductions

32. The workforce reductions outlined earlier in this Chapter appear to have had a significant impact on neighbourhood policing capacity, although some forces have sought to prioritise spending on frontline neighbourhood officers. PCSOs have borne the brunt of workforce reductions since 2010, with a 40% cut in numbers between March 2010 and March 2018 (from 16,918 down to 10,139 PCSOs in England and Wales).⁴⁷ Alison Hernandez told us that “neighbourhood policing is far more than PCSOs”, and Garry Shewan said that “the reduction in the number of PCSOs is okay, as long as they are replaced by a commitment from forces to ensure that their frontline police officers spend time, have responsibility and ownership over a local area, [...] and are committed to problem-solving activity and working with partners”.⁴⁸

33. As part of our data collection exercise, we asked forces how many officers and PCSOs had dedicated neighbourhood roles in a) 2009–10 and b) 2017–18, to assess the impact of budget reductions on their neighbourhood policing capacity. Kent and Essex both reported significant increases in the number of neighbourhood officers, but with caveats relating to their recording practices. Kent told us that a restructure took place between 2010 and 2018, which resulted in “the amalgamation of Central Response, Neighbourhood and Custody to form new Local District Policing Teams”. This resulted

46 The Police Foundation, [The future of neighbourhood policing](#), May 2018

47 Home Office, [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2018 \(data tables\)](#), 19 July 2018

48 [Q425](#)

in “the creation of a new job description to reflect the merged roles of Neighbourhood and Response”, meaning that the force cannot specify how many of those individuals are neighbourhood officers. Similarly, Essex Police’s figure for 2018 is “a combination of local policing and neighbourhood policing”, whereas in 2010 they were separate functions, and were recorded as such. Finally, the Metropolitan Police provided only estimated figures, because its model for neighbourhood policing has changed. The majority of its officers have been placed in emergency response roles since 2010, along with two dedicated officers in each ward.

34. After removing the Kent, Essex and Met returns, of the remaining 33 forces with data for both years, all but one (Hertfordshire) reported a decrease in the numbers of neighbourhood officers, averaging cuts of 35%. When all 36 forces were included, the average reduction was 21%. Out of the 37 forces providing data on neighbourhood PCSOs, all but five reported a decrease, with an average reduction of 21%. Clearly, there may be differences in the ways in which all forces have measured the number of neighbourhood officers, response officers and PCSOs, so there are limitations to the comparisons we can make between forces.⁴⁹



35. HMIC’s 2016 report on police effectiveness (published in March 2017) claimed that “the police service is not as well equipped to stop crime happening in the first place as it has been in the past” and that neighbourhood policing “continues to be eroded”.⁵⁰ HMI Zoe Billingham, who led the inspection, raised a “red flag” to warn forces of the consequences of “an unconscious form of rationing of police services”, and cautioned that neighbourhood policing must be preserved as “the cornerstone of the policing model in England and Wales”.⁵¹ The results of a survey of neighbourhood officers, published within

49 For example, several forces, including Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire, noted that organisational changes and the adoption of new policing models over the period in question will have driven some of the changes in neighbourhood officer numbers (but to a lesser extent than the Kent and Essex re-classifications).

50 HMIC press release, [HMIC raises warning flag as forces strive to cope with increased demand](#), 2 March 2017

51 HMIC press release, [HMIC raises warning flag as forces strive to cope with increased demand](#), 2 March 2017

that report, indicated that between half and two-thirds had been removed from their normal duties once or more per week to fill other functions, such as supervision of people in cells or hospitals, or transporting detainees.⁵²

36. The inspectorate's latest effectiveness report, published in March, noted that there had been some improvement in this area since the previous year. It observed some forces "changing their approach to neighbourhood policing to make sure they have enough officers and PCSOs dedicated to preventing crime, engaging with communities and tackling anti-social behaviour." It also described as "commendable" the fact that, since 2016, nearly half of all forces had increased or maintained the number of staff assigned to neighbourhood policing.⁵³ It did, however, express concern that some forces still do not know the extent to which officers and PCSOs were being taken away from their local policing duties to handle tasks elsewhere, and said that there were inconsistencies in "tackling local problems in a structured way" and in "using approaches the police service knows are effective".⁵⁴

Deployment to other policing teams

37. Andy Higgins told us that there has been "an expansion of the definition and understanding of what neighbourhood policing is", adding: "Some forces, for example, are putting 40% of their entire workforce into what they call neighbourhood policing", but "that covers a lot of the response and investigation work as well".⁵⁵ Chief Constable Thornton confirmed that neighbourhood officers are "doing a lot of response work", and that there is "undoubtedly a capacity issue in neighbourhood policing".⁵⁶ The Policing Minister, Nick Hurd MP, told us that he shares the concern, "expressed by Sir Thomas Winsor and his inspectorates", about the degree to which neighbourhood policing has "degraded" in recent years, resulting in "a fragmented system" and "different models of neighbourhood policing in different forces".⁵⁷

52 HMIC, [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016: A national overview](#), March 2017

53 HMICFRS, [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017: A national overview](#), March 2018

54 HMICFRS, [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017: A national overview](#), March 2018

55 [Q424](#)

56 [Q476](#)

57 [Q564](#)

Redeployment of neighbourhood officers across forces

We asked forces what proportion of their neighbourhood officers were asked to join response teams a) more than once per week, and b) more than once per month. The majority were not able to quantify this phenomenon, but the responses included the following estimates:

- City of London estimated that in 2009/10, around 10% of neighbourhood officers were redeployed to response teams more than once per month and 5% more than once per week, and in 2017/18 the figures were around 45% and 35% respectively;
- Dorset said that, during 2017/18, approximately 100 response duties per month were undertaken by neighbourhood officers;
- Gloucestershire estimated that, in 2017/18, 50% of neighbourhood officers were redeployed more than once per month, and 20% more than once per week;
- Leicestershire said that, during 2017/18, 116 out of 151 police constables (77%) and 34 out of 231 PCSOs (15%) were redeployed more than once per week; and
- Wiltshire told us that “Our NPT [neighbourhood policing team] now incorporates our response capability, so we no longer have response teams”.

38. The College of Policing published new guidelines on neighbourhood policing in July, with a short consultation held during August. The guidelines define the key features of neighbourhood policing as being “accessible to, responsible for and accountable to communities”; engaging with those communities “to build trust and develop understanding of needs”; and undertaking “collaborative problem solving with communities”.⁵⁸ The supporting material for senior leaders appears, to some extent, to acknowledge that neighbourhood policing may be deprioritised by forces. It states that chiefs and other leaders should support neighbourhood policing by, among other things, “emphasising that neighbourhood policing remains important but acknowledging that it can be a challenge when organised crime and public protection have to be managed on a routine basis”.⁵⁹

39. We are gravely concerned about the erosion of neighbourhood policing in a number of forces. The data we collected suggests that forces have lost at least a fifth of their neighbourhood policing capacity, on average. It is vital that neighbourhood officers and PCSOs are able to devote sufficient time to embedding themselves in their communities, and are not removed from this work to carry out reactive response or crime investigation work outside their dedicated area. It is clear, however, that some forces are struggling to respond to incoming urgent demands, and are using their neighbourhood officers to plug the gap. We welcome the College of Policing’s recent

58 College of Policing news item, [New neighbourhood policing guidelines published for public consultation](#), 2 July 2018

59 College of Policing, [Neighbourhood policing guidelines: Supporting material for senior leaders](#), 2018

guidance on neighbourhood policing, but this is insufficient to prevent forces from deprioritising proactive neighbourhood work, when faced with competing demands and limited resources.

40. Neighbourhood officers underpin the police service's more specialist capabilities in crucial ways. In counter-terrorism policing, they allow intelligence to be gathered and shared at a local level, and create the trust that encourages people to share their concerns about radicalised individuals. As part of the police response to gangs and serious organised crime, neighbourhood officers get to know the young people locally who might be tempted to get involved with criminal activity, and can spot patterns of behaviour that other parts of the service might miss. Once lost, these relationships cannot be quickly rebuilt. Without the maintenance of a consistent and reliable police presence in communities, forces' efforts to respond to the recent wave in volume and violent crime will be severely compromised.

41. Whilst this report has not examined the causes of the recent increase in 'traditional' crimes such as robbery, theft and vehicle related crime, we note that it is happening after several years of decline in the level of neighbourhood policing and community prevention work. We urge police forces and the Home Office to ensure that neighbourhood policing is not cut back further, and that forces instead start to reinvest in community capacity-building. It is absolutely vital that this cornerstone of British policing is reaffirmed throughout the country, to ensure that trust and legitimacy is maintained. This is particularly important in communities in which distrust of the police—and in public authorities more widely—is rife, and in which those local links are all the more important. Nevertheless, in all neighbourhoods, without local engagement, policing is at risk of becoming irrelevant to most people, particularly in the context of low rates of investigation for many crimes. The Government should report back to us within one month of the Comprehensive Spending Review, to explain what actions it has taken to maintain core neighbourhood policing functions in all forces, and to prevent officers from being diverted to other policing requirements.

3 Online fraud

Introduction

42. The use of internet-enabled smartphones and tablets has increased drastically during the last decade, and data suggests that 86% of people go online “daily or almost daily” in 2018, compared with 35% in 2006.⁶⁰ Unsurprisingly, this explosion in internet use has been accompanied by an upsurge in online crime, including fraud. Earlier this year, it was reported that victims of online fraud are turning to private investigators, due to dissatisfaction with the police response.⁶¹ This chapter explores the police response to fraud, particularly online, including key trends in offending, the role of Action Fraud, the quality of the police response, capacity and structural issues, and the role of industry. Cyber skills and training are crucial issues, but we return to them in Chapter 7, when we consider police technology.

Prevalence and trends

43. The ONS estimates that there were 3.2 million fraud offences in the year ending March 2018, including 1.7 million cyber-related offences (54% of the total). Based on these figures, approximately one in six offences are incidents of online fraud, and fraud (more broadly) is now the most commonly-experienced crime, accounting for 42% of all estimated offences.⁶² New questions on fraud and computer misuse were only added to the Crime Survey for England and Wales in October 2015, so long-term trends are difficult to assess, although City of London Police (the national lead force on fraud) told us that “Fraud and cyber crime have grown exponentially”,⁶³ and many witnesses referred to this as a significant and growing area of demand.

44. Police-recorded crime figures should be treated with caution due to changes in recording practices, but the police recorded 105,181 fraud offences in the year ending March 2007, compared with 261,943 recorded by Action Fraud in the year ending March 2017 (a 149% increase over the decade).⁶⁴ Nevertheless, only 13% of incidents of fraud are reported by the victim to either the police or to Action Fraud,⁶⁵ suggesting either that demand on policing could increase significantly in future, or that victims have little confidence in (or knowledge of) the system.

45. The latest annual fraud indicator estimated that fraud costs the UK £190 billion per year, including £134 million from online banking fraud and £568 million from plastic card fraud. Individual loss can also be substantial: in the year ending March 2017, of the 68% of victims who suffered financial loss from fraud, 37% lost more than £250 and 5% lost £2,500 or more⁶⁶ £101 million was lost to bank transfer scams in the first six months of 2017, and only a quarter of those funds were returned to the victim.⁶⁷

60 ONS, [Internet access – households and individuals, Great Britain: 2018](#), 7 August 2018

61 *The Times*, [Cybercrime victims forced to use private investigators](#), 21 May 2018

62 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

63 City of London Police ([PFF0065](#))

64 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: Appendix Tables](#), March 2018

65 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2018](#), 19 July 2018

66 ONS, [Crime in England and Wales: Additional tables on Fraud and Cybercrime, Year ending March 2017](#)

67 ONS, [Overview of fraud and computer misuse statistics for England and Wales](#), 25 January 2018

Action Fraud

46. Action Fraud is a centralised reporting centre for victims of fraud in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It is run by the City of London Police, although the contact centre is contracted out, and it works alongside the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB). The NFIB assesses and analyses reports to identify patterns, referring viable lines of inquiry to the relevant police force or regional organised crime unit (ROCU).⁶⁸ Victims of fraud who go to the police are advised to report the crime to Action Fraud, unless there is a ‘call for service’ and the offender is committing or has recently committed the crime at that time, or there is a local suspect. If a victim declines to report the crime to Action Fraud, the police should take full details of the incident and pass them to the NFIB via Action Fraud.⁶⁹

47. Action Fraud has repeatedly attracted negative press attention, after a series of administrative problems and reports of poor service. It was reportedly forced to apologise to almost 2,500 people in 2013, after their crime reports went missing due to an IT error.⁷⁰ In 2015, the not-for-profit organisation contracted to run Action Fraud’s contact centre, Broadcasting Support Services, went into administration.⁷¹ The US company Concentrix took over the contract in July 2015.⁷²

48. Action Fraud has undergone reform in recent years, with £35 million of government funding spent on improvements to the helpline and website, including a new online reporting tool. Since October 2016, the call centre has been available 24/7 and the Home Office has invested £5.5 million in a new IT system for Action Fraud and the NFIB.⁷³ Nevertheless, *The Times* reported in May that only cases involving losses of over £100,000 are being passed to a human investigator, with others being “dismissed by a computer algorithm as unworthy of investigation”.⁷⁴ In August, it was reported that Action Fraud only picks up two-thirds of phone calls, with an average wait of 11 minutes and 8 seconds.⁷⁵

49. In written evidence, City of London Police suggested that public expectations of Action Fraud are unrealistic. It said that there is “an expectation by some members of the public that most, if not all, frauds should be investigated. Operationally this is not feasible”. The force argued: “The volume of fraud means that investigative resources need to be prioritised towards the most harmful and organised frauds and, where offenders cannot be identified or offenders are based outside the UK, criminal justice outcomes are not always achievable”.⁷⁶ Giving evidence to us, Temporary Commander Dave Clark, then the national lead officer for online fraud, emphasised that “Action Fraud does not investigate anything. [It] is simply a call centre and an online reporting facility”.⁷⁷

68 Action Fraud website, [What is Action Fraud?](#) Accessed 5 September 2018

69 [Home Office Counting Rules for Fraud](#), with effect from April 2018

70 [Daily Mail, Fiasco as £2m fraud hotline loses 2,500 cases in just eight months... and blames error on computer fault](#), 20 July 2013

71 [Daily Mail, Victims of fraud suffer blow after private firm running £2million-a-year Government hotline goes bust](#), 25 July 2015

72 [The Independent, Concentrix: US firm brought in by City of London police to run Action Fraud helpline despite concerns](#), 20 October 2015

73 HM Treasury, Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Fourth to the Eleventh reports from Session 2017–19 (Cm 9575), March 2018

74 [The Times, Cybercrime victims forced to use private investigators](#), 21 May 2018

75 [The Sunday Times, If you thought the taxman was slow, try ringing Action Fraud](#), 12 August 2018

76 City of London Police ([PFF0065](#))

77 [Q246](#)

50. **Despite efforts to improve its response to victims of fraud, Action Fraud has irretrievably lost the confidence of the public, and reasonable expectations from victims are not being met. It is sensible to have a centralised reporting facility for fraud, but this must not simply become a way to divert and fob off victims of crime. Most importantly, it must be accompanied by a proper system to investigate crimes and respond to victims, or it will become irrelevant.**

The police response to fraud

51. T/Commander Clark told us that a quarter of Action Fraud crime reports (those meeting the Home Office counting rules) are disseminated to local forces, around 14% of which receive “outcomes”.⁷⁸ Cases are sent to the force where there are relevant lines of inquiry, such as a local bank account, postal address, internet address or telephone number, rather than where the victim is based (if the crime crosses force boundaries).⁷⁹ T/Commander Clark acknowledged this disconnect can be “very frustrating for the victim”, but said that this is a “very complex area”, and “the best chance of pursuing an investigation is to give it to the organisation or law enforcement agency where the offender is based”.⁸⁰

52. T/Commander Clark argued that “pursuit is not always the best option” in this area of criminality; and highlighted that, in 170,000 cases in 2017, “disruption was seen as the best form of action over investigation” due to “all kinds of difficulties”. This might include central disruption by removal of a website, seizure of money in a bank account, or disablement of telephone lines, for example.⁸¹ Overseas offenders account for a substantial proportion of offences, with approximately 14,000 criminals identified outside the UK in 2017.⁸² Organised criminal groups also play a prominent role: last year, for example, Europol disrupted a group which stole more than 8 million euros from over 130,000 payment card holders in 29 EU countries.⁸³

Criticism of the police response

53. A series of reports have been highly critical of the police response to online fraud. A 2015 study of digital crime by HMIC, covering six out of the 43 forces, found “very few police officers and staff who understood either their own roles and responsibilities or those of their force in relation to the investigation of fraud.” HMIC found a particularly poor level of knowledge, at all ranks, of the functions of Action Fraud and the NFIB. It also criticised an “absence of strategic leadership and direction” on digital crime in all but one of the forces examined.⁸⁴ One chief officer told the inspectorate that chief constables considered that they had: “given [fraud] in its entirety to Action Fraud”.⁸⁵ In June 2017, the NAO found that forces had different approaches to reporting and recording fraud, that they lacked “performance information” about reporting and investigating fraud, and that poor advice was being provided to victims. The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) subsequently said that the Home Office “must prioritise efforts to improve the collection

78 [Q246](#)

79 [Home Office Counting Rules for Fraud](#), with effect from April 2018

80 [Q248](#)

81 [Q252](#)

82 [Q261](#)

83 Europol news item, [Credit card fraud in 130,000 cases: organised crime group disrupted in European cross-border action](#), 14 March 2017

84 HMIC, [Real lives, real crimes: A study of digital crime and policing](#), December 2015

85 HMIC, [Real lives, real crimes: A study of digital crime and policing](#), December 2015

and reporting of data on fraud”, and called for the department to work with the City of London Police to establish “opportunities to identify, develop and share good practice in a more systematic way”.⁸⁶

54. As well as passing on lines of enquiry to the relevant force, the NFIB sends them the details of all local victims on a monthly basis. HMIC found that few officers were aware that this data existed or, if they were aware, “they did not use them for any beneficial purpose”. It also found “little evidence of effective care for fraud victims generally”.⁸⁷ T/Commander Clark told us that an “Economic Crime Victim Care Unit” has been piloted in London and was due to be launched in Greater Manchester and the West Midlands during 2018, but he conceded that “volume has outstripped any [...] implementation” of HMIC’s recommendations about victim support.⁸⁸

55. Witnesses highlighted resourcing and funding issues as a significant challenge. T/Commander Clark told us that “the sustainability of funding is really important to effect strategy and make a difference in online fraud investigation, and one-year allocation of budgets does not help”. In the face of a 30% increase in demand in this area, he said that his force had experienced a 5% funding reduction in real terms over the previous three years.⁸⁹ In follow-up written evidence, he called for “more investment in technology across the criminal justice system to deal with the large volumes of digital evidence”, stating that “City of London Police has over 70 million pages of evidence linked to 700 ongoing investigations for scheduling and disclosure”.⁹⁰ Detective Superintendent Nicky Porter, from the Financial Investigations Unit at Greater Manchester Police, said:

There are real challenges of resourcing. We cannot continue the way that we are operating around investigating fraud. What we will do is create a fertile area for more criminals to diversify into because the chances of being caught are slim unless it hits certain specific criteria.⁹¹

56. Last year, it was announced that a new National Economic Crime Centre would be created within the NCA. The NECC will “plan, task and coordinate operational responses across agencies”, “bringing together the UK’s capabilities to tackle economic crime more effectively”.⁹² It is reportedly due to commence work on 31 October.⁹³ T/Commander Clark said that this would result in “a more coordinated collective response across national law enforcement agencies”, improving prioritisation, tasking and coordination and facilitating “more efficient use of resources”—but he added that it “will not address the fundamental lack of capacity across the system”.⁹⁴ The Director General of the NCA, Lynne Owens, reportedly told *The Sunday Times* in January that the banking and insurance industries should channel some of their profits into the new Centre.⁹⁵

86 Public Accounts Committee, [The growing threat of online fraud](#), 27 November 2017

87 HMIC, [Real lives, real crimes: A study of digital crime and policing](#), December 2015

88 [Q290](#)

89 [Q291](#)

90 T/Commander David Clark, National Coordinator for Economic Crime, City of London Police ([PFF0003](#))

91 [Q209](#)

92 NCA news item, [National Economic Crime Centre announced](#), 11 December 2017

93 *The FT*, [UK’s new economic crime fighting centre set to open](#), 3 September 2018

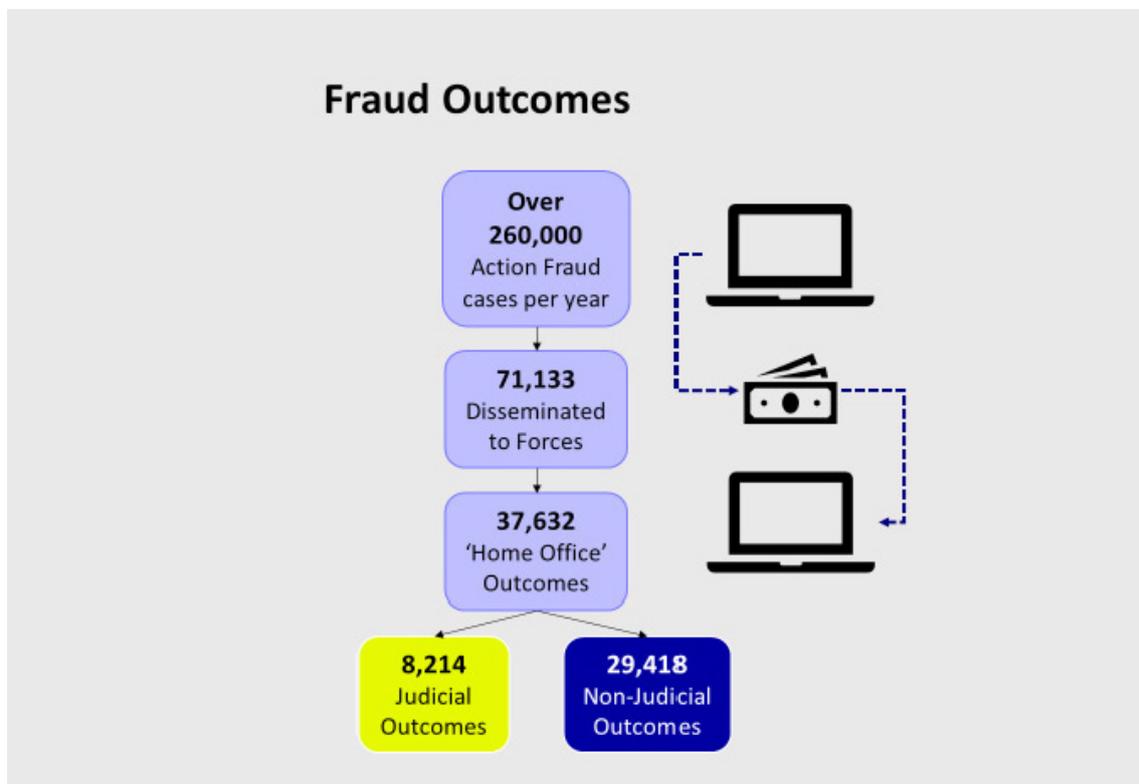
94 T/Commander David Clark, National Coordinator for Economic Crime, City of London Police ([PFF0003](#))

95 *The Sunday Times*, [National Crime Agency boss Lynne Owens: ‘Organised criminals pose a greater threat than terrorists’](#), 14 January 2018

Case outcomes

57. Action Fraud received over 23,000 crime reports per month, on average, during 2016/17; in the same reporting year, 71,133 cases were disseminated to forces, and there were 37,632 “Home Office outcomes”—this includes judicial (8,214) and non-judicial (29,245) outcomes. The latter category can include failure to identify a suspect and a determination that prosecution would not be in the public interest, among other outcomes. These figures suggest that little more than one in five (22%) recorded outcomes involved charges or summons, and that as little as 3% of cases reported to Action Fraud may result in charges or summons.⁹⁶ Current recording methods do not, however, generate figures on the proportion of all Action Fraud reports that result in a criminal justice outcome (or otherwise)—rather they provide a snapshot of all reports and outcomes during a specified reporting year.

58. There is significant variation between forces in the number of fraud outcomes relative to the number of NFIB referrals. In the year ending March 2017, for example, Devon & Cornwall received 1,055 referrals from the NFIB but recorded just one judicial outcome, along with 33 non-judicial outcomes. In contrast, West Mercia police received 388 referrals but recorded 288 judicial outcomes and 274 non-judicial outcomes. In theory, any investigation should result in an outcome, suggesting that in many forces, a substantial proportion of fraud offences are not being investigated (or they are not recording outcomes accurately). Detective Superintendent Nicky Porter told us that Greater Manchester Police investigated just 4% of the disseminations that it received from Action Fraud last year.⁹⁷



96 T/Commander David Clark, National Coordinator for Economic Crime, City of London Police ([PFF0003](#))

97 [Q268](#)

59. A report published by the Home Office in June examined the causes of attrition in fraud and cybercrime cases. It concluded that a number of factors contributed to cases being dropped after referral to forces, including confusion in police forces about who is responsible for investigating these crimes; the sheer number of cases disseminated, “and the risk that there are so many crimes they are unmanageable for forces”; a lack of recording of non-judicial outcomes; and a lack of clarity regarding inter-force cooperation, when cases cross force boundaries.⁹⁸

60. The proportion of fraud cases being investigated is shockingly low, in the context of 1.7 million offences per year and substantial costs to the UK economy, as well as to individual victims. Our findings indicate that, although multiple cases may relate to a single charge, as little as 3% of cases reported to Action Fraud may result in charges or summons. Of the 1.7 million offences committed annually, it appears highly unlikely that more than one in 200 victims ever sees their perpetrator convicted. Given the paltry number of justice outcomes, it is no surprise that so few fraud victims report their experience to the police or Action Fraud. While we recognise that many offences are committed overseas, it is nevertheless clear to us that the Government has failed to get a grip on this problem, and that major changes are needed to the way in which fraud is reported, investigated and prevented. We commend the City of London Police for its leadership, but one under-resourced police force, facing the same budget pressures as every other force, does not have the capacity or the leverage to introduce the sort of drastic improvements needed at a national and regional level.

61. There is a lack of transparency in the way that fraud statistics are published. At present, two sets of records are available: recorded crime figures and outcomes, with no way of linking the two. The Office for National Statistics and other agencies should take immediate steps to ensure that figures can be published on the proportion of online fraud offences resulting in justice outcomes, and the proportion for which no suspect is charged.

Structural issues

62. The evidence we received suggested that there are significant structural problems surrounding the police response to fraud. City of London Police highlighted issues arising from the “dislocation” between nationally-reported fraud and the location of offenders and victims, with the result that “victims’ home forces are not always taking responsibility for safeguarding victims and monitoring changes to their circumstances”. Echoing HMIC’s 2015 findings, the force said that it is “apparent that not all forces identify the significant life changing impact” that fraud can have on individuals and businesses, and it argued that victim support services should be coordinated nationally and supported by a local response.⁹⁹

63. Detective Superintendent Porter said that the regional response (the regional organised crime unit, or ROCU) in Manchester, is a “very small team, so they can become overwhelmed with large cases very quickly”. She agreed that a restructure was needed, telling us that there is currently a “postcode lottery”, and that crimes such as murder and sexual exploitation inevitably take priority when devices need examining:

98 Home Office, The scale and drivers of attrition in reported fraud and cyber crime ([Research Report 97](#)), June 2018

99 City of London Police ([PFF0065](#))

When we are looking at examining computers and phones locally, that is also against our colleagues who are investigating murders, sexual exploitation. In terms of threat, risk and harm, fraud is then put to the bottom of the list of priorities. Having a national service with some regional hub-and-spoke models would feel like we could gain some capacity.¹⁰⁰

64. T/Commander Clark also argued that changes were required:

[...] there has to be a national standardised approach, specifically in reporting, recording and accountability, with a national investigation capability that takes on the most impacting economic crimes that affect the wellbeing and infrastructure of this country [...] I would have regional investigations as the main structure in this space, with the local services providing essentially victim care and local policing responsibilities whereby victim, offender and location are in the same place.¹⁰¹

65. The Policing Minister conceded that “we are nowhere near where we need to be on this issue”. When he spoke to “every single police chief” last year and asked them which victims of crime “get the worst deal” from the police, he said they “invariably” say victims of online fraud and cybercrime. He also told us that the Security Minister, Ben Wallace MP, is “very clear in his mind” that “capabilities need to be aligned more intelligently between national, regional and local” structures.¹⁰²

66. The police response to fraud is in desperate need of a fundamental overhaul, and we welcome Government ministers’ recognition that the current system is not fit for purpose. There remains a clear requirement for a national reporting and analysis centre, but the current system of tasking and undertaking investigations needs to be overhauled, and standards of victim support are often extremely poor. The Government must show leadership in this area, working with the City of London Police, the NPCC, the National Economic Crime Centre within the NCA and other key stakeholders to implement a ‘hub and spoke’ structure for fraud investigation and victim support, with all investigations undertaken at a national or regional level.

67. This must be accompanied by proper resources and enhanced capabilities: the level of regional resource in this area is not commensurate with the threat or the cost to the economy of this growing form of crime. We return to the wider issue of police funding in Chapter 6. However, given that much online fraud takes place on platforms provided by extremely profitable global tech giants, or exploits weaknesses in the security of private sector companies, it is reasonable to expect the private sector to contribute to the funding of policing and safety online. Likewise, banks, credit card companies and insurance companies have a lot to lose from the continued escalation of this form of crime, so they too have a considerable interest in contributing to the policing of online fraud.

68. Not enough is being done to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud. This is compounded by pressures on Trading Standards offices. With investigative resources and capabilities focused at a national and regional level, forces should be given the space to focus predominantly on victim support, based on intelligence from

100 [Q295](#)

101 [Q298](#)

102 [Q536](#)

Action Fraud. When reporting a crime to Action Fraud, victims should be asked a series of questions to assess their levels of vulnerability and their need for follow-up support. This information should be disseminated to forces immediately, so that neighbourhood officers or PCSOs can respond accordingly, with timely and tailored support.

The Joint Fraud Taskforce

69. The Joint Fraud Taskforce is a Home Office-led initiative which aims to prevent individuals and organisations from becoming victims of fraud, change consumer behaviour through communication (such as the ‘Take Five’ campaign), and protect the UK by making it a hostile environment for fraud. In addition to Government, its membership includes the City of London Police, the NCA, Trading Standards, Cifas, UK Finance and individual banks. The NAO said in June 2017 that the Taskforce had “no clear success measures for its initiatives”, and that there was no public information on its progress to date.¹⁰³ Which? said last October that it was concerned about the “lack of transparency both in terms of what the taskforce is working on, but also importantly what progress it has made to date”.¹⁰⁴ In the same month, the Taskforce began publishing information online, shortly before Sir Philip Rutman, the Home Office’s Permanent Secretary, gave evidence to the PAC.¹⁰⁵ Nevertheless, Richard Pigginn from Which? told us in January that he would “like to see an action plan of what the taskforce is doing, what its objectives are, what its priorities are and [...] what progress it is making against those”, in a “regular report”.¹⁰⁶

70. Minutes from the Taskforce Management Board’s June 2018 meeting refer to an independent review of its work, which had concluded that it had “huge potential”, but that “certain aspects of the Taskforce needed strengthening”. It was agreed that a “focussed blitz” would take place in July, to “work up proposals for JFT [Joint Fraud Taskforce] 2.0” based on the review findings. It was agreed that “all constituent parts of the Taskforce had to be accountable for delivery”.¹⁰⁷ In its response to the Public Accounts Committee’s report, published in March, the Government said that it would publish an annual report setting out the objectives and achievements of the Taskforce by summer 2018, and thereafter every 12 months. At the time of writing, this had not yet been published.

71. The Joint Fraud Taskforce is a welcome initiative, but it has little to show for two and a half years of work and at the moment we are not sure what the point of it is, in practice. We agree with Which? that more transparency is needed, including a clear action plan and ownership of key tasks, regular reports on progress against that plan, and measurements of success in key areas, including public awareness campaigns. It is disappointing that the first annual report, promised for summer 2018, has not yet appeared. By the end of November, the Government should also publish the recent independent review of the Taskforce, which is referred to in the minutes of the June Management Board meeting, along with an action plan to address the weaknesses identified in that review.

103 National Audit Office, Online fraud ([HC 45](#)), 30 June 2017

104 Which? [written evidence submitted to the Public Accounts Committee](#), 5 December 2017

105 Home Office website, [Joint Fraud Taskforce](#), accessed 5 September 2018

106 [Q307](#)

107 Joint Fraud Taskforce Management Board, [Minutes of meeting held 20 June 2018](#)

The role of industry

72. Although our focus was on the police and Government response to online fraud, witnesses also called for industry to do more to protect consumers and cooperate with law enforcement efforts. City of London Police said that banks and other companies hold 90% of fraud and cyber-crime data, and the law enforcement sector would benefit from this information, but the sector demands “legal indemnities and protections” for providing it.¹⁰⁸ T/Commander Clark told us that a central register of bank accounts would speed up fraud investigations, because officers “would not have to rely on banks coming two weeks later to answer [...] We would be able to look at the central bank register for accounts and we would be able to identify where the suspect account is”. He made a further suggestion for the banking industry:

I would publish the suspect accounts that are made available to the national reporting centre for fraud. If a bank account is made available, or is 10 times, for example, across those 600,000 contacts, I would publish it. It will make the banks take action, it will mean that there is a warning list for citizens to check against and it will mean that action is taken.¹⁰⁹

73. Similarly, some commentators have suggested that a ‘naming and shaming’ approach to banks would force them to take more action in response to online fraud. Academic witnesses giving oral evidence to the previous Committee last year drew parallels with steps previously taken by car manufacturers to improve security and reduce car theft, after the Home Office began publishing figures showing the number of car thefts by manufacturer. This was credited with contributing to a drastic reduction in vehicle thefts.¹¹⁰ UK Finance has argued that the publication of banks’ fraud statistics could result in exploitation by fraudsters, and would not reflect the fact that online fraud can occur because of “vulnerabilities or choices in other sectors, such as a retailer choosing not to use two-step verification for a card payment”.¹¹¹

74. The Public Accounts Committee recommended last December that the Home Office should set out minimum standards for banks to follow on preventing online fraud and protecting customers, and require them to report to the Government on their performance. The Committee also called on the Department to “press the banking industry to make relative online fraud vulnerability performance data publicly available”, and said that it “expects the Department to provide a plan for publication of this data by Spring 2018”. In its response, the Government said that it would start collecting performance on fraud losses to report to the Financial Conduct Authority (FCA) from January 2018. It stated that “there may be risks and unintended consequences with publishing some fraud performance data”, and committed to working with JFT partners “to determine how to avoid these issues”.¹¹²

75. Banks were not the only organisations singled out by witnesses. T/Commander Clark told us that more companies need to be “secure by design”, criticising those that store millions of customers’ personal details “on a cost-over-security basis in a third-world

108 City of London Police ([PFF0065](#))

109 [Q309](#)

110 Oral evidence taken on 29 March 2017, [Q12](#)

111 [UK Finance correspondence with the Public Accounts Committee](#), 24 November 2017

112 HM Treasury, Government response to the Committee of Public Accounts on the Fourth to the Eleventh reports from Session 2017–19 ([Cm 9575](#)), March 2018

country that has lower demands and standards placed upon it”.¹¹³ Richard Piggin from Which? also told us that telecommunications companies need to do more to prevent text scams, in which messages appear to come from banks, but are actually sent by fraudsters. He said that there are “opportunities for telecoms companies to work with banks and others to tackle the systemic vulnerabilities that are in these systems, which could do a lot to prevent fraud from happening in the first place”.¹¹⁴

76. The private sector could do much more to reduce the demand on policing from online fraud. This problem can only be addressed effectively with a whole-system approach, including by regulatory reform, if necessary, to force companies to be ‘secure by design’. Key private sector companies—those whose customers create the most substantial workload for the police and NCA—should also employ analysts internally to facilitate evidence-gathering by law enforcement agencies. If industry partners will not do so voluntarily, the Government should consider imposing statutory requirements on companies to cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

77. We agree with the Public Accounts Committee that data should be available on banks’ relative performance in preventing and responding to fraud, including online fraud. The key counter-argument—that this could expose vulnerabilities that could be exploited by criminals—could equally have applied to the publication of statistics on car thefts by manufacturer, which had a significant impact on the incidence of vehicle theft. Consumers have the right to choose their banking provider based on the full knowledge of the risks they may be taking with their finances. Greater transparency may provide the commercial impetus required to ensure that industry does more to tackle this problem at source, and reduce demand on an overstretched police service.

113 [Q309](#)

114 [Q302](#)

4 Child sexual abuse

Introduction

78. One of the key themes emerging from the evidence—particularly from PCCs and police forces—was the growth in demand on policing from child sexual abuse (CSA), particularly online. Although a substantial proportion of child abuse takes place in a familial setting, online CSA poses new challenges for police forces, and witnesses spoke about the lack of technological solutions available. In September, the Home Secretary, Sajid Javid MP, said that “Keeping our children safe will be my mission as Home Secretary”, revealing NCA estimates that 80,000 people in the UK present some form of sexual threat to children online.¹¹⁵ Mr Javid announced:

- The establishment of a working group with business and the advertising industry, to end the placement of adverts from “legitimate companies” on child abuse websites;
- A forthcoming Online Harms White Paper, which will set out plans for legislation against “web giants” that don’t do enough to remove child abuse content from their platforms;
- A £250,000 fund to support new ideas on how to detect and disrupt the live-streaming of child sexual abuse;
- An extra £21 million over the following 18 months to “bolster the response of our law enforcement agencies to these types of crimes”; and
- A further £2.6 million for collaboration with child protection organisations, “to improve our understanding of offender behaviour and prevent future offending”.¹¹⁶

Prevalence and trends

79. Police-recorded crime figures are testament to the increased willingness of victims of child sexual abuse to come forward to the authorities, as well as enhanced levels of awareness among the public more widely.¹¹⁷ The number of CSA offences recorded by the police increased by 178% between the years ending March 2007 and March 2017, including a 187% increase in recorded rapes of girls under the age of 13, a 355% increase in rapes of boys under 13, and a 511% increase in the abuse of children through sexual exploitation.¹¹⁸ The latest statistics show a particularly sharp increase in a number of specific CSA offences recorded in the last five years, including a staggering twelve-fold (1,086%) increase in sexual grooming.¹¹⁹

80. Despite this substantial growth in reporting and recording, witnesses suggested to us that current levels of police-recorded CSA still represent a small proportion of offences. Chief Constable Simon Bailey, the NPCC’s Lead for child protection, said: “I cannot help

115 Home Office, [Speech by the Home Secretary: Keeping our children safe](#), 3 September 2018

116 Home Office, [Speech by the Home Secretary: Keeping our children safe](#), 3 September 2018

117 According to the ONS, changes to police recording practices are also likely to have had an effect. For example, see: ONS, [Sexual offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#), 8 February 2018

118 ONS, [Sexual offences in England and Wales: year ending March 2017](#), 8 February 2018

119 ONS, Crime in England and Wales: Appendix Tables, [Year ending March 2018](#)

but think there will still be a generation of children that still are ashamed, have been told they will not be believed, and are still not coming forward. I genuinely think we are still only seeing the tip of the iceberg”.¹²⁰ Cassandra Harrison, Director of the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, told us that researchers have estimated that around 5% of boys and 15% of girls will experience sexual abuse during childhood,¹²¹ and a self-report survey of adults conducted during the Crime Survey for England and Wales (year ending March 2016) found that one in five had experienced some form of abuse as a child. Only 7% reported their abuse to the police, and 74% did not tell anyone about the abuse at the time it occurred.¹²²

81. Our evidence session focused largely on contemporary CSA online, including the dissemination and viewing of indecent images of children, but we note that non-recent allegations also represent an area of growing demand on policing. Chief Constable Bailey said that 125 victims per month are approaching Operation Hydrant, an NPCC “coordination hub” set up in 2014 to oversee the police response to non-recent allegations of CSA. There are now “getting towards 6,000 victims within our database and only 4,500 alleged offenders”, which is generating “significant demand across policing”.¹²³

The prevalence and impact of online CSA

82. The evidence we received suggests that the internet has played a dominant role in the increased demand on policing from CSA, and not just from offending committed entirely online. Will Kerr, Director of Vulnerabilities at the NCA, said that it is “increasingly difficult to neatly disaggregate” online and offline offending, and that “the lines have become blurred”, adding:

For livestreaming, you can have three or four different types of offences being committed at once, both the making and the sharing and the distribution of indecent images of children or the live abuse of children. You have contact offending, because a child has been abused, very often in countries like the Philippines or Thailand or Cambodia. You have contact abuse by proxy, by an offender who might be sitting in a town in the United Kingdom and paying for that terrible service.¹²⁴

Mr Kerr suggested that three principal factors underlie the growth in CSA: global technology, including networks and other new opportunities; anonymisation and encryption, making it harder for the police to catch offenders; and changes to victims’ behaviour, with young people spending more time online and being “socialised and sexualised” there.¹²⁵

83. The distribution, dissemination and downloading of indecent images of children (IIOC) accounts for a significant proportion of the police and NCA workload from CSA, and has been described by the NPSCC as a “social emergency”.¹²⁶ The UK is reportedly the

120 [Q350](#)

121 [Q312](#)

122 [ONS, Abuse during childhood: Findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales, year ending March 2016, 4 August 2016](#)

123 [Q346](#)

124 [Q351](#)

125 [Q346](#)

126 [NPSCC, Online child sexual abuse images: doing more to tackle demand and supply, November 2016](#)

third-largest global consumer of child abuse images, behind the USA and Canada,¹²⁷ and Chief Constable Bailey told us that the police are “arresting getting on towards 450 men every month and safeguarding almost 700 children” in relation to IIOC alone.¹²⁸ Between December 2010 and 2017, there was an 1,239% increase in the total number of industry referrals received by the NCA (for example, IIOC found by internet companies on their platforms), and a 102% increase in the number of public reports. This includes criminal behaviour online, as well as indecent images.¹²⁹

84. As part of our data collection exercise, we asked forces for figures on the number of IIOC incidents recorded locally in the year ending March 2018, as well as the four years previously. When City of London Police’s nominal figures were eliminated, the other forces reported an average increase of 508% between 2013–14 and 2017–18, including notable increases of 1,544% in Durham, 1,954% in Northamptonshire (increasing from 13 to 267), and 916% in Cleveland. Across all forces, the total number of recorded IIOC incidents increased by 424%.

85. Very little is known about the characteristics of online CSA offenders—or about child sex offenders more broadly—but research suggests that between 16% and 50% will go on to commit contact offences,^{130,131} raising serious questions about the risk to children if CSA offenders continue to have contact with children, either in the family, at work, or as a result of roles within the community. Even these figures may not be reliable, however: Cassandra Harrison told us that research on the relationship between IIOC and contact offending had been contested.¹³² Regardless of subsequent offending behaviour, it is clear that IIOC offences are serious forms of child abuse in their own right. The NPSCC described the impact on victims in a 2016 report on online CSA images:

The child depicted in the image is a real person who is a victim. And each time an image is accessed there is re-victimisation, violation and degradation. The knowledge that their image can be repeatedly viewed and may never be removed contributes to the on-going trauma that victims face. There is evidence to suggest that fear of people viewing the content can prevent the victim from speaking out about their experiences and seeking help.¹³³

86. The growth of online indecent images of children (IIOC) is one of the most disturbing by-products of the digital age. Its impact on victims is devastating and long-lasting, so we were shocked by how little is known about IIOC offenders. We welcome the Government’s recent announcement of funding for collaboration with child protection organisations, to increase understanding of offender behaviour and prevent future offending. This must seek to identify the key characteristics of online CSA offenders, risk factors for viewing IIOC, the effectiveness of current child

127 *The Independent*, [Tech companies ‘must stop paedophiles uploading child sex abuse images’, National Crime Agency says](#), 21 June 2018

128 [Q350](#)

129 National Crime Agency ([PFF0007](#))

130 NatCen, [Behaviour and Characteristics of Perpetrators of Online-facilitated Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation: A Rapid Evidence Assessment](#), 25 October 2017

131 NPCC, [2015 Policing Position Statement](#), 8 May 2015

132 [Q314](#)

133 NPSCC, [Online child sexual abuse images: Doing more to tackle demand and supply](#), November 2016

protection measures, including the Disclosure and Barring Service, and the likely success of preventative measures to educate young people at an early stage about the impact of this crime on its victims.

The police response to online CSA

87. Across the UK, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) within the NCA coordinates activity against the proliferation of IIOC, online CSA, the sexual exploitation of children overseas by UK nationals, and contact child sexual abuse. CEOP will take primacy in an investigation when a national response is deemed necessary, including “severe and complex cases”, cases requiring the application of “niche capabilities”, cases covering multiple police force areas or with a significant international element, or those in which there are indications of an organised criminal network involved in contact abuse. Local police forces investigate cases disseminated to them by CEOP when the offender is identified as residing in their force area, and/or undertake child safeguarding activity when a victim has been identified.¹³⁴

88. A HMIC report on online CSA, published in 2015, found that the police response to child victims of online sexual exploitation required improvement. Forces were in some cases administering cautions to offenders for online CSE, which was “cause for concern, particularly in the absence of effective supervision and scrutiny arrangements within the force”. All the forces inspected were experiencing varying delays to investigations, with backlogs in the analysis of media devices (such as mobile phones and laptops), and offenders released on bail pending the results of analysis, risking further harm to children.¹³⁵ Commissioner Dick told us in June that she was “deeply concerned about the exponential rises in digital data and the impact that that is having”, adding that the Metropolitan Police sees a “doubling of data that we have to deal with” every 18 months.¹³⁶

89. The inspectorate has conducted further thematic inspections of individual forces’ child protection work, including quarterly reports on the Metropolitan Police, following serious failings identified in 2016. Its latest report (published in February) found some improvements, but identified significant issues relating to the investigation of IIOC offences. HMICFRS expressed concern about IIOC cases in which there are children present in the suspect’s home, which “now go to an already overburdened child abuse investigation team (CAIT)”. As a result of the CAIT’s lack of capacity, some of these cases were being passed to borough crime investigation departments (CID). There, they were investigated by officers with no specialist training, who were supervised by managers “with limited knowledge of the work and who are unable to offer investigative advice or set parameters in limiting the quantities of indecent images viewed by the officers”.

90. The inspectorate also found “Untrained, inexperienced borough officers” investigating medium- and high-risk cases (in which there were children in the family); meanwhile, the Met’s specialist officers working on Operation Bellona—a proactive investigation into the sharing and distribution of IIOC—were investigating low-level, low-risk cases.¹³⁷ Perhaps most damningly, delays to child protection work meant that IIOC suspects were

134 National Crime Agency (PFF0007)

135 HMIC, [Online and on the edge: Real risks in a virtual world](#), July 2015

136 [Q524](#)

137 HMICFRS, National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection: [Quarter 4 Update, The Metropolitan Police Service, October – December 2017](#), February 2018

able to continue accessing children, including those in their own home, after images had been identified. It recommended that staff in boroughs and specialist directorates should be “appropriately trained to carry out their duties”, and that the Met should review the procedures and identified aggravating factors for IIOC cases.¹³⁸

91. In August, another one of HMICFRS’s force-level child protection inspections hit the news headlines as a result of backlogs in checks on sex offenders who pose a risk to children. The inspectorate found that Merseyside Police had a 100:1 ratio of registered sex offenders (RSOs) to offender managers—approximately double the “reasonable” caseload—and the force had 98 overdue visits to RSOs, including those assessed as high risk. In addition, staff within the force’s ‘Abusive Images Unit’ were regularly releasing suspects from bail before there were enforceable restrictions in place to limit their access to children.¹³⁹ Inspector Matt Parr reportedly responded that officers were often “playing catch-up and couldn’t prioritise preventative work”, adding that neighbourhood policing teams were often “unaware of sex offenders living in their communities”.¹⁴⁰

Skills and training

92. Evidence suggests that forces have been delayed in upskilling their officers to deal with online CSA. Research published by Middlesex University in November 2016 found that nearly two-thirds of surveyed UK police officers said that they had investigated online grooming and/or the collection or distribution of IIOC, but the majority had not received any relevant training. Almost half had received no training at all on online CSA, 38% had received “general” training, and 16% had received “specific” training on the subject.¹⁴¹ Chief Constable Bailey assured us in March that there is now “a lot of training” taking place within forces, and that a “comprehensive package” is being rolled out by the College of Policing, with 10,000 frontline officers due to complete it by March 2019. Overall, he argued that the police service has “come a long way in the last three or four years, but there is still more to be done”.¹⁴² In November 2016, the College announced plans to pilot a “licence to practise” approach for CSA cases, to ensure that child abuse investigators have up-to-date skills and training, which is being piloted in three forces.¹⁴³

93. Chief Constable Sara Thornton, Chair of the NPCC, told us that “one of the things that we have identified across the board is the lack of skills and the need to skill up our staff, whether they are dealing with local cases or whether they are [...] in the regional units. There are a variety of different College of Policing training courses that are now being rolled out. But also some of it is about building capacity”.¹⁴⁴ In April, the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) called for the police to “raise the profile and priority of child sexual abuse”, and for entry requirements for senior leadership positions to include “operational policing experience in preventing and responding to child sexual abuse” and “accreditation” in this area. It recommended that the College of Policing develop the training content and accreditation requirements.¹⁴⁵

138 HMICFRS, National Child Protection Inspection Post-Inspection: [Quarter 4 Update, The Metropolitan Police Service, October – December 2017](#), February 2018

139 HMICFRS, National Child Protection Inspections: [Merseyside Police, 23 April – 4 May 2018](#), August 2018

140 *BBC News*, [Merseyside Police ‘failing’ to check on sex offenders](#), 30 August 2018

141 EU Child Online Safety Project, [Enhancing Police and Industry Practice](#), November 2016

142 [Q361](#)

143 College of Policing news item, [New approach to vulnerability for policing announced](#), 30 November 2016

144 [Q508](#)

145 Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, [Interim Report](#), April 2018, Chapter 7

94. **Based on inspections by HMICFRS and evidence received by witnesses, it appears that many police forces are woefully under-resourced for the volume of online child sexual abuse investigations they now need to undertake. It is unacceptable that officers are forced to investigate CSA cases with no specialist training at all, and that forces have insufficient resources to manage the risks posed to children by registered sex offenders, constantly playing ‘catch-up’ with a backlog of visits. We welcome efforts by the College of Policing to prioritise this issue, but we call on the Home Secretary to take urgent action to ensure that all forces have sufficient specialist CSA investigators, properly trained to undertake this vital and urgent child protection work. This may require more resources and capabilities to be provided at a regional level, as we will explore in Chapter 9.**

Disclosure and digital evidence

95. As well as creating problems for investigators, the growth in digital evidence has been associated with failings in the disclosure of criminal evidence to defence lawyers. In December 2017, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) reportedly abandoned the prosecution of a man charged with raping a child under 16, after the police disclosed additional evidence that was “relevant” to the case against him.¹⁴⁶ Since then, disclosure issues have been the subject of a significant degree of scrutiny, including a report by the Justice Select Committee, in which it concluded that police forces are “not always adequately equipped or properly trained to handle the type and volume of evidence that they now routinely collect”. The Committee recommended that the CPS, NPCC and College of Policing should produce a “comprehensive strategy to ensure that all 43 police forces are equipped to handle the increasing volume and complexity of digital evidence”, considering skills and technology, and “underpinned by appropriate investment”.¹⁴⁷

96. In a “disclosure improvement plan” published in May, the CPS, NPCC and College stated that they would review whether there should be a requirement for officers to hold a Licence to Practice in relation to disclosure. Giving evidence in March, Will Kerr referred to disclosure issues in CSA, and said that the principal piece of relevant legislation, the Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act 1996, “was never designed with the scale of digital evidence [...] that we see now” in mind. He added:

A contemporary smartphone holds around about 128 gigabytes of data. That equates to [...] 12,800 boxes full of paper. It is the same weight as a Boeing 757. The system just isn’t designed to cope with that range of digital evidence [...]. There have been some clear failings recently, but I think it is important to update and refresh the legislation to keep pace with the fact that everybody lives their lives digitally online now and the disclosure regime needs to reflect that.¹⁴⁸

97. **We share the Justice Committee’s concerns that police forces are not adequately equipped to handle the volume or type of digital evidence now generated, including in online child sexual abuse cases. Although reforms to the disclosure regime are clearly needed, this is undoubtedly having an impact on the speed of investigations,**

146 *BBC News*, [Metropolitan Police review of rape cases evidence](#), 20 December 2017

147 House of Commons Justice Committee, *Disclosure of evidence in criminal cases* ([HC 859](#)), Eleventh Report of Session 2017–19, 20 July 2018

148 [Q363](#)

too, as identified by HMICFRS. It is also symptomatic of broader problems facing a police service which appears increasingly ill-equipped for the challenges of the digital age. Addressing this will require fundamental reforms to the structure, culture and workforce of policing, which we will return to in chapters 7–9 of this report.

Attrition through the law enforcement response

98. The available data shows a sizeable gap between the growing prevalence of CSA online, including IIOC offences, and the number of convictions and custodial sentences. Last year, there were 385 convictions for possession of an indecent image of a child and 3,020 convictions for “taking, permitting to be taken or making, distributing or publishing indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children”. Cassandra Harrison told us that public protection outcomes may have been achieved in cases without judicial outcomes, in which “the police may have played a really important role in safeguarding children”.¹⁴⁹

99. Written evidence revealed some of the reasons for the gap between industry referrals, recorded crime and justice outcomes. During the year ending 31 August 2017, the NCA received 70,530 industry reports and made 8,291 disseminations to UK forces. This represented about 12% of all reports received by the NCA.¹⁵⁰ Of those discarded, a large proportion (46%) were “informational reports”—so-called “viral images” determined to be adult pornography, images of clothed children, or technical errors. In follow-up written evidence, Chief Constable Bailey outlined a number of reasons for attrition of online CSA cases from the law enforcement stages of the criminal justice system, between acceptance of an NCA referral by a force and arrest. These included:

- The inclusion of information that is too historic for the police to obtain a search warrant, or to offer a realistic prospect of conviction;
- The suspect having moved on from the address identified;
- No evidence of IIOC found following the execution of a search warrant;
- Images having been downloaded as part of a bulk download of adult pornography; and
- IIOC identified that cannot be attributed to a single individual (e.g. in a multi-occupancy property or on an open WiFi network).¹⁵¹

100. We also asked forces for outcomes data on IIOC offences during the previous five years. As outlined above, forces told us they recorded over 22,000 incidents in the year ending March 2018 (there is likely to be substantial overlap between these figures and the 8,291 NCA referrals to forces). According to Chief Constable Bailey’s evidence, around 5,400 people are being arrested per year for IIOC offences (approximately 450 per month). Collectively, 40 forces told us they had issued 249 cautions during 2017/18, with 431 issued the year before. Over 2,000 charges had been recorded (3,872 in the previous year); in 1,937 cases, no suspect had been identified; and 4,350 cases did not result in charges due to “evidential difficulties”. These figures suggest that only 9% of recorded incidents are

149 [Q329](#)

150 National Crime Agency ([PFF0011](#))

151 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0015](#))

leading to a charge (although a precise proportion cannot be calculated from the available evidence), and that far fewer charges are being brought forward—a 48% decrease between 2017 and 2018.

101. In a subsequent submission, Chief Constable Bailey said that police ICT infrastructure is “outdated”, and that “Offenders utilise the latest technology”, often “outpacing law enforcement”.¹⁵² The dark web was identified as a particular challenge for the NCA: Will Kerr told us that “we should be worried about it”, because it hosts “a higher-risk level of offending, where they have international communities of offenders [...] who are actively sharing paedophile manuals, actively sharing techniques and tactics to groom children online”. He highlighted that some offenders move between the dark web and the open web, so the response requires “a joined-up strategy that deals with both”.¹⁵³

102. Lynne Owens subsequently reassured us that there is “no evidence that policing has taken a backward step from this activity at all. We are arresting more people than ever before.”¹⁵⁴ She added that “we are keeping up with those referrals” (from industry), but “what we are not yet doing in the way that I think we should is being able to build the capacity and the capability to keep ahead of the curve”.¹⁵⁵ Ms Owens admitted that “we do not have enough dark web analytical capability across the whole system currently”, and “we need to find a way to build that capability”, with money to support it.¹⁵⁶ The Home Secretary announced an additional £21 million of funding for the law enforcement response to CSA in his September speech, although he did not specify how it would be allocated.

103. Child sexual abuse online is reaching epidemic levels, and there is absolutely no room for complacency. We received strong assurances that the police are pursuing offenders and are not stepping back from this activity, despite the vastly-increased volume of demand. But the NCA estimates that 80,000 people in the UK present some form of sexual threat to children online—yet our figures show that only 2,017 charges were brought in the year ending March 2018. The figures we received also suggest a very large gap between the number of recorded IIOC crimes and the number of arrests, with just one arrest for every ten recorded incidents, and a reduced number of charges in the last year. Whatever the causes of this attrition—lack of capacity, lack of technological capability, or lack of expertise at a force level, for example—we are extremely worried about the number of children who might be at risk of abuse from unidentified offenders in the same home, community or school, or online.

104. We are concerned that the police response to online CSA is still nowhere near the scale needed, especially given the risk that online CSA may either be an indicator of current or future contact child abuse or a contributing factor towards an offender engaging in physical child abuse in future. It is particularly troubling that an increasing number of IIOC cases are being abandoned without charge due to ‘evidential difficulties’, or because no suspect can be identified after an offence is detected. The technological capabilities available to officers are not keeping up with those being exploited by offenders, and many cases are being abandoned because offenders cannot be traced to a precise location.

152 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0013](#))

153 [Q378](#)

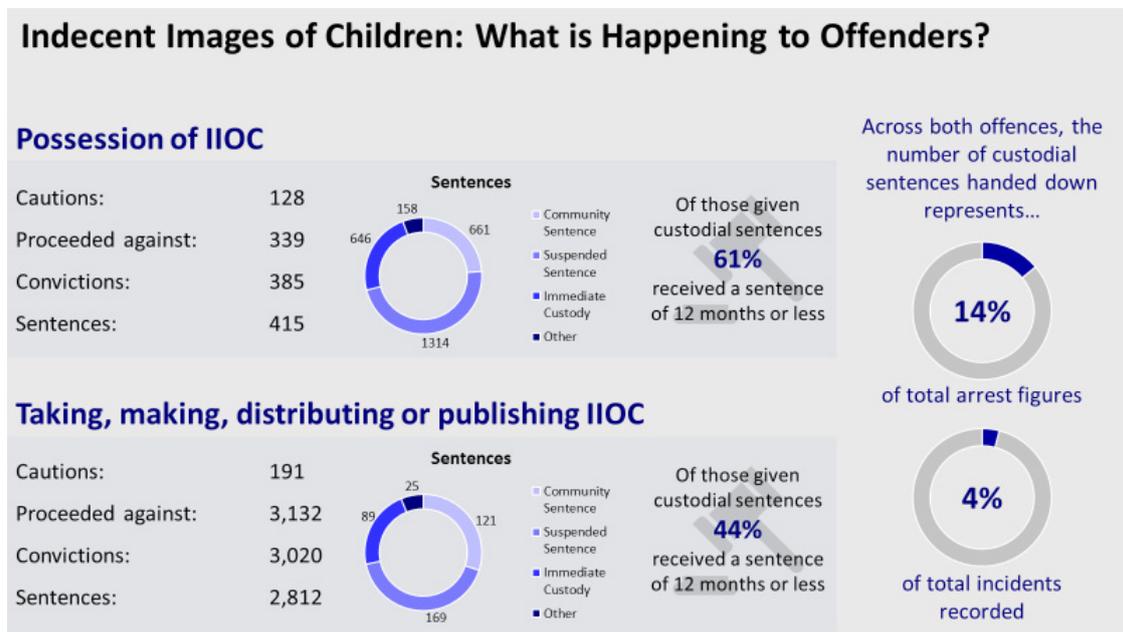
154 [Q515](#)

155 [Q445](#)

156 [Q507](#)

105. We welcome the Home Secretary’s recent announcement of additional resources, and we urge the Government to continue treating this as a high priority area for investment, ensuring that the police service has access to advanced tools to track down offenders and bring them to justice. This extremely dangerous crime cannot be treated simply as ‘too difficult to solve’. The NCA must also be supported to ensure that it can build the capabilities required to tackle offenders on the dark web. By the end of November, the Home Office should provide us with a breakdown of how the additional funding for CSA policing will be allocated.

Rehabilitation



106. Several witnesses raised concerns about the lack of rehabilitation for online child sex offenders—particularly for IIOC offences. Ministry of Justice figures show that there were 385 convictions for possession of an indecent image of a child in 2017, and 128 cautions issued. 415 sentences were handed down, including 89 custodial sentences, 113 community orders and 169 suspended sentences. Of those sent to custody, the majority (54) received a sentence of 12 months or less. There were an additional 3,020 convictions for taking, permitting to be taken or making, distributing or publishing indecent photographs or pseudo photographs of children, 191 cautions and 2,812 sentences handed down, of which only 23% (646) were custodial sentences. Almost half of those going to prison (44%) received custodial sentences of 12 months or less.¹⁵⁷

107. In total, the number of custodial sentences handed down last year represents just 14% of the total arrest figures provided by Chief Constable Bailey (roughly 450 arrests per month), and only 4% of IIOC incidents recorded by forces in the year ending March 2017 (18,347), even assuming that the two categories of offending—possessing and taking images—do not overlap (i.e. some offenders may have received custodial sentences for both offences). This has provoked frustration among some senior police officers. Last

¹⁵⁷ Ministry of Justice, Criminal Justice System statistics quarterly: December 2017, [Outcomes by offence data tool](#), accessed 6 September 2018

February, Chief Constable Bailey told *The Times* that “alternatives” to prosecution need to be considered for individuals viewing IIOC, such as counselling and rehabilitation for lower-level offenders.¹⁵⁸ Giving evidence to us a year later, he said that his intervention was “based upon my real frustration and concerns that we are simply letting victims down”, due to significant delays in getting cases into the Crown Court. He added that there is “no rehabilitation involved anywhere”, and argued again for alternative approaches to IIOC offending:

They should be being forced to attend a course, which they would probably pay for, so they could address their offending behaviour [...] When you look at the most prolific offending block viewing indecent imagery, it is the 18 to 24-year-olds, because they do not understand the law. [...] I understand the desire that all paedophiles should be locked up and the key should be thrown away for life [...], but that is not the real world.¹⁵⁹

108. Other witnesses agreed that there should be more focus on preventing future offending. Elaine McConnell, CEO of The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, a child protection charity which offers a helpline for people worried about CSA (including their own sexual thoughts about children), called for a cross-Government working party to address CSA prevention and rehabilitation. She referred to the need to upskill parents, work with young people so that they know where to go to get help, intervene with offenders who seek help, and make workplaces safer.¹⁶⁰ Similarly, Will Kerr said that far too much responsibility had been given to “the pursuit space”, and not enough “cross-sectoral thought” had gone into “how we prevent and protect our children in the first place”. He called for “a fundamentally different preventative approach”, including engagement with the education, health and “social sector”.¹⁶¹

109. Echoing Chief Constable Bailey, Lynn Owens subsequently said “There is a question about what happens with those people [IIOC offenders] when they get to the courts because, although many of them are being convicted, their sentences are very low”.¹⁶² She told us the NCA is “in a conversation” with the CPS about the use of conditional cautions in this area, “which would enable [offenders’] behaviour to be proactively monitored”.¹⁶³ Other witnesses also defended the use of these penalties: Chief Constable Bailey said that they can have “significant conditions attached to it, and if they are not adhered to, then you go back before the Crown Court”. Similarly, Elaine McConnell highlighted that the breaching of a conditional caution “would have the same consequences [as] breaching a community sentence—you are in front of a judge, you are still on the sex offender register and you still come up on a DBS [disclosure and barring service check]”.¹⁶⁴

110. We welcome the personal commitment of the Home Secretary to lead action in this area, and we commend the work of the National Crime Agency and the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s lead, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, in seeking to combat the destructive and growing threat of child sexual abuse. We have serious concerns,

158 *The Times*, [Don’t lock up low-risk paedophiles, say police](#), 28 February 2017

159 [Qq381–382](#)

160 [Q339](#)

161 [Q379](#)

162 [Q515](#)

163 [Q515](#)

164 [Q331](#)

however, about the current scale of the policing response to this growing crime, in the context of a relatively small number of convictions, an even lower number of custodial sentences, and evidence that most offenders are undergoing no rehabilitation at all.

111. Relative to the scale of the problem, only a tiny number of offenders are being charged or convicted for the possession of IIOC—there were just 385 convictions last year. The deterrent effect against potential offenders is therefore minimal. Many of those who may pose a threat to children online will continue to have direct contact with children. We are deeply concerned about the collective failure to protect those children, and a comprehensive strategy led by the Home Office is needed to address this. It must include engagement with other Government departments, as well as the police and criminal justice system, internet and tech companies, children’s services, schools and community organisations. It should also review the interaction between the police and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in responding to IIOC offences, to prevent dangerous contact with children.

112. This evidence also calls for a major focus on prevention and child safety. All cases referred to police forces must lead to an investigation of whether or not the suspected offender is in contact with children, and whether action is needed to protect children through safeguarding work. Leaving children at risk because police forces don’t have the capacity or expertise they need, or because of failings in co-ordination and the lack of a wider strategy against online child abuse, would be unforgivable. Without urgent action, future generations will look back and be appalled at how slow the system was to respond to this new threat.

113. It is vital that the police continue to pursue these offenders and bring them to justice, but there is also a pressing need to tackle offending and recidivism. The Government must invest urgently in research on effective prevention work, including the rehabilitation of child sexual abuse offenders.

The online space

114. Law enforcement witnesses repeatedly emphasised their frustration at the lack of work being done to prevent CSA, particularly online, and they called for tech companies to do more. Chief Constable Bailey said that his “greatest frustration” was that “so much of this abuse is preventable”:

It is the responsibility of the tech companies that are providing the platforms that are allowing people to abuse. I am regularly asked, “Are there now more people with a sexual interest in children than there were 20 or 30 years ago?” I do not believe that is the case. I simply believe that technology has now opened up an array of opportunities that were simply never ever afforded to would-be offenders before.¹⁶⁵

115. The industry response to this problem is coordinated by the Internet Watch Foundation (IWF), a UK-based charity which works to remove CSA material from the internet, and to raise awareness of CSA issues within the tech industry. It is largely funded by internet service providers, with additional funding from the European Commission. Associated members can download lists of ‘hashes’ (features of digital material) and URLs daily, to

ensure that their services enforce the most up-to-date blocks and filters.¹⁶⁶ Witnesses were clear that more could be done: Will Kerr referred to “three or four simple things that we could ask the companies all to engage in”, in order to enhance online child safety, which were elaborated upon in written evidence from Chief Constable Bailey. These were:

- Pre-filtering and pre-screening of content prior to upload or download from websites, alerting law enforcement to attempts to access or share IIOC;
- The awarding of a ‘kite mark’ for online platforms with appropriate safeguards;
- Ring-fencing of a proportion of tech companies’ research and development budgets for the design of “safeguarding into all their products”; and
- For companies to police their platforms “adequately”, including taking responsibility for material distributed on them.¹⁶⁷

116. If the volume of demand could be reduced, they argued, law enforcement could be given “the time and the space” to target “those people who are committing the very, very worst forms of abuse”. Lynne Owens said that tech companies could do more when referring IIOC to the NCA, after which CEOP “then have to do comms data checks” and “an intelligence build around it”. She said that the companies “already have all that information”, and that “I think they should be giving us an intelligence package that enables us to get to the bottom of identifying who the offender is”.¹⁶⁸

117. In July, the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee’s interim report on ‘fake news’ called for “clear legal liability” to be established in relation to illegal and harmful content online, and suggested that “failure to act” could leave tech companies “open to legal proceedings launched either by a public regulator, and/or by individuals or organisations who have suffered as a result”.¹⁶⁹ During the Home Secretary’s recent speech on CSA, he said that “there are some companies that refuse to take it seriously”, and promised legislative proposals in a forthcoming Online Harms White Paper.¹⁷⁰

118. Like many of the trends identified in this report, responsibility for cracking down on online child sexual abuse is falling almost entirely on an overstretched and under-resourced law enforcement community, with inadequate cooperation from the internet giants. While we acknowledge that the Internet Watch Foundation plays an important role in removing abusive material, law enforcement witnesses were clear that tech companies are not doing enough to reduce the number of child abuse images online. We agree with the Home Secretary that the web giants need to do much more to combat online CSA. The wealth, power and influence of these companies means that there is no excuse for complacency in removing illegal content from their platforms and ensuring the safety of their users.

119. We urge the Government to include in its Online Harms White Paper the imposition of statutory duties on companies to cooperate with investigators in the pursuit of online child abuse offenders, including by providing more comprehensive intelligence

166 Internet Watch Foundation website (iwf.org.uk), [Image Hash List](#), accessed 6 September 2018

167 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0013](#))

168 [Q510](#)

169 House of Commons Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee, Disinformation and ‘fake news’: Interim Report, Fifth Report of Session 2017–19 ([HC 363](#)), 29 July 2018

170 Home Office, [Speech by the Home Secretary: Keeping our children safe](#), 3 September 2018

packages to CEOP and other investigators. The Government should also establish a regulator with statutory powers to hold internet companies to account against a clear code of practice, developed in consultation with law enforcement experts. Failure to adhere to this code, such as providing inadequate protections against online grooming and the proliferation of child abuse images, should result in penalties being imposed, including fines and other sanctions as appropriate.

5 Safeguarding vulnerable people

Introduction

120. A prominent theme emerging throughout this inquiry was the increasing volume of police work arising from identifying and managing various forms of vulnerability, including safeguarding vulnerable adults who cross their path, being first-on-scene during a mental health crisis, undertaking child protection work on a multi-agency basis, and dealing with repeat missing person incidents, including looked-after children. These trends were attributed to a multitude of factors, including growing awareness of various forms of vulnerability and the need to protect marginalised individuals from harm, a culture of risk aversion, and the impact of funding pressures experienced by other public services (some of which do not operate a 24/7 service), including local authorities and NHS mental health services.

121. Dee Collins, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police, told us last year that “83% of my time in terms of delivering services is not about crime”, and referred to “real pressures around mental health, real pressures around [people] missing from homes, children and adults”. Her force had seen “almost a 300% increase in the number of missing [...] people over the last three years”.¹⁷¹ Similarly, Chief Inspector Michael Brown, Mental Health Coordinator for the NPCC and the College of Policing, told us that the “vast majority” of what the police spend their time managing is “vulnerability, mental health, missing children, CSE [child sexual exploitation] and other concerns for welfare from accident and emergency departments, social services and so on”.¹⁷² Chief Constable Mike Veale, the NPCC’s Lead for missing persons, said that “the responsibility for filling that gap” in services to vulnerable people sometimes becomes “suffocating and difficult to manage”.¹⁷³

122. Despite the wide scope of this inquiry, we were unable to examine every area of growing demand and vulnerability in detail. This chapter focuses on mental health work, missing people (particularly missing children), and multi-agency child protection work. In July, we launched a separate inquiry into Modern Slavery, including the role of ‘county lines’ drug distribution networks, after several reports criticised the response of the police and other agencies since the Modern Slavery Act 2015 came into force.¹⁷⁴ Our Serious Violence inquiry is also examining the involvement of vulnerable people in gangs and organised criminal groups.

Estimating ‘non-crime’ demand on policing

123. Faced with limited statistics on the level of demand on policing arising from vulnerability and mental health, with vast variations in estimates, we asked forces how many command and control (C&C) calls handled locally resulted in (a) a crime report, (b) a police intervention involving the safeguarding of vulnerable people, and (c) a case involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis. On average, only 14% of calls and 24% of incidents resulted in a crime report, 3% of calls included flags to suggest they involved safeguarding a vulnerable person, and 1% of calls included flags to suggest that

171 [Q18](#)

172 [Q384](#)

173 [Q394](#)

174 Home Affairs Committee news item, [Call for written evidence into modern slavery](#), 18 July 2018

they involved a mental health issue. These figures should be treated with caution, as forces used varying methods of identification.¹⁷⁵ The College of Policing made similar estimates in 2015: it revealed that 83% of all “command and control” (C&C) calls during 2012/13 concerned non-crime related incidents, and approximately 2% of incidents reported to the police over the course of a year were linked to mental health.¹⁷⁶

124. In both sets of data, mental health incidents were far less common than the volume estimated in written evidence. The Met’s submission said that approximately 40% of its work has a “mental health element”, and Kent Police estimated more recently that a third of its time is spent dealing with individuals and cases involving mental health.¹⁷⁷ Chief Inspector Brown told us that data provided to the Home Office by forces had demonstrated that “not every police force fully understands its demand”, in part because “the data does not lead easily from police systems that were built for purposes such as crime recording”.¹⁷⁸

Mental health work

125. Despite the figures outlined above, there is very strong evidence that mental ill health is placing increasingly high demands on the police service. The results of an FOI reported by the press last October showed that 23 police forces in England and Wales dealt with 215,000 mental health cases in 2016–17—a 39% increase on the year before. Some forces saw the number of incidents more than double during that period.¹⁷⁹ The use of section 136 of the Mental Health Act, which enables the police to remove an individual to a place of safety if they are suffering from mental disorder and are in immediate need of care or control, reportedly increased by 50% between 2005/06 and 2015/16.¹⁸⁰

126. There is evidence that NHS mental health services are under significant strain, particularly in crisis care: the Royal College of Psychiatrists warned last year of a ‘national crisis’ in inpatient psychiatric treatment, resulting in more patients needing to be sent out of their area for care.¹⁸¹ Figures obtained by the BBC last year from 39 mental health trusts showed that 70% reported a workload increase in the previous year, and one trust (East London NHS Foundation Trust) had seen a 60% rise in crisis referrals.¹⁸² In August 2017, it was reported that the amount of paramedics’ time spent supporting people with their mental health rose by 32% nationally and by 45% in London.¹⁸³

127. Sir Thomas Winsor said last year that these pressures were “too often making the police the service of first resort, long after the chances of effective prevention have been lost”. He declared this “a profoundly improper way to treat vulnerable people who need care and help”, and said: “Until mental health is given the same priority as physical health, in resources including funding, the police will continue to play too large a role dealing

175 They may relate to calls (999 and 101), or to the creation of incident reports. Further information is provided in the Annex to this report.

176 College of Policing analysis: [Estimating demand on the police service](#), 2015

177 Kent PCC, [Do you have an idea which could cut policing’s mental health demand?](#) 9 March 2018

178 [Q405](#)

179 *BBC News*, [Police handling a third more mental health cases, figures suggest](#), 28 October 2017

180 *The Guardian*, [Police say they are becoming emergency mental health services](#), 9 October 2016

181 HSJ, [Royal college warns bed shortage is ‘national crisis’](#), 11 July 2017

182 *BBC News*, [Mental health crisis services in England ‘under pressure’](#), 27 July 2017

183 *The Guardian*, [Ambulance call-outs for mental health patients in England soar by 23%](#), 13 August 2017

with people with mental health problems”.¹⁸⁴ This year’s annual report called for public services to work together to prevent mental health problems in children, and said that there are “many people in the criminal justice system who should not be there”.¹⁸⁵

128. Dame Vera Baird, PCC for Northumbria and APCC Lead for Victims, highlighted to us that “there isn’t an obvious place to go if you, as a member of the public, see somebody behaving in an odd way, which might trigger your concerns that they have mental health issues”, so people “tend to go to the police”.¹⁸⁶ Sophie Corlett, Director of External Relations at Mind, suggested that there should be “an open number that everybody could call [...] and then be able to get a mental health appropriate response”. She noted that the health service has an “aspiration” to “move towards” better crisis care, but that “funding it and putting it in place is slow work”.¹⁸⁷

Detention of vulnerable individuals

129. The deaths of a number of vulnerable individuals in police custody prompted the previous Government to appoint Dame Eilish Angiolini to carry out a review on the subject, resulting in a report published in October 2017. She recommended that plans to introduce NHS commissioning of healthcare in police custody should be reinstated and implemented; that the viability of “drying-out centres” as an alternative to police custody or A&E for those under the influence of drugs and alcohol should be “reconsidered”; and that local authorities should ensure that they have “reasonable systems in place” to guarantee that all police requests for accommodation, whether secure or non-secure, are accepted.¹⁸⁸ In response, the Government said that Dame Elish’s report would be “used to further improve training, guidance and standards in relation to detention and custody”, including through the NPCC’s National Strategy for Police Custody. £30m was made available to local clinical commissioning group areas to ensure sufficient provision of community and health-based places of safety for children.¹⁸⁹

130. Despite these efforts, campaigners criticised the Government’s approach in this area in July, after official figures revealed that 23 people had died in or after police detention in 2017–18, the highest in a decade. Over half had “mental health concerns”, and 18 had “links to drug and/or alcohol”.¹⁹⁰ Deborah Coles, Director of INQUEST, said that “this has been a year of widespread promises of change and learning lessons”, following the Angiolini review, but that “real systemic change remains to be seen”.¹⁹¹ Chief Inspector Brown has also voiced concern about the extent to which forces and NHS organisations are learning lessons from deaths in police custody. In a blogpost published in July, he said: “this could happen again tomorrow because the learning is usually just done by the force affected”.¹⁹²

184 HMICFRS, [Police cannot continue to fill the gaps left by other agencies](#), 20 April 2017

185 HMICFRS, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2017](#), 12 June 2018

186 [Q384](#)

187 [Q388](#)

188 Rt. Hon. Dame Eilish Angiolini DBE QC, [Report of the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody](#), January 2017

189 Home Office press release, [Government publishes response to major review into deaths and serious incidents in police custody](#), 30 October 2017

190 IOPC news item, [IOPC publishes figures on deaths during or following police contact for 2017/18](#), 25 July 2018

191 INQUEST press release, [INQUEST responds to IOPC annual statistics which show highest number of police related deaths in over a decade](#), 25 July 2018

192 Mental Health Cop blog, [Accountable to the law, not the NHS](#), 5 July 2018

131. After reforms to the Mental Health Act to reduce the use of police cells for s136 detentions,¹⁹³ this practice fell dramatically (by 56%) between 2014/15 and 2015/16, with a particularly marked reduction (by 73%) for children and young people.¹⁹⁴ Nevertheless, last December the NPCC estimated that around 2,000 people per year were being detained unlawfully in police custody beyond the 24-hour limit.¹⁹⁵ Although health-based places of safety are more appropriate for people experiencing a mental health crisis, Chief Inspector Brown told us that it “actually costs more in officer hours to work with the NHS by taking people to healthcare settings than it does to put someone in custody”. He elaborated: “If you have a health-based place of safety process in an area where the NHS do not staff the safe room”, then “two officers frequently remain there for six or seven hours or more—for the whole period of time that it takes to arrange an assessment”. He added: “If the person needs an inpatient bed, which may not be available for hours or indeed days, the officers may have to remain there for that period, too.”¹⁹⁶ Sophie Corlett said that, in London, the police are “doing a lot of phoning around to find out where the empty space is—the police are doing that labour, not the health services”.¹⁹⁷

132. The interim report of the independent review of the Mental Health Act observed that the principle of treating an unwell individual in hospital, rather than a police cell, should extend to the method of transportation used to take them to hospital.¹⁹⁸ The latest figures show that, in the year ending March 2017, a police vehicle was used to transport the person to a place of safety in over half of cases. In over a third of cases in which a police vehicle was used, this was because an ambulance was not available within a reasonable amount of time.¹⁹⁹

133. We welcome the reduction in the use of police custody for individuals detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act. We remain concerned, however, that lessons are not being learned by all forces about the use of these powers in a lawful and appropriate way, including the use of restraint against individuals experiencing acute mental distress, and we are very troubled by the increase in the number of deaths in police custody. The Government should provide us with an annual update regarding progress against Dame Eilish Angiolini’s recommendations, and explain why the number of deaths in police custody have increased in the last recorded year.

134. If an individual requires a health-based place of safety for a mental health crisis, the police service’s involvement in their care should end at the point at which they are sectioned. It is unacceptable that the majority of section 136 cases involve police transport to a health facility, frequently because an ambulance is not available in time. This is an inappropriate way to care for patients, and leaves police forces overstretched. We have also heard evidence of the police spending hours trying to find a treatment provider, and remaining in hospital with a mental health patient while an inpatient bed is found for them. These are risks which the NHS should be responsible for managing, and has the expertise to manage—it is completely inappropriate to leave the police to

193 580–82, [Policing and Crime Act 2017](#)

194 NPCC, [Use of police cells for those in mental health crisis more than halves](#), 9 September 2016

195 *BBC News*, [Police reveal ‘unlawful’ mental health detentions](#), 8 December 2017

196 [Q384](#)

197 [Q388](#)

198 The independent review of the Mental Health Act: [Interim report](#), 1 May 2018

199 Home Office, [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2017](#) ([Statistical Bulletin 20/17](#)), 26 October 2017

pick up the pieces in this way. The NHS is currently advancing Integrated Care Systems as an attempt to integrate local health and social care services more effectively. These should take into account the effects of local health needs on the police.

Police mental health training

135. Dame Eilish’s report criticised progress on police mental health training, stating that it had “tended to be slow, not sustained, fragmented and with little national coordination”. She said that “there appears to be a pressing need for a national mechanism that can monitor if and when police forces are carrying out training recommended by the College of Policing”, and recommended that “national, comprehensive, quality assured mental health training” should be provided to all officers in front-line or custody roles, covering all new recruits, and with the provision of regular refresher training.²⁰⁰

136. In October 2016, the College of Policing published new authorised professional practice (APP)²⁰¹ materials for officers on responding to calls involving mental ill health, mental vulnerabilities and learning disabilities.²⁰² Chief Inspector Brown told us that the College suggested that all officers should have a two-day training package on mental health, which he described as the “absolute minimum”, with an option for a third day. The training is not mandatory—“unfortunately in my opinion”—and there is a “mixed picture across the country”.²⁰³

137. As part of our data collection exercise, we asked forces how many of their officers, PCSOs and staff members had received mental health training, and what form that training had taken. Of the 32 forces that returned data on proportion of headcount, rather than attendance numbers for the training, we found that an average of 53% of officers and 23% of staff had received some form of training. In most cases, this was reported to be a mix of online and classroom training, although twelve forces provided no details. Figures varied significantly between forces, from 5% of staff and 7% of officers/PCSOs in Derbyshire to 100% of officers/PCSOs and staff in Cambridgeshire.

138. Chief Constable Veale said that training on mental health and vulnerability in his force (Cleveland) is “embedded into one day of wider training”. He told us that demands on policing “often outstrip resources”, with the result that “There is no longer the ability to just take officers and staff from the frontline and spend two days training them in some of those incredibly important areas of our business”.²⁰⁴ In a blog post last year, Chief Inspector Brown contrasted the amount of mental health training for officers with the three-week course on driving police vehicles, with longer training courses for advanced drivers. He said: “I would argue the strategic risk to policing that is represented by mental health related demands means we should be giving more than two days, if the risk represented by driving standards means a three week course”.²⁰⁵ He later told us that there

200 Rt. Hon. Dame Eilish Angiolini DBE QC, [Report of the Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody](#), January 2017

201 As outlined in Chapter 6, Police officers and staff are expected to “have regard to APP [guidance] in discharging their responsibilities”.

202 College of Policing, [APP content: mental health](#), accessed 6 September 2018

203 [Q387](#)

204 [Q405](#)

205 Mental Health Cop blog, [The Angiolini Review](#), 30 October 2017

is significant appetite for mental health awareness among the officers to whom he speaks, and he described the advantages for chief constables of investing in training, stating that they get “an awful lot back in terms of reductions in crime and reductions in demand”.²⁰⁶

139. From the evidence we received, it appears that some police forces see mental health training as a ‘nice-to-have’, rather than an essential part of their officers’ knowledge base and skillset. We appreciate that it is extremely challenging to remove officers and PCSOs from the frontline in order to train them for two days, as per the College of Policing’s guidance. But we urge forces to consider the cost of a single death in police custody of an individual experiencing a mental health crisis—not just in monetary terms, but to that individual’s loved ones, and to society as a whole. It is ludicrous that officers receive a three-week course in police driving, while dealing regularly with acute mental health crises with just a few hours of training. The College of Policing should take immediate steps to mandate a minimum two-day mental health course for all officers and PCSOs. We urge chief constables to regard this as an investment rather than a chore.

Joint working with NHS mental health services

140. An increasing number of forces are working in closer partnership with the NHS and other local agencies to improve their response to individuals experiencing mental health crises, including through street triage services, in which mental health workers or paramedics work with the police to respond to mental health incidents. In 2016, researchers at University College London (UCL) published an evaluation of triage services in nine pilot areas across England and Wales.²⁰⁷ The researchers recommended that the schemes should be made available 24/7, and that a national curriculum and associated training materials for street triage staff should be developed, along with enhanced mental health training for all police officers.²⁰⁸ Sophie Corlett told us that there are about 17 schemes operating across the country, but “we would like to see them everywhere”,²⁰⁹ and later highlighted that they can enable the police to access information from other services “about people they are coming across on the street”.²¹⁰

141. Chief Inspector Brown had less praise for these schemes. He criticised the UCL study and told us that Kent’s street triage scheme was disbanded, partly because they “couldn’t physically get to everything that they were trying to respond to”—unlike in urban areas with more condensed populations. He also questioned their value: in the street triage schemes he had witnessed around the country, he had observed that the majority of incidents “didn’t require the police service”, and “a good proportion of them, if not a clear majority of them, are patients who are currently known to their local mental health trust as having existing mental health problems”.²¹¹ Warning that such schemes might be having unintended consequences, by increasing demand on the police, he said: “We know that in some areas, the existence of street triage means other professionals now see the police as an easy-to-access nurse-led service, even when the interaction itself does not require the police”.²¹²

206 [Q406](#)

207 UCL, [Street Triage Report on the evaluation of nine pilot schemes in England](#), March 2016

208 UCL, [Street Triage Report on the evaluation of nine pilot schemes in England](#), March 2016

209 [Q396](#)

210 [Q408](#)

211 [Q386](#)

212 [Q421](#)

142. Joint triage schemes between the NHS and the police have been spoken of positively by many witnesses, and efforts to encourage data-sharing and cooperation between the police and local health providers are to be encouraged. We are concerned, however, that they are promoting further reliance on the police as the first-point-of-call for individuals who witness or experience a mental health crisis. People who require mental health treatment in a crisis need an urgent, NHS-led response, not a police car.

143. In too many areas, the police are the only emergency service for those in crisis, and they are being used as a gateway to healthcare for those in desperate need of help. This is an extremely poor use of public funds and one of the worse examples of cost-shunting between public services. The NHS is expected to receive a £20bn funding uplift in the upcoming Budget. This should take into account the significant disparity in funding for mental health, relative to physical health, so that the NHS is better able to support those with mental health needs, rather than relying on the police.

Missing people

144. Reports of missing people, including children, are another frequently-cited area of growing demand on the police, and can involve complex vulnerabilities and associated safeguarding activity. NCA figures released in December 2017 showed that police forces in England and Wales received 337,650 calls regarding missing people in 2015/16—an increase of a fifth compared with the year before.²¹³ Included in those figures were 124,507 reports of missing children made to the police, accounting for 60% of incidents (the vast majority of which related to teenagers).²¹⁴ A large amount of demand is generated by the same individuals going missing repeatedly: 59% of missing person incidents involving children are repeat missing episodes involving the same child, and 20% of adult incidents are repeat episodes.²¹⁵

Missing children and child protection work

145. Children in the care of local authorities are much more likely to go missing than those living with their parents, with demand generated from care homes housing children from other areas, as well as those who grew up locally. Figures obtained by the Labour MP Ann Coffey, published on her website, indicated that the number of looked-after children placed in residential care outside their local area had increased by nearly two-thirds between 2012 and 2017.²¹⁶ Separate figures provided to us by police in Rochdale showed that, between November 2017 and April 2018 alone, there were 227 local incidents of children going missing from care homes that involved children in the care of the local authority, but an additional 101 incidents involving children in the care of another local authority.²¹⁷

146. The latest HMICFRS thematic inspection of the police response to missing people was published in March 2016, focusing on missing children. The inspection found “unacceptable inconsistencies between and within forces, across all aspects of the approach

213 NCA, [Missing Persons Data Report 2015/16](#), December 2017

214 NCA, [Missing Persons Data Report 2015/16](#), December 2017

215 NCA, [Missing Persons Data Report 2015/16](#), December 2017

216 Ann Coffey MP website (anncoffymp.com), news item: [Greater Manchester ‘sent away’ children in danger](#), 8 May 2018

217 Greater Manchester Police, Rochdale District ([PFF0022](#))

to missing children, whether in respect of assessing risks, investigating or supporting children”. It called for “both operational and cultural changes in the police service”, and made a series of recommendations, including for the Home Office to work with the Department for Education to review the placement of looked-after children in other local authority areas; for the national policing lead to work with the Association of Independent Local Safeguarding Children’s Board Chairs to improve oversight within local authority areas, to ensure that agencies are fulfilling their responsibilities; and for chief constables to ensure that information management processes are in place which focus on outcomes for children who go missing, and to provide better analysis of the effectiveness of the police and multi-agency responses.²¹⁸

147. A further HMICFRS inspection in September 2016 examined the multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation and missing children. It found that a better understanding was needed of why children go missing, at both an individual and strategic level; that the requirement for every child who has been missing to receive a return home interview was “not working well enough”; that police risk assessments of missing children are “inconsistent”; and that their effectiveness is “limited” for some children, because “episodes of children going missing are sometimes seen in isolation without considering wider vulnerability”.²¹⁹ Chief Constable Veale told us that there needs to be “more emphasis” on a “seamless partnership approach between residential care homes and local authorities”, adding that the police have “made great strides in improving” multi-agency working in this area, “but we’re not anywhere near where we should be”.²²⁰ Overall, he painted a picture of inconsistency and a lack of leverage at a national level. For example, he told us that, “unfortunately [...] despite my desire and the guidance for local authorities”, return-home interviews for missing children are still administered in different ways across the country, “with different standards, different questions being asked and different professionals involved”.²²¹

148. Data-sharing between agencies was highlighted as a key barrier to progress in this area. In written evidence, the Children’s Society highlighted that risk assessments undertaken by the police when children go missing are mostly informed by “limited information communicated to the police call taker by a person reporting a child missing”. The information that might be available from children’s services and voluntary sector organisations is “often not taken into consideration” during risk assessments, and there is “a lack of proper information sharing between the police and local safeguarding service”. It attributed this partly to “the variety of IT systems used, and a lack of clarity around what data can be shared without breaking data protection laws”.²²²

149. Chief Constable Veale also referred to data protection concerns as a barrier to information-sharing about vulnerable individuals. He suggested that concern about personal data “impairs and inhibits conversations between agencies”—sometimes due to “misinterpretation of some of the legislation”. He admitted that there are occasions when the police are “risk averse” and “not lawfully audacious”, the latter of which “we should be”.²²³ Chief Constable Simon Bailey’s follow-up written evidence called for better sharing

218 HMIC, [Missing children: who cares? The police response to missing and absent children](#), March 2016

219 HMIC and others, [‘Time to listen’ – a joined up response to child sexual exploitation and missing children](#), September 2016

220 [Q412](#)

221 [Q413](#)

222 The Children’s Society ([PFF0072](#))

223 [Q399](#)

among agencies of information about children at risk, or those identified to have had adverse childhood experiences. He said that “Creating more innovative and effective ways for the public to submit concerns and intelligence to law enforcement and partners would provide further sources of intelligence”, as would “bringing together the large datasets held by individual public services”.²²⁴ He called for a cross-government strategy on CSA, and a public health approach to tackling abuse and its causes, to “clarify responsibilities for all agencies” and enable the third sector to work with the public sector.²²⁵

150. The demand on policing arising from cases involving missing people—particularly children—appears to be the result of a perfect storm generated by funding reductions to other public services, the extensive use of out-of-area placements for looked-after children, a lack of data and intelligence-sharing between the police and other public agencies, and an excessive dependence on the police as a service-of-last-resort for vulnerable individuals, including the safeguarding of children at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. We do not lament the police’s involvement in this important area of work, but their increasing workload appears to be the result of failures in other services and in partnership working, rather than a political or strategic decision. We are also concerned that there appears to have been little progress since HMICFRS published its 2016 report on this subject. This is one of many areas in which the national policing lead seems to have insufficient leverage to enact fundamental change at a local level.

151. We are concerned that there has been a serious lack of Ministerial leadership in relation to the threat of child sexual abuse in England and Wales, including the response to missing children, the proliferation of child abuse images, and the join-up between agencies on child protection work. Police activity is fragmented, under-resourced and subject to competing demands; information-sharing between agencies is woeful; rehabilitation for CSA offenders is virtually non-existent; and there is nowhere near enough proactive activity taking place to stem the tide of child abuse images online, and the associated growth in known paedophiles. We welcome the Home Secretary’s personal commitment to driving progress in this area. The Government should appoint a Commissioner for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse to work across departments and agencies, work closely with private and non-profit organisations, and produce a bold and comprehensive cross-Government strategy on child protection and the prevention of child sexual abuse.

152. Even if our recommendations are implemented effectively, the police will still have an important role to play in protecting vulnerable people from harm, including managing the risk from sex offenders, referring vulnerable offenders to other agencies, and tracking down missing people. However, our findings strongly point to the need for agencies to be much more joined-up in their approach, with more pooling of resources and a less risk-averse approach to data-sharing. We return to this issue in the next chapter.

224 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0013](#))

225 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0013](#))

6 Police funding

Current levels of funding

153. The latest police funding round was announced on 31 January, covering the 2018/19 financial year. If all Police and Crime Commissioners maximise their income from the council tax precept, total direct resource funding for England and Wales will increase to just over £11.3 billion in 2018/19, from just over £11.0 billion in 2016/17—a cash rise of 2.5%.²²⁶ CPI inflation was 2.5% in the 12 months up to February 2018, so this represents a flat settlement in real terms. £270 million of the £450 million increase will be dependent on use of the maximum precept, and precept income varies significantly between forces.

154. The NAO's recent report on police financial sustainability stated that legal requirements prevent police forces from running a budget deficit, so “any problems caused by funding reductions are likely to manifest themselves in a force being unable to provide an adequate policing service rather than in financial failure”. It highlighted evidence that the service is under strain, including figures on the average time it takes to charge an offence, which increased from 14 days for the year ending March 2016 to 18 days for the year ending March 2018. It criticised the Home Office for its “light touch” approach to accountability, meaning that “forces’ financial sustainability has not received proper attention”, and pointed out that there are “no common standards for measuring all demands for police services and their costs”, with the result that there is “no national picture of what forces need”. Further, it concluded that there is “no overarching strategy for policing”, limiting the Home Office’s ability to plan investments and programmes of work over the longer-term.²²⁷ Gavin Thomas, President of the PSAEW, reportedly responded: “Policing is now utterly reliant on fewer people working longer and harder. That exploits police officers and defrauds the public.”²²⁸

155. It was made clear to us throughout this inquiry that the police service is deeply dissatisfied with current funding levels, which many regard as unsustainable. Chief Constable Thornton told us that the service got “more than we expected” in the last settlement, but “we did not get what we asked for”. Commissioner Dick told us that the Met has made £700 million’s worth of efficiencies in “the last few years”, and they have “another couple of hundred million to find”, but that difficult choices need to be made:

I am sure everybody would say there is probably a little bit more efficiency they could squeeze here and there, but what we see is this huge rising expectation and demand that is putting a massive strain on our people, and it cannot go on without hard choices: [...] more money, smaller mission, [or] greater risk appetite”.²²⁹

156. As well as widespread concerns about the level of police funding, witnesses also complained about the manner in which it is delivered. City of London Police said that “Annualised funding allocations result in short term strategies that deliver short

226 [Police Grant Report England and Wales 2018/19](#)

227 National Audit Office, *Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018* ([HC 1501](#)), 11 September 2018

228 *The Independent*, [Home Office in the dark about whether police forces are running out of money, damning report warns](#), 11 September 2018

229 [Q462](#)

term impact”, and described them as a “constraint on the development of skills and technology”.²³⁰ Stephen Mold, PCC for Northamptonshire, said that the “imposition of one year funding settlements [...] hampers effective long term financial planning”, potentially deterring forces and PCCs from making long-term investments.²³¹ Martyn Underhill, PCC for Dorset, described the “absence of any indication of funding beyond 12 months” as “disappointing”, and said that it compromises the ability to formulate “a realistic medium term financial plan”, placing the police “at a disadvantage and out of step with the rest of local government”.²³² Dame Vera Baird also called for three year funding packages to allow for effective medium-term planning. The Police Transformation Fund, which awards tens of millions of pounds every year to projects aimed at preparing the police to respond to changing demands, was criticised by witnesses for being “heavily focused on short-term funding”,²³³ and for incentivising forces to invest resources in a “competitive bidding process for short term projects”.²³⁴

157. In 2015, the “advisory group on the national debate on policing in austerity” published a discussion paper making a number of recommendations about police funding and structural reform. It was authored by the then CEO of the College of Policing, chief constables from four forces, and representatives from UNISON, the Police Federation, the PSAEW, HMIC and the APCC. The paper called for the “replacement of multiple, uncoordinated funding streams with multiyear settlements and authority to budget, fund and commission jointly” with other public services. It said that consideration should be given to providing direct funding to “any units set up to provide functions cross-force or nationally”, rather than “routing money via participating forces”. It also described the grant-based funding formula overseen by the Home Office as “backward-looking, highly complex, opaque and, through its reliance on out of date data and regression, distant from current policing reality”.²³⁵

The police funding formula

158. The police funding formula determines the manner in which Central Government funding is allocated to each of the 43 police forces in England and Wales, accounting for factors such as population volume, density and the size of the “hard-pressed population”. Reform of the funding formula was the subject of a report published by our predecessor Committee in December 2015. This explored the circumstances leading to the Home Office’s decision to pause the reform review process, following the realisation that the data used to calculate future funding changes at force level had been incorrect.

159. The Committee said that the current formula is not fit for purpose, and called for the Home Office to appoint an independent panel to assist it in formulating revised proposals. It asserted that the revised model should take account of variations in income from the council tax precept, non-crime demand, local diversity, cross-boundary crime, and the demands of counter-terrorism policing.²³⁶ The Government’s response was received 15 months later, in March 2017. The Home Office stated that it had developed a new review

230 T/Commander David Clark, National Coordinator for Economic Crime, City of London Police ([PFF0003](#))

231 Stephen Mold, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire ([PFF0032](#))

232 Martyn Underhill, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset ([PFF0025](#))

233 Keith Hunter, Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside ([PFF0013](#))

234 Chief Constable Debbie Simpson, Dorset Police ([PFF0018](#))

235 The advisory group on the national debate on policing in austerity, [Reshaping policing for the public](#), June 2015

236 Home Affairs Committee, Reform of the Police Funding Formula, Fourth Report of Session 2015–16 ([HC 476](#)) 11 December 2015

process since the ‘pause’ that followed the identification of errors in the data. The review commenced in September 2016, with a “period of detailed engagement with the policing sector and experts”.²³⁷

160. In March 2017, the Chair of the Committee wrote to the then Policing Minister to enquire about the status of the review, and asked when the Home Office intended to engage police forces and PCCs, before going out to public consultation on a revised funding model. In response, the then Minister said that he had invited Chief Constables and PCCs to meet him to discuss the review, and a recent meeting of the Senior Sector Group (which includes chief constables) had included a discussion about the manner in which the new model is being developed. The Minister did not set a timeframe for the next consultation, stating that “details of any consultation will be set out in due course and cover a range of issues, including transitional arrangements”.²³⁸ The NAO’s recent report criticised the funding formula, stating that it “does not take into account the full range of demands on police time”, and noted that any changes emerging from the Home Office’s review will not be implemented until 2020–21 at the earliest.²³⁹

Comments by Government Ministers

161. The Home Secretary, Sajid Javid MP, has indicated that he has some sympathy for the case for a funding uplift, telling the Police Federation’s annual conference that he will “prioritise police funding in the Spending Review next year”.²⁴⁰ Chief Constable Thornton told us in June that work was underway to make a “coherent joint case” for funding for the Spending Review,²⁴¹ and argued that “there is an obvious place for investment in policing”.²⁴² Areas she identified as requiring specific investment included “technology”, developing “the skills of our staff and officers” and “capabilities such as cyber”.²⁴³

162. The Policing Minister told us that he recognises that “the police system needs more resource, which is exactly what it has”, as a result of the additional funding provided since 2015. The Minister pointed to Durham Constabulary as a force that “continue to provide good outcomes despite budget cuts”, and said that it is not “all about resource”. But he nevertheless acknowledged that “the police are very stretched”, and said that “the Home Secretary has made it very clear that he is going to attach priority to policing in the CSR [Comprehensive Spending Review]. There has been a significant change in that direction in response to very clear evidence of demand on the police”.²⁴⁴

163. Sir David Norgrove, Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, has repeatedly emphasised “the need for greater precision in the way numbers are used” by the Government in statements on police funding. In March, he warned that statements from the Prime Minister and the Home Office on the latest police funding round “could have led the public to conclude incorrectly that central government is providing an additional £450

237 Home Affairs Committee, Reform of the Police Funding Formula: Government Response to the Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2015–16 ([HC 1093](#)), 14 March 2017

238 [Letter from the Policing Minister, Brandon Lewis MP, to the Chair of the Committee, Yvette Cooper MP](#), 6 April 2017

239 National Audit Office, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018 ([HC 1501](#)), 11 September 2018

240 Home Office, [Home Secretary Police Federation speech 2018](#), 23 May 2018

241 [Q456](#)

242 [Q464](#)

243 [Q456](#)

244 [Q585](#)

million for police spending in 2018/19.” He recommended that “the Home Office’s Head of Profession for Statistics speak to communications colleagues about the importance of clear public statements about police funding and ensure they understand the structure of police funding.”²⁴⁵

164. **The Government must be clear and accurate about police funding, and the resource pressures facing forces. We welcome the Home Secretary’s commitment to prioritising police funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), and the Policing Minister’s clear recognition that the service requires additional resources to enable it to meet changing demands. We agree with them. Policing urgently needs more money. We strongly recommend that police funding is prioritised in both the upcoming Budget and the next CSR.**

165. **Given the complex challenges outlined in this report, we have no doubt that a failure to provide a funding uplift for policing would have dire consequences. Efficiency savings can only go so far, in the context of the challenges that forces now face: substantial increases in serious violence and volume crime; a rise in complex cases, including child sexual offences and domestic abuse; an ever-growing workload from safeguarding vulnerable people, and an explosion of internet crime, with the evidential challenges that creates. Without extra funding, something will have to give, and the police will not be able to fulfil their duties in delivering public safety, criminal justice, community cohesion and public confidence.**

166. **We are extremely concerned by the National Audit Office’s recent conclusion that the Home Office does not know whether or not the police system is financially sustainable, and cannot be sure that funding is being directed to the right places. Future investment must be strategic and evidence-based, ensuring that resources are focused in the areas in which they can have the most impact on crime prevention and harm reduction, and not just those areas that might attract the most favourable press coverage.**

167. **The current model for police funding is not fit for purpose, and should be fundamentally revised and restructured. Such heavy reliance on the council tax precept for additional funding is also unsustainable. It is time to stop kicking this problem into the long grass, and create a funding settlement for forces that is fit for the 21st century, recognising the true cost of policing. This must be based on robust evidence on resource requirements arising from diverse and complex demands. It is also likely to require more resource to be channelled to regional levels, to address the structural challenges outlined later in this report.**

168. **As we outlined in Chapter 5, the police service is playing an increasing role in managing vulnerability and risk across public services, and many individuals have complex needs which cross organisational boundaries. In Chapter 2, we referred to models involving the co-location of police officers or PCSOs with other agencies, to work on interventions for individuals in greater need of holistic support. The Government should undertake a review of models that enable the police to pool resources with other public agencies, and facilitate these arrangements where they would enable a more joined-up, effective and cost-efficient response.**

245 [Letter from the Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir David Norgrove](#), to Louise Haigh MP, 20 March 2018

169. Many witnesses highlighted the challenges created by the short-term approach to police funding. This is an unnecessary obstacle to investment in innovation, and it disincentivises medium- and long-term financial planning. The Government should move to a longer-term funding structure, to enable the service to frontload investment in the technology that will enable it to make the best use of its resources and assets. The Police Transformation Fund is a piecemeal and ad hoc method for funding innovation and new technology in policing, and a much more coordinated, long-term approach is required.

7 Police technology

Introduction

170. Earlier chapters of this report have referred to the challenges being created by the growth in digital evidence, and police service’s inability to keep pace with the increasingly-sophisticated methods of online offenders. This chapter takes a closer look at police technology, focusing on cyber and digital skills, digital capabilities at a national level, and police forces’ ability to implement new technology and communications solutions at an agile pace.

Cyber and digital skills

171. Many policing witnesses spoke about the challenges involved in acquiring colleagues with strong cyber and digital skills, and in training officers and staff to the required standard. Written evidence from the Met Police said that “being able to tackle cybercrime, fraud and other crimes that take place in a non-physical environment requires a totally new skillset for our officers and staff.”²⁴⁶ The Police Foundation argued for “much greater flexibility within the police workforce”, to enable forces to “move past the current dichotomy between warranted officers and police staff”. Highlighting the fact that “analysts and fraud investigators (who may have no power of arrest) are very much at the forefront of tackling crime and keeping the public safe”, the Foundation suggested that “A key part of this shift will be cultural, both within forces and among citizens, as to what we mean by [...] ‘frontline’ policing”.²⁴⁷

172. In a speech in 2016, the President of the Police Superintendents Association of England and Wales, Chief Superintendent Gavin Thomas, argued that the response to online crime might require “recruiting someone in their late teens, or early twenties, who thinks about, and uses technology in a very different way to those of their colleagues”. He suggested that police teams could be supplemented by cyber and financial experts from outside policing.²⁴⁸ The PSAEW told us last year that “there is a need to redefine policing’s relationship with the private sector, so that it becomes one that is agile and flexible, enabling the sharing of skills, knowledge and technology”.²⁴⁹ It was also supportive of the notion of transforming the Special Constabulary into “an effective reserve force”.²⁵⁰ The Policing Minister told us that Hampshire Constabulary has “led the field in encouraging what they call cyber specials”—people with “skills that would take forever to develop inside the police system”, who “come in and offer those to the force”.²⁵¹

173. T/Commander Dave Clark told us that there had been progress in training officers on online fraud, including through courses run by the College of Policing, but he acknowledged that there was “more to do on direct entry of specialist skills”, adding that “traditional policing recruitment” has not helped.²⁵² His written submission said that “a

246 Metropolitan Police Service ([PFF0055](#))

247 The Police Foundation ([PFF0041](#))

248 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales, [New figures, new thinking – how to deal with the cyber crime phenomenon](#), 21 July 2016

249 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

250 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

251 [Q536](#)

252 [Q283](#)

majority of regional fraud teams have fewer than half a dozen fraud investigators”, so “the capacity to support forces on serious and complex fraud investigations is severely limited”.²⁵³ The APCC said in written evidence that ongoing challenges were being generated by the loss of police staff with “niche technical skills”, who leave forces to pursue better-paid opportunities in the private sector.²⁵⁴

174. In June, we visited the National Digital Exploitation Service (NDES), which is hosted by the Metropolitan Police Service. The NDES was created in 2015 as a national capability to support counter-terrorism policing, with the ability to access and exploit various forms of digital intelligence and evidence.²⁵⁵ Lynne Owens suggested to us that the policing of serious and organised crime is not in the same place as counter-terrorism, in relation to national capabilities and structures. She told us that a recent national security capability review had concluded that “there ought to be a new national assessment centre built within the National Crime Agency, supported by a new national data exploitation centre”, also within the NCA.²⁵⁶ In an interview with *The Sunday Times* in January, Ms Owens reportedly described the difference in resourcing between serious organised crime and counter-terrorism as “disproportionate” to the level of risk.²⁵⁷

175. Chief Constable Thornton told us that the area of policing in which she is “least confident” is “our response to cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled crime”. A review in 2017 had concluded that “only about a third of forces had a proper capability to deal with cyber-dependent and cyber-enabled” offences. She told us that the NPCC and NCA were making a joint bid to the Police Transformation Fund for cyber units in forces, “regionally coordinated as part of the NCA area”, with views “emerging” about “the skills that are needed”. She admitted, however, that this was “very much work in progress”.²⁵⁸

176. We have serious concerns about the police service’s digital capabilities, including the skills base of officers and staff and the technological solutions available to them. We were impressed by the digital and data exploitation capabilities available to counter-terrorism policing, but we note comments by Lynne Owens, Director General of the NCA, regarding the inequitable provision of resources available to other threats, including serious organised crime. Previous chapters have outlined our concerns about digital capabilities in other fields, including child sexual abuse and online fraud, and we fear this may be a systemic problem throughout the police service.

177. Based on the National Digital Exploitation Service model, used for counter-terrorism policing, we believe that a prestigious national digital exploitation centre for serious crime—possibly with regional branches—would be better able to attract and retain talent, alongside the likes of GCHQ. It would also have the purchasing power to invest in innovative methods of digital forensics and analysis, from which all forces could then benefit. We call on the Government and the police service to take steps urgently to cost such a model, in time to account for the required funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

253 T/Commander David Clark, National Coordinator for Economic Crime, City of London Police ([PFF0003](#))

254 Association of Police and Crime Commissioners ([PFF0057](#))

255 Metropolitan Police Service, [Police Staff Information Pack, Digital Specialist – Equipment Interference](#)

256 [Q483](#)

257 *The Sunday Times*, [National Crime Agency boss Lynne Owens: ‘Organised criminals pose a greater threat than terrorists’](#), 14 January 2018

258 [Q448](#)

178. **At force-level, there is a clear need to upskill the existing workforce and bring in more staff and officers with advanced cyber skills. We also endorse the Police Superintendents’ Association’s suggestion that the Special Constabulary could be transformed into an effective reserve force, and suggest that resources should be devoted to scoping this as a national model, focused on cyber and digital skills.**

Technology and data-sharing between forces

179. A common theme emerging from the evidence was the inability of forces introduce and implement new technological and communication solutions in an agile and joined-up manner. Martyn Underhill said in written evidence that policing continued to be “hamstrung” by “numerous different solutions to the same problem being generated across 43 different forces”. He pointed to body-worn cameras as a “positive initiative” that has nevertheless been “rolled out in a piecemeal fashion with a lack of common standards and shared learning from the process”. He added that the introduction of the Police ICT Company, which is owned and funded by PCCs to support police ICT projects, was “a positive move in trying to co-ordinate technology related matters at a national level”, but that “the sheer size, scope and complexity of systems, requirements and contracts across the current policing landscape makes this an extremely challenging task, with little real progress made to date”.²⁵⁹

180. The challenges arising from fragmentation in technology were also a key theme emerging from our roundtable event on barriers to innovation and reform. Participants described a lack of long-term strategy and the immense extra costs emerging from duplicating reform programmes across forces. They were particularly frustrated by the lack of interoperability between forces’ databases and communication systems, with delays built into operational work as a result, while officers make phone calls to establish what intelligence is held on a suspect in a neighbouring force. Lynne Owens later confirmed to us that “the intelligence systems that individual police forces work from are different and they are not joined up”.²⁶⁰

181. Chief Constable Thornton told us that “three or four things” were being done at a national level to improve coordination and communication between forces. The “most relevant” of those, she said, are the National Law Enforcement Data Programme, which will replace the Police National Computer (PNC) and the Police National Database (PND) with one database, and the National Enabling Programme, which will enable better communication between forces through joint procurement of software products.²⁶¹ Subsequent evidence revealed the limitations of these and other national projects, however. The Government was unable to provide a figure on the number of forces that had signed up to the National Enabling Programme. When asked why it did not require all forces to sign up, Scott McPherson, Director General of the Crime, Policing and Fire Group, responded: “I think that comes back to the question about local democratic accountability. It is not for the Home Office to dictate to forces exactly what they do on these things”.²⁶² The

259 Martyn Underhill, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset ([PFF0025](#))

260 [Q483](#)

261 [Q487](#)

262 [Q577](#)

National Law Enforcement Data Programme, due to complete in 2019/20, will enhance the sharing of intelligence between frontline officers, but it will not provide them with access to all information from other forces on a ‘real-time’ basis.²⁶³

182. Sir Thomas Winsor told us that a new ‘Network Code’, developed by HMICFRS, will set minimum operating standards for forces to adhere to when upgrading or purchasing an IT system, to enable interoperability between forces, but that forces will not have to sign up to it. Mike Cunningham described current arrangements for national reform as “amorphous”, and said that he would like to see:

[...] something that is much clearer, crystallised in a protocol, in an agreement of some form, that forces and central policing agencies can sign up to [...] when something comes into place that is of public benefit [...]. At the moment, things are done on far too much of an ad hoc basis.²⁶⁴

He added later: “I think that everybody who has led on a national initiative will feel the frustration that we are dealing with a very fragmented system”.²⁶⁵

183. One area in which the Home Office has taken a lead role in delivering a national service to police forces is the Emergency Services Network (ESN) programme. This was intended to provide all emergency services with an advanced communications system, with new data capabilities that they could use to increase efficiency. It was also intended to save money, by allowing the more costly Airwave radio system to be turned off.²⁶⁶ In 2015, the Home Office signed contracts with Motorola and EE to deliver the ESN, with the intention that emergency services would start transitioning to the new network in September 2017.²⁶⁷

184. This programme has run into significant difficulties, however.²⁶⁸ As predicted by the National Audit Office in 2016, the delivery timetable chosen by the Department proved too ambitious, and the roll-out of ESN has been delayed by fifteen months. Services are not due to start using the new system until 2019.²⁶⁹ The problems prompted the Department to start a strategic review of the programme,²⁷⁰ the results of which were finally announced in September 2018, with the programme undergoing a major change of direction. Instead of delivering the entire end-to-end service at once, forces will now have the option of using elements of the service, such as mobile data, as soon as they are ready.²⁷¹ As a result of these delays, the significant financial and productivity benefits projected in the programme’s business case will not be achieved.²⁷² The delays also mean that the Home Office will need to pay £330 million per year to keep Airwave running until ESN is ready.²⁷³

185. The Policing Minister told us that one of his personal “bugbears” is that the police are “not where they need to be” in taking advantage of new technology, which is “the

263 Home Office, National Law Enforcement Data Programme, [Law Enforcement Data Service \(LEDS\) – Privacy Impact Assessment Report](#), July 2018

264 [Q643](#)

265 [Q643](#)

266 [NAO report, Upgrading emergency services communications: the emergency services network](#), para 2

267 [NAO report, Upgrading emergency services communications: the emergency services network](#), timeline page 5

268 [Committee of Public Accounts, Upgrading emergency service communications – recall](#), conclusions 1 and 2

269 [NAO report, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales](#), para 3.13

270 [Letter from Committee of Public Accounts Chair to Home Office](#)

271 Home Office news story, [New strategic direction for the Emergency Services Network \(ESN\)](#), 21 September 2018

272 [NAO report, Upgrading emergency services communications: the emergency services network](#), para 4.11, 4.16

273 [NAO report, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales](#), para 3.13

biggest opportunity in British policing”.²⁷⁴ He referred later to “a central challenge around an historic approach to procurement with insufficient understanding of what they were buying and insufficient collaboration”. He assured us that, “Collectively, we are trying to drag police technology from a place that feels terribly out of date into the modern age”, and “there will be a resource requirement attached to that, which we intend to take to the CSR”.²⁷⁵

186. Police forces’ investment in and adoption of new technology is, quite frankly, a complete and utter mess. We welcome the Policing Minister’s recognition that police technology requires additional investment to enable the service to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This is clearly correct, although we do not think the level of investment is the only problem. Forces are facing rapidly-evolving threats from criminals who exploit new technology in advanced and innovative ways, yet their own technological solutions are not always up to the task. There are enormous opportunities for policing, including greater use of artificial intelligence and the exploitation of data, but the service is often failing to take advantage of them.

187. We believe that the biggest failing in this area is not the level of funding, but rather the complete lack of coordination and leadership on upgrading technology over very many years. This is badly letting down police officers, who are struggling to do their jobs effectively with out-of-date technology. It is astonishing that, in 2018, police forces are still struggling to get crucial real-time information from each other, and that officers are facing frustration and delays on a daily basis. The National Enabling Programme and the ongoing reforms to the Police National Database, though welcome, are woefully unambitious, and will not solve the problem. Criminals don’t recognise police force boundaries, and neither should the data that is gathered on them. The Home Office must make it a clear and stated aim to unify all police databases and communications systems according to a clear timetable, with all new force-level contracts negotiated accordingly, so they can fit into a national framework or contract in future.

188. Stronger national leadership from the Home Office on technology is essential—Ministers need to take ultimate responsibility for the failure of this crucial public service to properly upgrade its technology to deal with the threats of the 21st century. However, this must be accompanied by enhanced capacity and capabilities within the Department: its abject failure to deliver the promised savings from reforms to the Emergency Service Network (ESN) demonstrates what can happen when national projects are poorly managed.

274 [Q571](#)

275 [Q572](#)

8 Police workforce and culture

Introduction

189. Police training and recruitment were not part of our initial call for evidence, but they emerged as recurrent themes throughout our inquiry, along with cultural issues that may serve as barriers to innovation and reform. To explore the latter subject in further detail, we held a private roundtable event under ‘Chatham House’ rules, to encourage candour. Participants included officers from a range of ranks and lengths of service, as well as representatives from the Police Federation, the PSAEW, the Police ICT Company and Police Now. We describe some of the key themes in this chapter. We also took evidence on this issue specifically from Mike Cunningham, CEO of the College of Policing, and Sir Thomas Winsor, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary.

190. As at March 2018, the police workforce (FTE) comprised 122,404 officers, 10,139 PCSOs, 62,820 staff and 11,690 special constables.²⁷⁶ Workforce reform is being pushed for by the Treasury as a prerequisite for additional police funding: Chief Constable Thornton said that “the suggestion has been made by officials that, if we don’t move forward on both workforce reform and pay reform, [...] it does not look like it is a police service that is very committed to modernisation and making the most of what it has”.²⁷⁷ This chapter considers the role and powers of the College of Policing; recruitment and retention problems, including for chief constables; and police cultural issues, including those identified by witnesses and participants attending our roundtable event.

The College of Policing

Background

191. The College of Policing was created by the Coalition Government in 2012, as part of then Home Secretary Theresa May’s sweeping changes to the policing landscape. It took on a number of responsibilities previously held by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA), and its core purpose is to “provide those working in policing with the skills and knowledge necessary to prevent crime, protect the public, and secure public trust”.²⁷⁸

192. In July 2016, our predecessor Committee published a report entitled “College of Policing: three years on”. It criticised the “alarming lack of consistency” in professional standards and recruitment between different forces, and called for “a standard recruitment process with standard entry requirements for someone wishing to become a police officer in England and Wales”. The Committee said that it was “incumbent on the 43 Chief Constables across England and Wales to fully support the work of the College”, but that “we do not believe sufficient support has been forthcoming to date”. It also recommended that the College should be able to set standards for civilian staff.²⁷⁹ The Government’s

276 Home Office, Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2018 ([Statistical Bulletin 11/18](#)), 19 July 2018

277 [Q497](#)

278 College of Policing website (college.police.uk), [About us](#), accessed 6 September 2018

279 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, *College of Policing: three years on*, Fourth Report of Session 2016–17 ([HC 23](#)), 9 July 2016

response said that “police recruitment should continue to be driven by forces to reflect local needs as determined by Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners”, and that it was for forces themselves to decide whether to work together on recruitment.²⁸⁰

New recruitment and training routes

193. In February 2016, the College launched a programme of work to design a new Policing Education Qualification Framework (PEQF), with the aim of creating consistent, national education levels that reflect the profession’s current and future challenges. By January 2020, there will be three routes into policing, including the three-year Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA)—a professional, degree-level apprenticeship, enabling new recruits to “earn while they learn”. The College has said that the apprenticeship will cover “areas that are critical to effective policing in the 21st century, such as evidence-based policing, supporting vulnerable people, dealing with cyber crime and crime prevention”.²⁸¹ Existing graduates will be able to join a two-year practice-based programme, resulting in a graduate diploma, and a third entry route will enable completion of a three-year knowledge-based degree in professional policing, prior to joining the police service.²⁸² For serving officers and staff, the College is developing routes to gain accreditation for previous learning and experience, in the form of credits that can be put towards academic qualifications offered by higher education institutions. From the end of 2019, all new recruits will either be graduates or will join as police apprentices.²⁸³

194. The reforms have caused disquiet in some parts of the service. Marc Jones, the PCC for Lincolnshire, said that there are “a huge amount of unknowns that may deliver chaos through this push for change to solve a non-issue”.²⁸⁴ Assistant Chief Officer Andrew White, also from Lincolnshire, reportedly told the *Police Oracle* that the plans could be akin to a 5% cut to officer numbers, due to the amount of time that new recruits will spend in training. The Police Federation’s new Chair, John Apter, said in July that “having certificates on the wall doesn’t make you a good police officer. I fear that the relentless drive to ensure all police officers have degrees means policing will not appeal to all areas of society”.²⁸⁵

195. Mike Cunningham told us that there had been some “miscommunication around the issue of degrees and entry into policing”, asserting that it is “about recognising the complexity and high level within which constables currently work”.²⁸⁶ He was also questioned about the challenges posed to forces by the new training requirements for apprentices. He said that the College is “working with forces on how this will be implemented”, and “to see if that is realistic and achievable”, but he also lamented what he described as “a cultural issue for policing”:

The training and development of staff is more often seen as a cost than an investment. I think one of the roles of the College of Policing will be

280 House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, *College of Policing: three years on: Government and College of Policing responses to the Committee’s Fourth Report of Session 2016–17 (HC 678)*, 16 September 2016

281 College of Policing website, [Entry routes for police constables](#), and [Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship](#), both accessed 6 September 2018

282 College of Policing website, [Entry routes for police constables](#), accessed 6 September 2018

283 *Police Oracle*, [Forces approach College about change to recruitment plans](#), 23 July 2018

284 *Police Oracle*, [Forces approach College about change to recruitment plans](#), 23 July 2018

285 *Police Oracle*, [Police Federation candidates answer your questions](#), 23 July 2018

286 [Q632](#)

to assist the service to look at what development of staff really means, the importance of training staff. When I talk to colleagues in other sectors—for example, the military, where training has an importance that it does not have in policing—I think there are lessons for the service to learn.²⁸⁷

196. Commissioner Dick said that the plans “allow sensible routes for all” and that, “rather like nursing, it helps us to make sure that people have the right formal technical expertise and understanding”.²⁸⁸ Chief Constable Thornton acknowledged “concerns” about the reforms, including from the Police Federation, but said that “given the complexity and the difficulties involved in policing”, if officers do not have a degree then “to do that high level apprenticeship is the right thing”.²⁸⁹

Mandatory training

197. The College has statutory powers to issue guidance to policing bodies and chief officers about training for civilian staff, and it can ask the Home Secretary to lay codes of practice in Parliament and set regulations relating to police training.²⁹⁰ It also develops Authorised Professional Practice (written guidance) for the police on a wide range of topics, including armed policing, covert policing, intelligence management, mental health and stop and search. Police officers and staff are expected to “have regard to APP in discharging their responsibilities”.²⁹¹

198. In written evidence, Dame Vera Baird QC told us that there is “undoubtedly a role for the College of Policing in professionalising the approach to policing”, stating that “sharing of best practice and innovation remains limited”, and “The need for the police service to develop a greater evidence base is critical to future reform.”²⁹² The Police Foundation said that “Freeing up sufficient time for current and new officers to undergo [...] additional training will of course be challenging”, but argued that “it is of paramount importance that at every level of policing, individuals are equipped with the appropriate skills to deal with modern demand”.²⁹³

199. In Chapters 3 and 4 of this report, we raised concerns about the levels of training and officer knowledge in relation to online fraud and child sexual abuse, respectively. In Chapter 5, we concluded that forces should be mandated to provide a minimum of two days’ mental health training to all officers and PCSOs. The College currently only exercises its powers to mandate training in a small number of areas, however, including accreditation requirements for public order commanders and firearms officers. Mike Cunningham told us that national powers “ought to be used as a principle of last resort”. He did, however, express concern to us about the way in which the national policing environment currently functions, and argued that “we need to have a clearer, better understood, better agreed principle for how national recommendations, national requirements, are implemented locally”.²⁹⁴

287 [Q632](#)

288 [Q497](#)

289 [Q496](#)

290 S123–S130, [Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#)

291 College of Policing website, [About us: What is APP?](#) Accessed 6 September 2018

292 Dame Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria ([PFF0068](#))

293 The Police Foundation ([PFF0041](#))

294 [Q607](#)

200. Policing is a challenging and complex vocation, and officers face increasingly difficult demands, requiring a high level of skill, knowledge and understanding. These demands may vary between rural and urban forces, but every force requires access to key specialisms, and every officer, PCSO or staff member—be they forensic analysts, child abuse investigators or safer schools officers—deserves to be given the tools with which to perform to the best of their abilities. This includes being equipped with evidence of ‘what works’, clear referral routes for certain incidents or scenarios, and relevant data from around the country. Based on what we have seen during the course of this inquiry, that is a long way from the current state of affairs. Training is a long-term investment in the most important resource that police forces have—their workforce. Without time to train and continuously learn, it will be even harder to meet the short-term challenges facing policing, and staff will be put under even greater pressure.

201. Throughout this report, we have identified a number of areas in which specialist knowledge appears to be lacking, and in which underqualified and inexperienced officers are being forced to take on responsibilities for which they are inadequately prepared. We urge the Government and the College to review urgently the amount of training that is mandated, the scope for introducing compulsory licenses to practice for a wider range of specialisms, and the resource and cultural issues standing in the way of the provision of a higher level of specialist, continuous professional development for police officers and staff.

202. This inquiry has not included a detailed examination of the College of Policing’s plans for degree-level accreditation and apprenticeships for officers. We agree that police officers need to be able to move the service away from the sort of crisis interventions that result from negative inspections and complaints, and towards the maintenance of consistent quality standards, based on accredited professional qualifications, a well-established evidence base, and high levels of practitioner knowledge. But forces must also be able to maintain diversity within their workforce, and ensure an increasingly-wide range of routes into policing, including continuing to encourage entry from those who have not pursued a degree.

203. By March, the Home Office and College of Policing should publish a comprehensive impact assessment of the police apprenticeship (based on the plan to implement it from 2019/2020), including the likely impact on neighbourhood policing (time spent by new recruits in dedicated wards), response times to calls for service, the resources available for training existing staff and officers, and the diversity of new recruits.

Recruitment and retention problems

204. Police forces across England and Wales are suffering from significant shortages in detectives, with approximately 5,000 vacant roles.²⁹⁵ Sir Thomas Winsor told us that this is “a matter of very serious concern”, and highlighted the lack of additional allowances for detectives, who take on more acute risks:

295 BBC News, [Police detective entry system targets graduates](#), 11 June 2018

Detectives are now expected to carry very considerable caseloads and there is a fear among many, it seems to me, that if they get something wrong, if they have missed anything, it could lead to catastrophic consequences. [...] There is no extra pay for detectives; there used to be.²⁹⁶

In his 2011 review of police pay and conditions, Sir Thomas told us he recommended “a number of additional allowances for officers who were either working in the most arduous physical conditions or in the most taxing professional jobs, including detectives”. He recalled that it was “ferociously opposed by the Police Federation at the time—I think its leadership now is quite different”, and was not introduced because it was “condemned as being elitist”.²⁹⁷

205. Direct entry schemes are now in place across the country for Inspector and Superintendent ranks.²⁹⁸ In addition, the Police Now scheme has placed 640 graduate officers in 25 forces,²⁹⁹ with recruits undertaking a two year training and development scheme, including residential courses and regular opportunities to share innovation and best practice.³⁰⁰ A detective version of the scheme was announced in June, and will be developed with the aim of recruiting an additional 1,000 detectives. The Police Federation’s Secretary, Karen Stephens, reportedly described the programme as “an insult to the experienced hard-working detectives”.³⁰¹ Sir Thomas Winsor highlighted that it will still leave 4,000 detective positions unfilled.³⁰²

206. We are gravely concerned about the severe detective shortages being experienced by police forces in England and Wales, which is undoubtedly impacting on police welfare, access to justice for victims, and the safety and security of the general public. We welcome efforts to recruit detectives directly, provided they are given the requisite training and support, but this will only fill a quarter of existing vacancies. The Government should revisit Sir Thomas Winsor’s previous recommendation for additional allowances for detectives, and consult the profession on their introduction. It must also work with the Police Federation, PSAEW and NPCC to identify ways of enhancing the support offered to detectives in managing their caseload and taking appropriate risks, providing the necessary funding to ensure that a detective career becomes a more attractive prospect for existing officers.

207. Although the detective shortage is one of the most acute problems facing the police workforce, and requires urgent action, a piecemeal approach to pay and workforce reform will ultimately be unsustainable. The evidence we have received suggests that new approaches to recruitment and reward are likely to be required across the police workforce, if the service is to respond effectively to growing and emerging demands.

Chief Constable recruitment

208. Sir Thomas Winsor highlighted that there has been greater “churn” at chief constable level in recent years, and that fewer applicants are coming forward for open positions.

296 [Q634](#)

297 [Q634](#)

298 Home Office, [Home Office evidence to the Police Remuneration Review Body](#), 2018/19 pay round

299 Police Now ([PFF0020](#))

300 Home Office, [Home Office evidence to the Police Remuneration Review Body](#), 2018/19 pay round

301 [BBC News, Police detective entry system targets graduates](#), 11 June 2018

302 [Q634](#)

He suggested that the introduction of PCCs might be having an impact.³⁰³ Following their evidence to us in June, the three policing leaders (Chief Constable Sara Thornton, Commissioner Dick and Lynne Owens) wrote to us regarding their concerns on this issue. They told us that over half of chief officers appointed in 2015 were the only candidate for the job, with a national average of just 2.21 applicants per vacancy. Interviews with retired chief constables, serving PCCs, HMICFRS and Home Office officials, along with a survey of serving assistant chiefs and deputy chiefs, identified a number of issues:

The pressure and scrutiny from the IOPC [Independent Office for Police Conduct], HMICFRS and PCCs were cited by retired officers and were highlighted as greater disincentives for those considering applying for the top jobs within policing. While relationships between PCCs and chief officers vary enormously across the country there is a general concern that the policing protocol does not set out the responsibilities as clearly as it might which can cause difficulty. [...] Officers who have not reached pensionable service are concerned about their vulnerability to dismissal using s.38 (Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011) and many are concerned about the isolation of the office.³⁰⁴

209. The survey of assistant chiefs and deputy chiefs found that the most significant considerations were the perceived reputation and challenges associated with the local PCC, the distance from home, and whether an internal applicant was applying for the role. Personal and financial considerations were also cited by many potential candidates, and their perception was that there was “little financial incentive for promotion”, with the complexity of pension and taxation rules causing “confusion”. Proposals being considered by the leadership of the service include support for the College of Policing’s new leadership hub, to assist with the appointment of chief officers; recommending that former police officers should not be allowed to stand as PCCs; and “an increased role for Police and Crime Panels in dismissals using s.38”.³⁰⁵

210. We welcome the focus by the leaders of the police service on problems with chief officer recruitment, including the very low number of applicants for each role. We urge the Government to undertake a review of the relationship between chief officers and PCCs, to identify issues on either side. It should also eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to promotion, addressing any problems with pension and taxation rules, to ensure that capable candidates are not disincentivised from taking on the enormous responsibility of running a police force.

Police culture

211. Much of the evidence we received spoke to deep-seated cultural issues within the police service. Strikingly, policing witnesses were almost united in lamenting a risk-averse ‘culture of blame’. Stephen Mold argued that “risk management, as opposed to risk aversion, should be the mantra of national and local political masters and law enforcement practitioners”, and that the police should “Adopt the ‘learn from failure’ model practised

303 [Q636](#)

304 National Crime Agency, National Police Chiefs’ Council and the Metropolitan Police ([PFF0021](#))

305 National Crime Agency, National Police Chiefs’ Council and the Metropolitan Police ([PFF0021](#))

by the airline industry as opposed to the ‘blame & claim’ culture seen within the NHS”.³⁰⁶ The Police Federation said that officers need to be held accountable in a “supportive and appropriate” manner, “moving away from a culture of blame to a learning culture”.³⁰⁷ The PSAEW also referred to the “culture of blame that pervades within policing”, and called for a “culture that learns from its mistakes, both at an individual and an organisational level”.³⁰⁸ The NPCC said that the service “must move from a ‘blame’ culture to one which values questioning, learning and improvement”.³⁰⁹

212. The police complaints system was regularly referred to as a key source of risk aversion in policing. For example, the Police Federation said that the IOPC needs to move “towards a culture of learning from mistakes”, and that the “historic culture of blame” often “makes it difficult for the police service to have open and inclusive conversations about how it can improve processes”, making it “difficult to implement positive change”.³¹⁰ The Met Police also argued that “officers making genuine mistakes need to be supported to learn—no fear misconduct”, the latter of which “encourages a closed culture”. Its written submission asserted that “wrong-doing needs to be addressed, but the balance is currently imperfect”.³¹¹

213. The Independent Office for Police Conduct launched formally in January, replacing the much-criticised Independent Police Complaints Commission. The Government promised “speedier decision-making” under new leadership, with a new board “to ensure greater accountability to the public”.³¹² The PSAEW’s submission to this inquiry said that, in the 38 misconduct investigations against its members in 2015, no further action was taken in over 70% of the cases finalised at the time of writing; only one case had led to a dismissal.³¹³ In August, the NPPC’s lead for complaints and misconduct, Chief Constable Craig Guildford, reportedly told the *Police Oracle* that reforms are underway to shift the culture of the misconduct system from “blame to learning”. Changes being “worked on” include a raised threshold for what constitutes misconduct and gross misconduct; issuing terms of reference to an officer subject to a notice; requiring investigative bodies to produce reports explaining why a misconduct hearing is taking more than 12 months to complete; and introducing more clarity regarding the IOPC’s ‘case to answer’ test for misconduct hearings.³¹⁴ We will monitor the reforms introduced by the IOPC and other bodies, and consider in due course whether more detailed scrutiny of the police complaints system is required.

Our roundtable event

214. In May, we held an informal roundtable event with officers from various ranks and tenures, to explore possible cultural barriers to innovation and reform. The event was held under “Chatham House” rules, so no transcript was taken, but participants were advised that we would summarise key themes and ideas in our subsequent report. We are grateful to all those who took part in this fascinating discussion about police culture. The following key themes and messages emerged:

306 Stephen Mold, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire ([PFF0032](#))

307 Police Federation of England and Wales ([PFF0067](#))

308 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

309 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0035](#))

310 Police Federation of England and Wales ([PFF0067](#))

311 Metropolitan Police Service ([PFF0055](#))

312 Home Office and IPCC news item, [Independent Office for Police Conduct launches](#), 8 January 2018

313 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

314 *Police Oracle*, [Misconduct reforms to ‘shift the culture from blame to learning’](#), 20 August 2018

- Participants criticised the lack of long-term strategy and long-term funding in policing. They referred to a culture that is obsessed with hierarchy and governance, with innovation smothered by the ‘permafrost’ of middle management, and officers left with few opportunities to bring forward new ideas or take any risks. They also talked about high levels of accountability, with police holding the risk as soon as a call comes in, even if local authorities and other agencies have been involved in the case concerned.
- Participants expressed concern that bright, tenacious young people were leaving policing, in part due to enormous hierarchies above them and delays to decision-making. One compared policing to ‘The Borg’ from Star Trek: everyone assimilates, and no longer has their own thought process. Others referred to bureaucratic and administrative barriers to innovation and career progression, and officers being forced to undertake tasks that staff would have previously taken on.
- Participants spoke of the need to cultivate innovation, especially from lower-ranking officers and staff. One junior officer said that, in two years as a PC, nobody had asked for their views on anything, and suggestions tended not to receive a response, in part due to high turnovers and a long chain of command. Another complained of a lack of investment in retaining the right people. Others pointed to the PCC election cycle as an obstacle to innovation: elections can come in the middle of the process of getting a new reform programme approved, requiring officers to make the case again to a new PCC.
- Concerns were also raised about risk-averse attitudes towards sharing information with partner agencies (such as the NHS). Participants called for better leadership from ‘the top’ regarding what information and data can and can’t be shared, and for every officer to have direct access to a local social worker. A participant referred to one colleague who had to use two laptops to access different systems; another had to sign a confidentiality agreement in order to share information with another force.

215. Many of these messages echoed—often in stronger terms—evidence we received throughout our inquiry, particularly about risk aversion and a lack of leadership to drive reform. For example, the NPCC’s written submission included the following quote from Derbyshire Constabulary: “We are afraid that to deviate from tried and tested practices will lead to failure” when, in fact, “to continue without progression will lead to failure as the rest of the world is moving on”.³¹⁵ When asked why not enough progress had been made on technology to enable forces to communicate with one another, Mike Cunningham admitted that “developments have been nowhere near as coherent or as swift as they have needed to be”, and called for “some urgent clarity around how the national policing architecture can best work”.³¹⁶ The PSAEW said that “Reform, innovation and creativity can be challenging in a highly regulated environment such as policing”, and called for “more joined up working and the effective sharing of data, information and resources” with other agencies.³¹⁷

315 National Police Chiefs’ Council ([PFF0035](#))

316 [Q640](#)

317 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

216. It was striking that our roundtable participants—some of them relatively new to policing—were confident in identifying deeply-entrenched cultural barriers to reform in policing. These included the impact of rank structures and hierarchies, including long chains of command; the effect of the PCC election cycles on reform, and the ability of forces to plan long-term; and the root causes of a systemic resistance to innovation and change.

217. The College of Policing should undertake a review of barriers to innovation and reform, and ensure that the new Policing Education Qualifications Framework promotes a more open and innovative culture. While acknowledging the need to maintain discipline, this should encourage constructive challenge from officers at junior ranks, and discourage the promotion of ‘continuity at all costs’ over innovation and change. Police culture needs to shift away from blame-and-claim and towards learning from failure, and policing leaders need to take a much more consultative approach to their oversight of more junior colleagues.

9 The role of the Home Office and allocation of responsibilities

Introduction

218. A great deal of the evidence we received was critical of the current structure of policing in England and Wales, including the role of the Home Office and the 43-force model, questioning its suitability to meeting the challenges currently facing forces. Many witnesses have also criticised the allocation of responsibilities at a national, regional and local level. This Chapter summarises the evidence and draws conclusions on some of these overarching issues.

The role of the Home Office

219. Several witnesses highlighted the fact that the Home Office’s role in setting policing policy and priorities has been significantly diminished in recent years, and the Department stated in written evidence that it “does not run policing but is supporting the sector to become self-reforming”.³¹⁸ Crest Advisory, a consultancy specialising in the criminal justice system, said that in the past, the “challenge of adapting policing priorities to changing demand” would have been “picked up” by the Home Office. In the early years of the last Labour Government, this was done via the use of “top-down targets”, and later via a single target for public confidence and a set of ‘national entitlements’, outlining what the public could expect from the police.³¹⁹ Crest said that PCCs now have the freedom to determine both “what the police prioritise and how they should focus their time/resources”, and that the only central direction from the Home Office is via the Strategic Policing Requirement, which sets out forces’ responsibilities in relation to national threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime, cyber security, public order, civil emergencies and child sexual abuse.³²⁰

220. Chief Constable Thornton told us that “the recent focus has been on the local”, adding that “accountability is local” and “most budgets are local”, but she observed that this “does beg the question about what is the role of the centre and how do the various pieces at the centre”—including the Home Office, NPCC and NCA—work together.³²¹ Similarly, Commissioner Dick said that the police service’s relationship with the Home Office “sometimes feels as if there is not much central push; it is, ‘Get on with it and good luck’”; and yet, “at the same time it has sometimes felt a bit parent-child”. She said that the Department could have a strong role in reviewing how to improve the volume of candidates for chief officer roles.³²²

221. The NAO’s recent report on the financial sustainability of forces stated that the Home Office has “devolved responsibility for police service transformation to a board which has limited resources and no powers”: the Police Reform and Transformation Board (PRTB), which is a voluntary association of its members (including the NPCC,

318 Home Office ([PFF0037](#))

319 Crest Advisory ([PFF0046](#))

320 Crest Advisory ([PFF0046](#))

321 [Q526](#)

322 [Q526](#)

APCC and Home Office). It argued that the PRTB’s “role as a national coordinator of the transformation of police services is limited as it has no budget, formal powers or levers to make transformational change happen across all forces”.³²³

222. When asked what her primary request would be of the Home Secretary, Chief Constable Thornton told us that it would be to “develop the role of the Home Office in providing that framework and architecture for law enforcement, security and policing”.³²⁴ Lynne Owens praised the model for counter-terrorism—which she described as “centralised and devolved at the same time”—and said that “there is a big role for the Home Office” in trying to negotiate new delivery models for other areas of policing.³²⁵

223. When asked about the role of the Home Office, including its ability to instruct forces to sign up to national programmes, the Policing Minister responded:

That has not been our model, but we are moving into a different phase now where the Home Office is considering our role in relation to the system. As many in the police system, my view is that the Home Office needs to take a stronger view on a number of things.

He concluded his evidence by stating: “On my watch the Home Office is stepping forward because the environment that we are policing together is a highly complex one”. He also conceded that “We are part of the police ecosystem that has not worked together as effectively as it should have in the past”.³²⁶

224. As the lead department for policing, the Home Office must step up to the plate and play a much stronger role in policing policy. Many of the challenges outlined in this report could benefit enormously from national leadership. Throughout our report, we have identified coordination problems between forces—particularly over new technology. We have also identified weaknesses in assessing and investing in the response to new and changing patterns of crime, weaknesses in engaging other organisations in the fight against crime or in public protection, and a lack of strategic direction. In all of those areas, it should be the Home Office that takes responsibility. When it comes to influencing or partnering with global internet companies, the NHS or the education system, individual forces cannot match the power and influence of a central government department. We urge the Home Office to play a much stronger role in driving reform in key areas, such as data-sharing between public services, the negotiation of national technology contracts, and the regulation of internet companies. Sitting back and leaving it to individual police forces is irresponsible. We welcome the Policing Minister’s recognition that “the Home Office needs to take a stronger view on a number of things”, which appears to signify a major shift in departmental policy.

The 43-force structure

225. Many witnesses criticised the 43-force structure, showing significant appetite for national reform. The PSAEW’s submission to this inquiry voiced support for localism as “the bedrock of policing”, with its members as “identifiable police commanders, known

323 National Audit Office, Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018 ([HC 1501](#)), 11 September 2018

324 [Q527](#)

325 [Q526](#)

326 [Q603](#)

by and accountable to their communities for the delivery of local policing services”. But it argued that “current force structures” are “a major obstacle to the achievement of reform and greater efficiencies and effectiveness”, and called for a “complete review of the structure of policing”.³²⁷ While accepting that local variation in services will need to exist, to reflect the priorities and needs of local communities, the PSAEW called for national coordination and oversight of how the service as a whole responds to emerging challenges and changing demands. It advocated for a “service-wide strategic vision” to identify risks, opportunities and threats for policing up to 2040, to provide “a much-needed long-term strategic context for both policy makers and the service’s leadership”.³²⁸

226. The Police Federation also challenged the current structure of policing, criticising the “43 fiefdoms, with different ways of working and different systems and multiple procurement processes”. Its submission called for a “Royal Commission on Policing” to look at “the entire structure, function, roles and funding of the police service”, to allow for “radical, long-term, strategic thinking”, rather than “knee-jerk responses and tinkering based on political whim”.³²⁹ Chief Constable Thornton told us in June that the 43-force model is a “strength and a weakness”, with problems apparent in the response to national and transnational crime, and in the implementation of new technology or new ways of working. She said that resistance to national structures and mergers was political, rather than operational.³³⁰

227. Commissioner Dick described the current force structure as “quite a curious configuration” which “puts a lot of barriers in the way of change and development”.³³¹ Chief Constable Thornton and Lynne Owens both spoke of the challenges of driving collaboration between forces, which sometimes take place at a “glacial” pace: Ms Owens said that if every new policing capability “has to be negotiated in slow time over months through 86 [PCCs and chief constables], I am concerned that we are going to get left behind”.³³²

228. Ms Owens also drew contrasts between the structures applied to counter-terrorism and those involved in the response to serious organised crime, where the funding and governance structure is more localised.³³³ Counter-terrorism policing is coordinated at a national level by the National Counter-Terrorism Policing Headquarters (NCTPHQ). The NCTPHQ devises policy and strategy, advises the Government on how counter-terrorism budgets should be allocated to police forces in England and Wales, and provides corporate and support services to a network of counter-terrorism units (CTUs) and counter-terrorism intelligence units, which gather local intelligence. Five CTUs make up the National Counter-Terrorism Network, and together are accountable to the NPCC’s Counter-Terrorism Coordination Committee.³³⁴

229. Commissioner Dick and Chief Constable Thornton both told us that counter-terrorism policing is the area in which they feel most confident about the police service’s ability to respond to new challenges, with CC Thornton adding: “The way in which we

327 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

328 Police Superintendents’ Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))

329 Police Federation of England and Wales ([PFF0067](#))

330 [Q482](#)

331 [Q482](#)

332 [Q526](#)

333 [Q526](#)

334 NPCC website, [Counter Terrorism Policing](#), accessed 8 October 2018

have developed the structures for terrorism, the way we have developed capability over the last 13 years, working very closely with the security agencies, is something that we are proud of”.³³⁵ Ms Owens said that the Commissioner has “impressively led” a “very good whole-system response to counter-terrorism”.³³⁶

230. The possibility of force amalgamation or mergers, or even the creation of two national police forces for England and Wales, has been the subject of heated debate for decades. In 2004, the PSAEW called for the creation of a single national police force, and in 2005, HMIC proposed the merger of smaller forces, arguing that the 43-force structure was “no longer fit for purpose”.³³⁷ Subsequent efforts to implement change, with the aim of establishing 17 forces across 10 regions in England and Wales, were beset by difficulties. By February 2006, only Cumbria and Lancashire had reached a clear agreement to merge.³³⁸ In July 2006, the plans were abandoned altogether, with the then Prime Minister Tony Blair stating that it would not be “sensible” to force them on police forces.³³⁹

231. Since then, efforts have been focused on sharing specialist capabilities across forces, with regional organised crime units (ROCU) established to enable forces to pool capabilities in areas such as undercover policing, specialist surveillance and cybercrime. An HMIC review of ROCUs in 2015 concluded that they provided a “strong foundation” for tackling serious and organised crime, but that they had evolved in a “piecemeal way” and had developed inconsistently. They ranged from “highly ambitious and effective cross-force collaborative units to smaller and less effective units”, which could “compromise effectiveness or duplicate capabilities unnecessarily”.³⁴⁰

232. Lynne Owens told us that serious organised crime needs a “whole-system response”, and that “the current structure of funding and governance does not meet a need that is not bounded just in a single geography”. The Security Minister confirmed recently that the number of county lines operations has doubled to 1,500 in the last year, and told the House of Commons that “The problems are getting worse” in this area of criminal activity.³⁴¹ Ms Owens criticised short-term investments in different coordination centres, including for CSA, human trafficking and modern slavery, and said she would prefer “one system, investment in a national assessment centre within the National Crime Agency”, with a “system joined-up approach to data”.³⁴² She also called for a review of capabilities at a national, local and regional level, outlining the challenges facing the NCA and other national bodies:

There [...] needs to be a conversation about what capabilities we need at regional level and what capabilities should sit at national level. If all the money just gets passported locally to individual Chief Constables and individual Police and Crime Commissioners, then there is a hell of a job for Cress and Sara and I to negotiate with a minimum of 86, more if you add in

335 [Q448](#)

336 [Q476](#)

337 HMIC, [Closing the Gap](#), 13 September 2005

338 *BBC News*, [Setback for police merger plans](#), 24 February 2006

339 *BBC News*, [Police mergers ‘still on agenda’](#), 12 July 2006

340 HMIC, [Regional Organised Crime Units should build on their strong foundations](#), 1 December 2015

341 House of Commons Hansard, Drug Trafficking: County Lines (Adjournment Debate), Vol 647, [Columns 759–760](#)

342 [Q480](#)

other partners. My fear about that issue always goes to the lowest common denominator and that will not deal with the threats that we are currently facing.³⁴³

233. The Police Foundation argued that collective decision-making is hindered by current structures and processes, because “consensus is generally required in order for a decision to be taken forward nationally”, and chief constables have the right to derogate from decisions taken nationally. It recommended “a shift to a more democratic system”, in which “every PCC and Chief would get one vote”. A majority of two-thirds of both PCCs and chief constables, or “another agreed threshold”, could then “enable a decision to be taken forward and be binding on all members”. Without such mechanisms for making decisions together, it argued, “it will be impossible to achieve the Government’s ambition of a ‘self-improving police service’”.³⁴⁴

The Government’s response

234. The Policing Minister appeared to have sympathy for the views outlined in this Chapter. He told us that there are “advantages in the 43-force model for local accountability, closeness to the public, accountability to the public”, and “In theory it is a system where people can try different things”. But he conceded that the “fundamental challenge in the police system” is “how you develop more consistent standards and public experience across this fragmented system”. He added:

The challenge for us—and I put the Home Office firmly on the pitch on this—is how we work together more effectively as one system in a place that increasingly does not recognise boundaries [...]. [...] there is a frustration in the system about how difficult it is to drive change through the system at pace, how difficult it is sometimes to align capabilities, the degree to which police and crime commissioners, who have strong local accountability to their electors, are conditioned to respond to national threats. [...] Ironically, when you read the history of police reform in this country [...] One of the questions they have asked themselves over the centuries is: why do we have so many police forces?³⁴⁵

235. When questioned about problems being experienced in Scotland, where a national force was established in 2013, the Minister clarified that “the official policy of the Home Office is not to be pushing for a major top-down reorganisation of the 43-force model”. But he said that there is “a recognition that we—and the Home Office has to play its part in this—have to do a lot more to make this system work smarter as one system in the face of the threats that we see”.³⁴⁶

236. The current allocation of responsibilities in policing at a national, regional and local level is broken, and in dire need of review. Policing structures remain largely unchanged since the 1960s, and whilst the creation of PCCs has enabled leadership and new partnerships within many force areas, collaboration between forces is still a problem in those areas where regional or national action is required. Local identity

343 [Q461](#)

344 The Police Foundation ([PFF0041](#))

345 [Q568](#)

346 [Q570](#)

is a significant strength in UK policing, but our evidence on neighbourhood policing indicates that relationships with officers at a neighbourhood and community level are more important than the 43-force structure. As the Policing Minister acknowledged, the current structure is a significant barrier to the service's ability to tackle national and transnational threats, which require an advanced level of specialist capability.

237. We recognise that previous force mergers have been beset by difficulties, and that the Government is unlikely to reduce the number of forces. We believe that a more strategic, evidence-based approach is required. Before the end of November, the Home Office should launch a transparent, root-and-branch review of policing, publishing proposals by the end of February, which should focus on the allocation of responsibilities and capabilities at a local, regional and national level. Based on what we have seen, we propose that local policing should be given the space to focus on community relations and local crime and disorder, including inter-agency working to reduce harm and address repeat offending. The driving force for restructures, such as mergers of whole forces, back offices, or between police and fire and rescue services, should be service improvement, rather than the hope of savings. At a national and regional level, forces need to pool resources and capabilities to a far greater extent, particularly for online crimes such as fraud, but also in complex areas where crimes often cross force borders, such as organised crime, county lines and modern slavery. The structure for counter-terrorism policing, which is frequently singled out for praise, could serve as a model for other areas of policing.

238. An ambitious reform programme of this kind will be impossible without stronger national leadership, and a more dynamic and transparent approach to policing policy-making. It is vital that the operational independence of chief officers is maintained, and that PCCs are able to act on local priorities and local problems. But the current state of police ICT and communications systems is a striking example of the problems generated by this fractured system of policy-making and governance.

239. The Government should create a National Policing Council, chaired by the Home Secretary and comprising representatives of the APCC, NPCC, officer/staff associations, College of Policing and HMICFRS. Proposals for reform could be put to a National Police Assembly comprising all PCCs and chief constables in England and Wales. The Home Office should consider key policy areas where decisions of the Council and Assembly could then be binding on all forces.

240. This report has set out the many complex and changing demands on policing in the 21st century, in the context of a system of funding and governance that is ill-suited to dynamic reform. In the absence of strategic direction from the Home Office, operating under a fractured leadership structure, forces are plugging the gaps left by other public services in an attempt to protect the most vulnerable people from harm. In the meantime, 'traditional' crimes such as violence and theft are on the increase, and an overstretched justice system is bringing forward a decreasing number of charges. It is time for the Government to demonstrate clear ownership of policing policy and funding, and stop abdicating responsibility. The Home Secretary must make it clearer to the police service what areas he expects it to prioritise, where to focus its limited resources, and what he will do to drive much-needed reform at a national level.

Annex: Police force data return

Introduction

1. As part of our inquiry, we wrote to all forces earlier this year to request data on a number of topics. We outline here our survey results on two key subjects: the recent decline in the number of neighbourhood officers and police community support officers (PCSOs), and the proportion of demand arising from so-called ‘non-crime’ demands. We also outline some limitations of the dataset.

Neighbourhood policing

2. In a letter sent to all chief constables on 6 June, we asked: “How many a) dedicated neighbourhood officers and b) PCSOs dedicated to a single neighbourhood/area did you employ as at a) the year ending March 2010, and b) the year ending March 2018?”. The responses are outlined in the table below, and illustrated in the three graphs that follow. These show changes to the number of neighbourhood officers and PCSOs in each force, in both 2010 and 2018. They suggest that, on average, forces have lost at least a fifth of their neighbourhood policing capacity since 2010.

3. Kent and Essex both reported significant increases in the number of neighbourhood officers, but with caveats relating to their recording practices. Kent told us that a restructure took place between 2010 and 2018, which resulted in “the amalgamation of Central Response, Neighbourhood and Custody to form new Local District Policing Teams”. This resulted in “the creation of a new job description to reflect the merged roles of Neighbourhood and Response”, meaning that the force cannot specify how many of those individuals are neighbourhood officers. Overall, the force has lost 15% of its officers and 23% of its PCSOs since 2010.^{347,348} Similarly, Essex Police’s figure for 2018 is “a combination of local policing and neighbourhood policing”, whereas in 2010 they were separate functions, and were recorded as such. Finally, the Metropolitan Police provided only estimated figures, because its model for neighbourhood policing has changed. Since 2010, the majority of its officers have been placed in emergency response roles, along with two dedicated officers in each ward.

4. After removing the Kent, Essex and Met returns, of the remaining 33 forces with data for both years, all but one (Hertfordshire) reported a decrease in the numbers of neighbourhood officers, averaging cuts of 35%. When all 36 forces were included, the average reduction was 21%. Out of the 37 forces providing data on neighbourhood PCSOs, all but five reported a decrease, with an average reduction of 21%.

347 [Police Service Strength England and Wales, 31 March 2010 supplementary data tables](#)

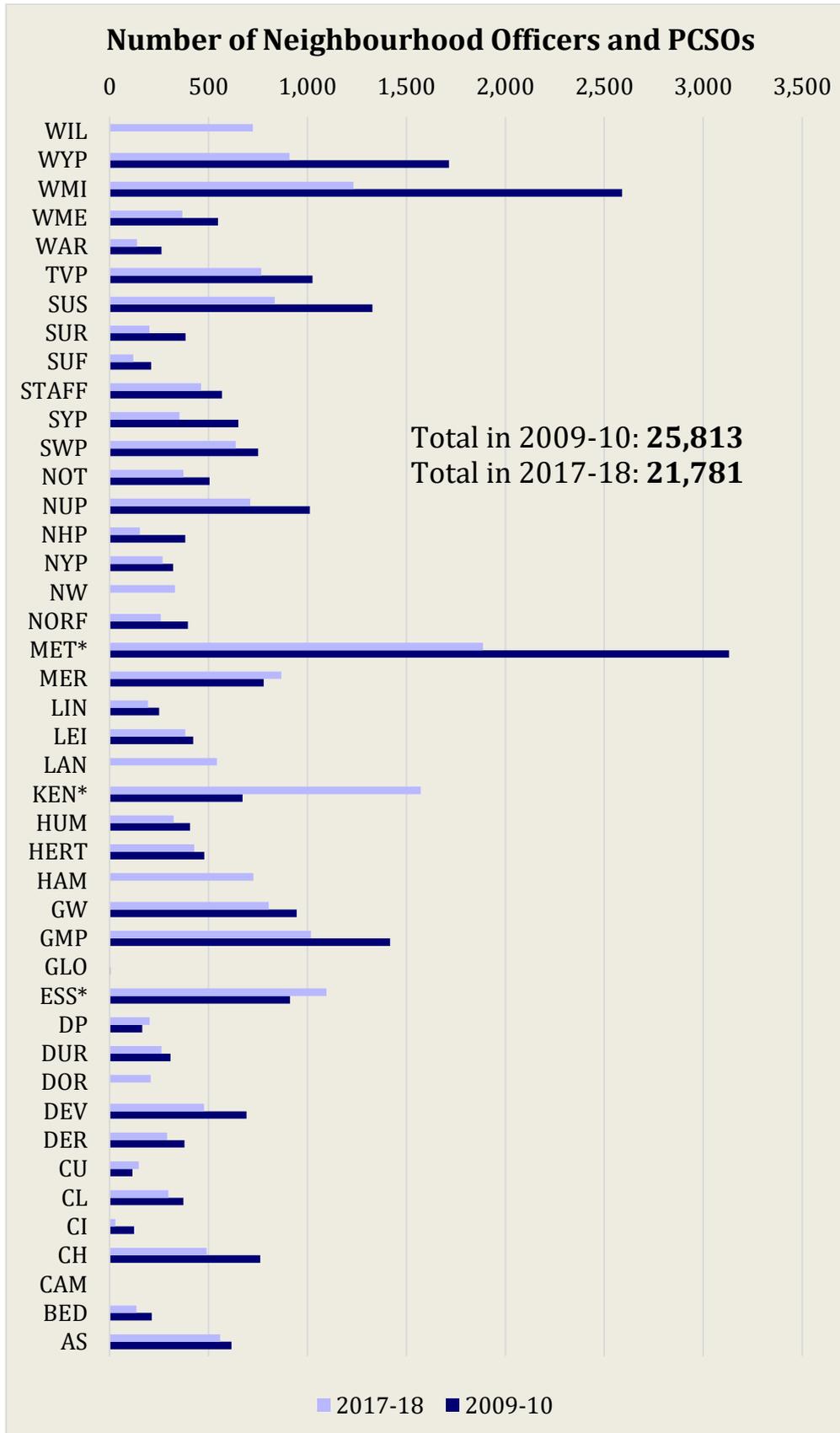
348 [Police Workforce, England and Wales, 31 March 2018: data tables](#)

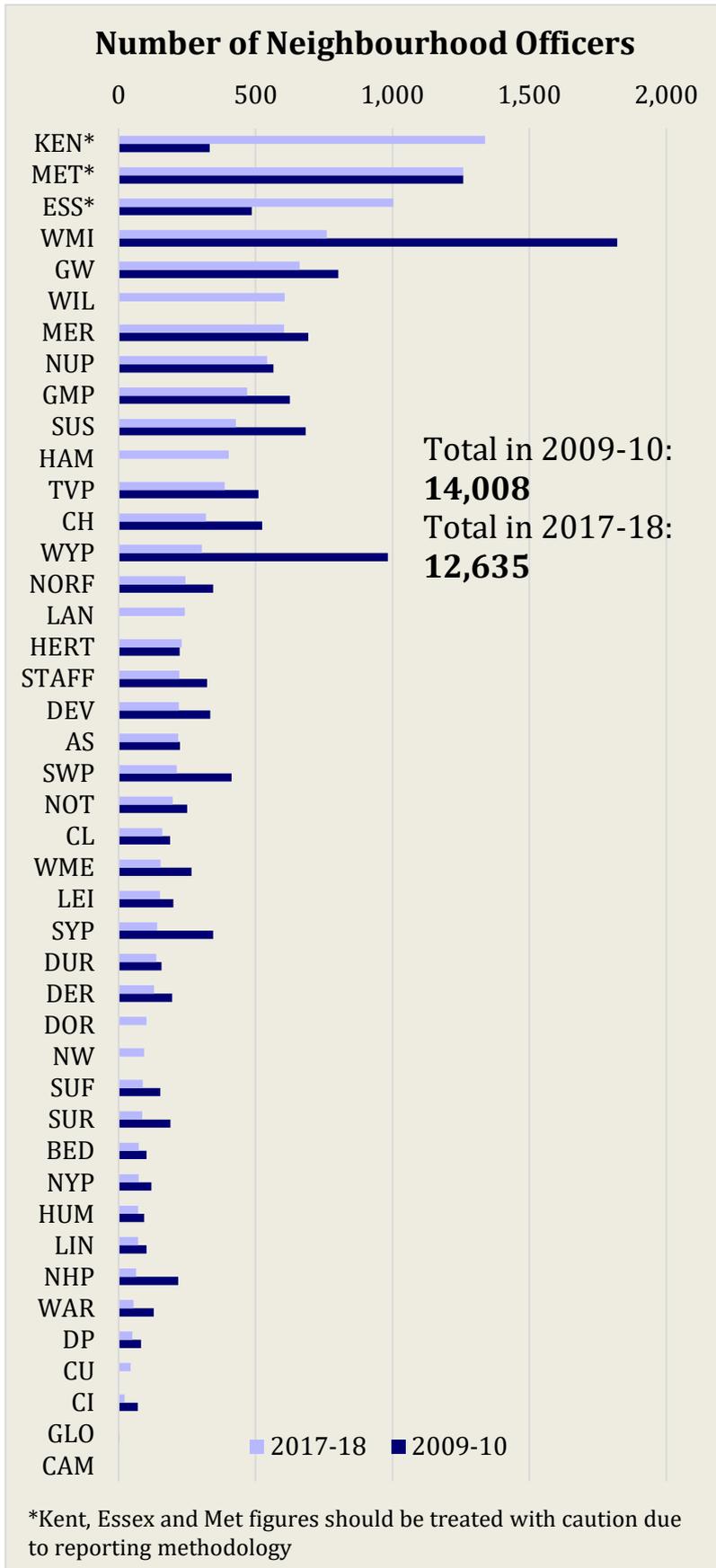
Force	Year ending March 2009–10			Year ending in March 2017–18			FTE data only	Total % Change
	Neighbourhood Officers	PCSOs	Total	Neighbourhood Officers	PCSOs	Total		
AS	224	392	616	218	340	558		-9%
BED	102	111	213	73	63	136	yes	-36%
CAM			0			0		0%
CH	524	237	761	319	171	490		-36%
CI	71	53	124	22	7	29	yes	-77%
CL	188	185	373	160	137	297		-20%
CU	0	116	116	44	104	148		+28%
DER	196	182	378	129	162	291		-23%
DEV	335	357	692	220	257	477	yes	-31%
DOR			0	102	106	208	yes	N/A
DUR	157	151	308	138	125	263		-15%
DP	82	83	165	50	152	202		+22%
ESS*	486	426	912	1,004	92	1,096	yes	+20%
GLO	3	2	5	1	1	2		-60%
GMP	625	792	1,417	469	548	1,017		-28%
GW	802	143	945	661	143	805	yes	-15%
HAM			0	402	324	726		N/A
HERT	223	256	479	231	197	428	yes	-11%
HUM	94	313	407	71	253	324		-20%
KEN*	332	340	672	1,338	234	1,572		+134%
LAN			0	242	301	543		N/A
LEI	200	223	423	151	231	382		-10%
LIN	102	148	250	71	124	195		-22%
MER	693	86	779	604	264	868		+11%
MET**	1,258	1,872	3,130	1,258	629	1,887		-40%
NORF	345	51	396	244	14	258		-35%
NW			0	93	237	330		N/A
NYP	120	201	321	73	195	268		-17%
NHP	218	164	382	64	89	153		-60%
NUP	565	447	1,012	542	169	711		-30%
NOT	250	255	505	198	175	373		-26%
SWP	413	337	750	213	424	637		-15%
SYP	345	306	651	141	212	353	yes	-46%
STAFF	323	245	568	222	240	462		-19%
SUF	152	59	211	88	32	120		-43%
SUR	189	195	384	86	115	201		-48%
SUS	683	645	1,328	428	407	835		-37%
TVP	511	514	1,025	387	379	766		-25%
WAR	128	134	262	54	85	139		-47%
WME	266	282	548	154	214	368		-33%
WMI	1,821	769	2,590	760	472	1,232		-52%
WYP	983	732	1,715	304	605	909		-47%

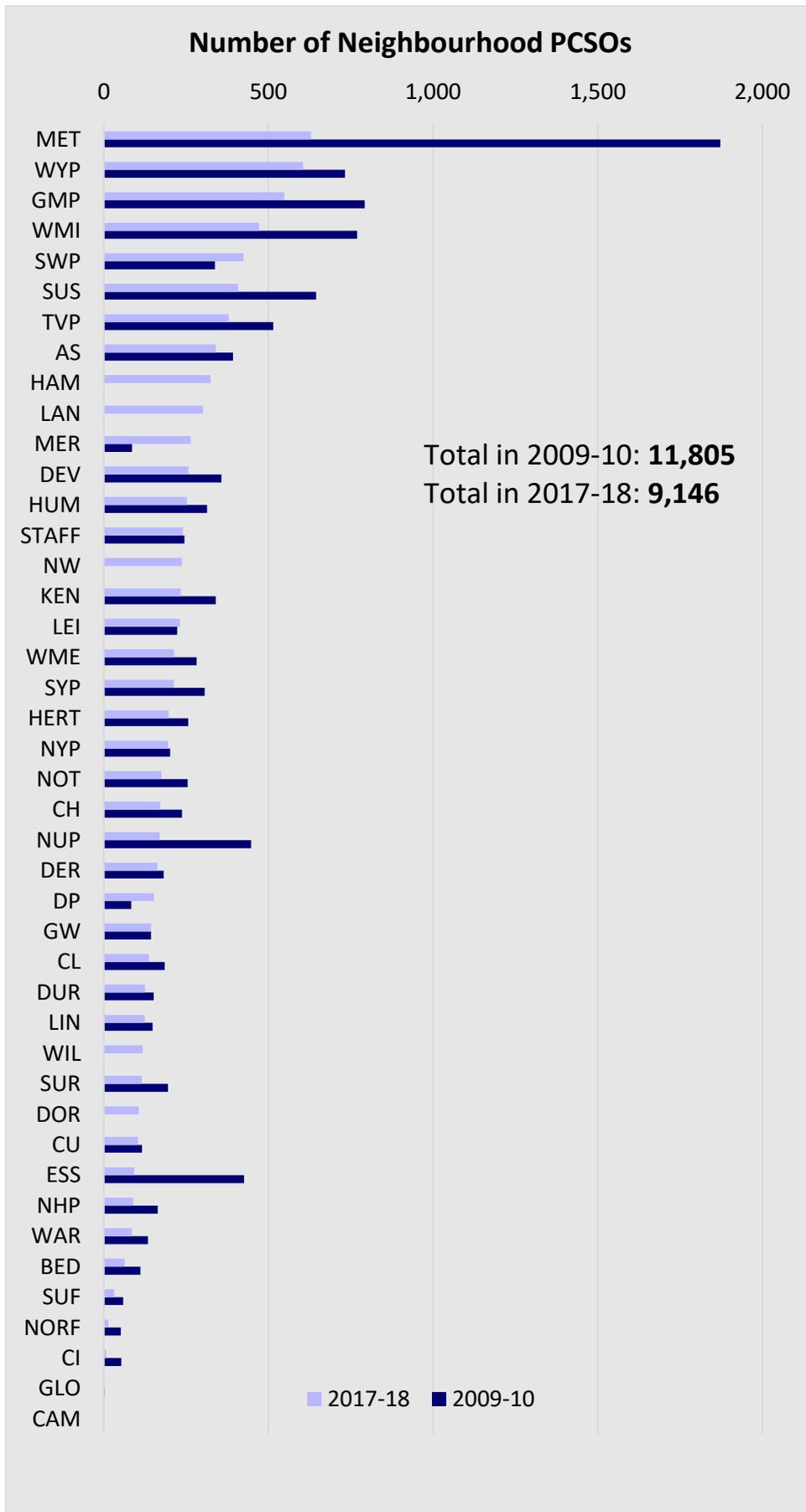
Force	Year ending March 2009–10			Year ending in March 2017–18			FTE data only	Total % Change
	Neighbourhood Officers	PCSOs	Total	Neighbourhood Officers	PCSOs	Total		
TOTAL	14,008	11,805	25,813	12,635	9,146	21,781	-16%	(average change: -21%)

Notes:

- * Restructuring of classifications means direct comparison between years is not possible
- A number of forces appear to have used the Home Office Annual Data Return in their classification. Several forces, including Greater Manchester and South Yorkshire, note that organisational changes and the adoption of new policing models over the period in question will have driven some of the changes in neighbourhood officer numbers (but to a lesser extent than the Kent and Essex re-classifications).
- ** Estimated figures
- Figures assumed to refer to headcount; where both headcount and FTE were provided, only headcount has been included in the table. Forces only providing FTE have been noted.
- Kent Police, Essex and Met returns are not conducted on a consistent basis. Six forces were unable to provide data for 2009–10, so the total reduction for all forces is likely to be understated.
- A key to the force abbreviations is provided below.







Command and Control calls

5. Our letter to chief constables also asked the following question: “During the year ending March 2018, what number of command and control calls handled by your force resulted in (a) a crime report, (b) a police intervention involving the safeguarding of vulnerable people, and (c) a case involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis? Please provide the total number of C&C calls received during that period, as well as the numbers for each of the above categories.”

6. The tables and charts below outline our findings. They suggest that many C&C calls may not relate to an ongoing criminal incident. On average, only 14% of calls and 24% of incidents resulted in a crime report. Only 3% of calls included flags to suggest they involved safeguarding a vulnerable person, and 1% of calls included flags to suggest that they involved a mental health issue. These figures should be treated with caution, as forces used varying methods of identification.³⁴⁹ In both sets of data, mental health incidents were far less common than the volume estimated in written evidence. The Metropolitan Police’s submission said that approximately 40% of its work has a “mental health element”, and Kent Police estimated more recently that a third of its time is spent dealing with individuals and cases involving mental health.³⁵⁰

For year ending March 2018					
Force	Number of command and control calls handled by the force*	Incidents only**	Of which resulted in:		
			Crime report	Police intervention involving the safeguarding of vulnerable people	Case involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis
AS	932,202		168,584 (18%)	40,268	12,006
BED	499,970		47,738 (10%)	8,495	4,885
CAM	439,677		32,929 (7%)	10,622	10,072
CH	253,241		61,875 (24%)	6,899	6,140
CI	23,193		3,071 (13%)	800	308
CL	237,171		57,241 (24%)		5,556
CU	89,168	yes	24,794 (28%)	15,596	4,854
DER	200,981	yes	29,774 (15%)	21,502	8,917
DEV	967,113		37,108 (4%)	17,042	7,374
DOR	178,811		49,583 (28%)	12,171	6,194
DUR	185,573	yes	61,379 (33%)	34,819	8,163

349 They may relate to calls (999 and 101), or to the creation of incident reports.

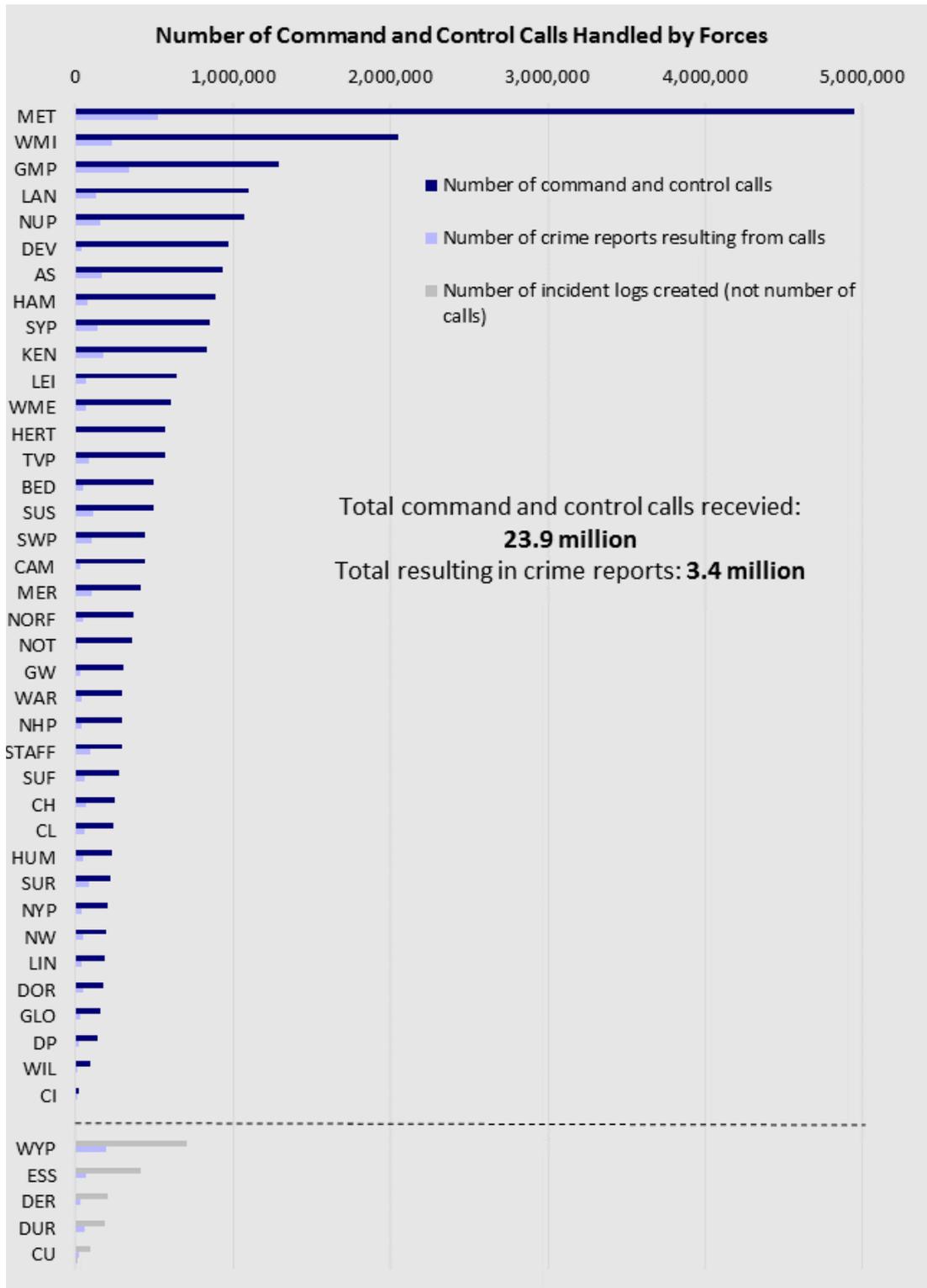
350 Kent PCC, [Do you have an idea which could cut policing's mental health demand?](#) 9 March 2018

For year ending March 2018					
Force	Number of command and control calls handled by the force*	Incidents only**	Of which resulted in:		
			Crime report	Police intervention involving the safeguarding of vulnerable people	Case involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis
GLO	154,623		30,457 (20%)	3,981	6,661
GMP	1,287,879		339,902 (26%)	157,582	18,896
GW	305,655		31,075 (10%)		
HAM	888,093		75,240 (8%)	18,288	38,322
HERT	572,442				15,253
HUM	233,899		51,180 (22%)	12,330	8,987
KEN	833,464		177,109 (21%)	3,179	19,081
LAN	1,099,844		126,808 (12%)	25,383	711
LEI	640,235		64,444 (10%)	6,220	9,233
LIN	183,647		39,558 (22%)	1,560	3,749
MER	415,960		105,065 (25%)	3,408	8,179
MET	4,943,496		518,945 (10%)	40,000	20,000
NORF	365,833		50,746 (14%)	13,054	11,465
NW	192,724		52,292 (27%)	26,255	806
NYP	204,784		39,712 (19%)		
NHP	292,633		37,400 (13%)	4,613	6,531
NUP	1,069,387		153,821 (14%)		6,788
NOT	362,557		7,911 (2%)	4,873	481
SWP	439,934		105,294 (24%)		
SYP	856,492		141,989 (17%)	20,193	7,472
STAFF	290,547		91,688 (32%)	6,001	9,637
SUF	274,335		53,114 (19%)	4,658	4,608

For year ending March 2018					
Force	Number of command and control calls handled by the force*	Incidents only**	Of which resulted in:		
			Crime report	Police intervention involving the safeguarding of vulnerable people	Case involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis
TVP	572,031		84,895 (15%)		8,392
WAR	293,299		35,399 (12%)	5,585	1,786
WME	609,359		66,547 (11%)	22,333	7,000
WMI	2,048,209		233,230 (11%)	84,984	17,820
WYP	707,341	yes	198,172 (28%)	137,254	15,944
WIL	95,487		8,138 (9%)		

Notes:

- *Figures are assumed to represent all command and control calls received by the force from both 999 and 101 numbers, unless otherwise stated.
- ** “Incidents only” indicates that a police force has stated that figures relate to the creation of an incident log. Not all C&C calls will generate such a log.
- Figures are assumed to have removed duplicate calls. They may include admin and training calls.
- The total for 999 and 101 calls has been included, but the ratio of 999 calls may potentially be a more important factor in determining the pressures faced by different forces.
- Crime Reports may include crimes that originated from other sources.
- The number of calls/incident logs that result in a crime report does not take in to account non-crimes in which police activity still takes place e.g. for safeguarding reasons.



Force abbreviations

AS	Avon and Somerset Constabulary
BED	Bedfordshire Police
CAM	Cambridgeshire Constabulary
CH	Cheshire Constabulary
CI	City of London Police
CL	Cleveland Police
CU	Cumbria Constabulary
DER	Derbyshire Constabulary
DEV	Devon & Cornwall Police
DOR	Dorset Police
DUR	Durham Constabulary
DP	Dyfed-Powys Police
ESS	Essex Police
GLO	Gloucestershire Constabulary
GMP	Greater Manchester Police
GW	Gwent Police
HAM	Hampshire Constabulary
HERT	Hertfordshire Constabulary
HUM	Humberside Police
KEN	Kent Police
LAN	Lancashire Constabulary
LEI	Leicestershire Police
LIN	Lincolnshire Police
MER	Merseyside Police
MET	Metropolitan Police Service
NORF	Norfolk Constabulary
NW	North Wales Police
NYP	North Yorkshire Police
NHP	Northamptonshire Police
NUP	Northumbria Police
NOT	Nottinghamshire Police
SWP	South Wales Police
SYP	South Yorkshire Police
STAFF	Staffordshire Police
SUF	Suffolk Constabulary
SUR	Surrey Police
SUS	Sussex Police
TVP	Thames Valley Police
WAR	Warwickshire Police
WME	West Mercia Police
WMI	West Midlands Police
WYP	West Yorkshire Police
WIL	Wiltshire Police

Other findings and limitations

This section details some other key findings from analysis of the data returned to the Committee, and describes some of the limitations of the data.

All 43 forces returned data in response to our request. However, due to differences in administration, record-keeping and interpretation of the survey questions, data was not always provided on a consistent basis across the forces. The findings below highlight where data issues arise, and where subsets of the data have been used.

Indecent Images of Children

Incidents

- The number of IIOC incidents has been increasing significantly over time, from 4,248 in 2013–14 to 22,253 in 2017–18; a 424% increase. The average increase for a force is 496%.
- All forces except the City of London have recorded an increase in the number of IIOC incidents. Fifteen forces recorded increases of over 500%.
- Two forces (Northampton and Durham) recorded increases of over 1000% percent, although this is partly due to a base effect, as these forces were responsible for the second and third lowest number of incidents in 2013–14.

Outcomes

- “Outcomes” may relate to incidents that were recorded in previous years, so in-year comparisons must be treated with some caution.
- Since 2013–14 (when there was a total of 319 cautions for IIOC incidents), the number of cautions increased by 35% in 2016–17, but fell by -22% in 2017–18.
- Over the same period, the total number of charges increased from a base of 2,004 charges by 93% and 1% respectively.
- The number of incidents in which there was “*no suspect identified*” increased from 124 to 1,937 (over 1,400%) in 2017–18 and those with “*evidence difficulties*” increased from 169 to 4,350 (over 2,400%).
- These differences in growth rates mean that, whereas in 2013–14 the number of cautions represented 8% of incidents, and charges represented 47% of incidents, these fell to 2% and 21% respectively in 2016–17.
- As a proportion of incidents, “No suspects identified” increased from 3% to 8% and “evidence difficulties” from 4% to 24% over the same period.

Command and Control Calls

- Forces used different methodologies in counting the number of C&C calls received; the majority gave information about 999 and 101 calls (a total of 23.9 million calls).
- Five forces specifically detailed incidents that were logged as a result of calls (a total of 1.6 million calls).
- Of the forces detailing 999 and 101 calls, the highest figures were for the Metropolitan Police (4.9 million calls) and West Midlands (2.0 million calls). City of London Police received the fewest (0.02 million calls).
- Regarding the outcomes generated by these calls, the following results were recorded:
 - Crime report: 3.4 million or 14% of total calls
 - Police intervention involving the safeguarding of vulnerable people: 0.7 million or 3% of total calls
 - Case involving someone experiencing a mental health crisis: 0.3 million or 1% of total calls.
- For forces that detailed incidents logged as a result of calls, these figures were 24%, 18% and 3% respectively.

Mental Health Training

- 39 forces returned information on mental health training; however, some forces were only able to identify attendances on mental health training courses, rather than the number of officers trained, resulting in double counting.
- 32 forces provided data on the number (headcount or full-time equivalent) of trained officers. Of the 79,740 officers and PCSOs detailed, 43,083 had received training (54%).
- There is a significant range between forces; two forces have 100% of officers/PCSOs having received training, whilst six forces have less than 20% of the officers/PCSOs having received such training.
- Of the remaining staff of 53,915, around 23% have received mental health training.
- From the descriptions provided by forces, around 64% of mental health training combines a mixture of classroom and online course. 15 forces (36%) specifically mentioned NCALT training.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introduction

1. Our extensive inquiry has enabled us to examine a range of issues in detail, painting an overall picture of a police service which still has great strengths, values and expertise, but which is struggling to deal with the fast-changing demands of the 21st century, using systems and structures that have barely changed since the 1960s. We will show that the current structure and funding model for policing in England and Wales is not fit for purpose, and that the Home Office needs to demonstrate far more leadership on crime and policing—particularly in areas where crimes are changing, and where national reform is required. (Paragraph 5)
2. Since we launched this inquiry, six police officers have lost their lives in the line of duty, including PC Keith Palmer GM, who died while defending the Palace of Westminster from a terrorist attack. On a daily basis, officers are faced with some of the most exacting and upsetting scenarios imaginable, and deal with them with dignity, dedication and commitment to public service. Many people spend the worst hours of their life in the reassuring presence of a police officer: the aftermath of a violent attack, an unexpected bereavement, a mental health crisis, or the anxious wait for a loved one who has gone missing. Policing is a service which, above all, depends on the people who work within it, and if they are not supported then the service will badly decline. (Paragraph 8)
3. We wish to put on record our immense gratitude to police officers, PCSOs, special constables and police staff across the UK for their service. We recognise the immense challenges inherent to any policing role, and the impact of this career on their health, wellbeing and family life. Recent figures on police officer morale and welfare paint a picture of a service under severe strain, which causes us serious concern. The Home Office must do more to protect and promote the welfare of the police workforce, who safeguard all our welfare on a daily basis. (Paragraph 9)

Changing trends in crime and policing

4. Many ‘volume’ crimes, including robbery, theft from the person, and vehicle-related theft, are now increasing at an alarmingly steep rate, after a long period of decline. While recorded crimes have risen by 32% in the last three years, the number of charges or summons has decreased by 26% and the number of arrests is also down. The wider Crime Survey also found recent steep increases in robbery and theft. If these trends continue, the service risks both a serious decrease in public safety and in confidence in the police and the CPS. (Paragraph 16)
5. Policing is facing both new challenges and rising demand from traditional crimes, yet resources in recent years have been strained, and forces are under considerable stress merely to keep up with existing pressures. Without a change of course, the current trends—fewer officers delivering a wider mission, under increasing demands—will continue, and policing will struggle to attract the talented individuals that it relies on in order to survive. (Paragraph 21)

Neighbourhood policing

6. Neighbourhood policing brings immense value to communities, particularly when officers or PCSOs are given the space and time to get to know local people and problems, develop tailored solutions, and build trust in policing. This is central to the British model of policing by consent. It is understandable that forces would be tempted to prioritise reactive, emergency work over proactive problem-solving within communities, but we regard this as a false economy. The relationships built by neighbourhood officers enable problems to be dealt with before they become emergencies, and encourage cooperation with the police at times of crisis. The decline in neighbourhood policing has therefore been a significant loss to communities. (Paragraph 30)
7. We welcome efforts to integrate policing with other public services, including through multi-agency teams based in the same location, which focus on individuals who come into repeat contact with authorities. We are concerned, however, that some forces may see this model as their sole ‘offering’ on neighbourhood policing. There can be no substitute for having officers and PCSOs who are embedded in their local communities. (Paragraph 31)
8. We are gravely concerned about the erosion of neighbourhood policing in a number of forces. The data we collected suggests that forces have lost at least a fifth of their neighbourhood policing capacity, on average. It is vital that neighbourhood officers and PCSOs are able to devote sufficient time to embedding themselves in their communities, and are not removed from this work to carry out reactive response or crime investigation work outside their dedicated area. It is clear, however, that some forces are struggling to respond to incoming urgent demands, and are using their neighbourhood officers to plug the gap. We welcome the College of Policing’s recent guidance on neighbourhood policing, but this is insufficient to prevent forces from deprioritising proactive neighbourhood work, when faced with competing demands and limited resources. (Paragraph 39)
9. Neighbourhood officers underpin the police service’s more specialist capabilities in crucial ways. In counter-terrorism policing, they allow intelligence to be gathered and shared at a local level, and create the trust that encourages people to share their concerns about radicalised individuals. As part of the police response to gangs and serious organised crime, neighbourhood officers get to know the young people locally who might be tempted to get involved with criminal activity, and can spot patterns of behaviour that other parts of the service might miss. Once lost, these relationships cannot be quickly rebuilt. Without the maintenance of a consistent and reliable police presence in communities, forces’ efforts to respond to the recent wave in volume and violent crime will be severely compromised. (Paragraph 40)
10. Whilst this report has not examined the causes of the recent increase in ‘traditional’ crimes such as robbery, theft and vehicle related crime, we note that it is happening after several years of decline in the level of neighbourhood policing and community prevention work. We urge police forces and the Home Office to ensure that neighbourhood policing is not cut back further, and that forces instead start to reinvest in community capacity-building. It is absolutely vital that this cornerstone of British policing is reaffirmed throughout the country, to ensure that trust and legitimacy

is maintained. This is particularly important in communities in which distrust of the police—and in public authorities more widely—is rife, and in which those local links are all the more important. Nevertheless, in all neighbourhoods, without local engagement, policing is at risk of becoming irrelevant to most people, particularly in the context of low rates of investigation for many crimes. The Government should report back to us within one month of the Comprehensive Spending Review, to explain what actions it has taken to maintain core neighbourhood policing functions in all forces, and to prevent officers from being diverted to other policing requirements. (Paragraph 41)

Online fraud

11. Despite efforts to improve its response to victims of fraud, Action Fraud has irretrievably lost the confidence of the public, and reasonable expectations from victims are not being met. It is sensible to have a centralised reporting facility for fraud, but this must not simply become a way to divert and fob off victims of crime. Most importantly, it must be accompanied by a proper system to investigate crimes and respond to victims, or it will become irrelevant. (Paragraph 50)

The police response to fraud

12. The proportion of fraud cases being investigated is shockingly low, in the context of 1.7 million offences per year and substantial costs to the UK economy, as well as to individual victims. Our findings indicate that, although multiple cases may relate to a single charge, as little as 3% of cases reported to Action Fraud may result in charges or summons. Of the 1.7 million offences committed annually, it appears highly unlikely that more than one in 200 victims ever sees their perpetrator convicted. Given the paltry number of justice outcomes, it is no surprise that so few fraud victims report their experience to the police or Action Fraud. While we recognise that many offences are committed overseas, it is nevertheless clear to us that the Government has failed to get a grip on this problem, and that major changes are needed to the way in which fraud is reported, investigated and prevented. We commend the City of London Police for its leadership, but one under-resourced police force, facing the same budget pressures as every other force, does not have the capacity or the leverage to introduce the sort of drastic improvements needed at a national and regional level. (Paragraph 60)
13. There is a lack of transparency in the way that fraud statistics are published. At present, two sets of records are available: recorded crime figures and outcomes, with no way of linking the two. The Office for National Statistics and other agencies should take immediate steps to ensure that figures can be published on the proportion of online fraud offences resulting in justice outcomes, and the proportion for which no suspect is charged. (Paragraph 61)
14. The police response to fraud is in desperate need of a fundamental overhaul, and we welcome Government ministers' recognition that the current system is not fit for purpose. There remains a clear requirement for a national reporting and analysis centre, but the current system of tasking and undertaking investigations needs to be overhauled, and standards of victim support are often extremely poor. The

Government must show leadership in this area, working with the City of London Police, the NPCC, the National Economic Crime Centre within the NCA and other key stakeholders to implement a ‘hub and spoke’ structure for fraud investigation and victim support, with all investigations undertaken at a national or regional level. (Paragraph 66)

15. This must be accompanied by proper resources and enhanced capabilities: the level of regional resource in this area is not commensurate with the threat or the cost to the economy of this growing form of crime. We return to the wider issue of police funding in Chapter 6. However, given that much online fraud takes place on platforms provided by extremely profitable global tech giants, or exploits weaknesses in the security of private sector companies, it is reasonable to expect the private sector to contribute to the funding of policing and safety online. Likewise, banks, credit card companies and insurance companies have a lot to lose from the continued escalation of this form of crime, so they too have a considerable interest in contributing to the policing of online fraud. (Paragraph 67)
16. Not enough is being done to identify and support vulnerable victims of fraud. This is compounded by pressures on Trading Standards offices. With investigative resources and capabilities focused at a national and regional level, forces should be given the space to focus predominantly on victim support, based on intelligence from Action Fraud. When reporting a crime to Action Fraud, victims should be asked a series of questions to assess their levels of vulnerability and their need for follow-up support. This information should be disseminated to forces immediately, so that neighbourhood officers or PCSOs can respond accordingly, with timely and tailored support. (Paragraph 68)

The Joint Fraud Taskforce

17. The Joint Fraud Taskforce is a welcome initiative, but it has little to show for two and a half years of work and at the moment we are not sure what the point of it is, in practice. We agree with Which? that more transparency is needed, including a clear action plan and ownership of key tasks, regular reports on progress against that plan, and measurements of success in key areas, including public awareness campaigns. It is disappointing that the first annual report, promised for summer 2018, has not yet appeared. By the end of November, the Government should also publish the recent independent review of the Taskforce, which is referred to in the minutes of the June Management Board meeting, along with an action plan to address the weaknesses identified in that review. (Paragraph 71)

The role of industry

18. The private sector could do much more to reduce the demand on policing from online fraud. This problem can only be addressed effectively with a whole-system approach, including by regulatory reform, if necessary, to force companies to be ‘secure by design’. Key private sector companies—those whose customers create the most substantial workload for the police and NCA—should also employ analysts internally to facilitate evidence-gathering by law enforcement agencies. If industry

partners will not do so voluntarily, the Government should consider imposing statutory requirements on companies to cooperate with law enforcement agencies. (Paragraph 76)

19. We agree with the Public Accounts Committee that data should be available on banks' relative performance in preventing and responding to fraud, including online fraud. The key counter-argument—that this could expose vulnerabilities that could be exploited by criminals—could equally have applied to the publication of statistics on car thefts by manufacturer, which had a significant impact on the incidence of vehicle theft. Consumers have the right to choose their banking provider based on the full knowledge of the risks they may be taking with their finances. Greater transparency may provide the commercial impetus required to ensure that industry does more to tackle this problem at source, and reduce demand on an overstretched police service. (Paragraph 77)

Child sexual abuse

20. The growth of online indecent images of children (IIOC) is one of the most disturbing by-products of the digital age. Its impact on victims is devastating and long-lasting, so we were shocked by how little is known about IIOC offenders. We welcome the Government's recent announcement of funding for collaboration with child protection organisations, to increase understanding of offender behaviour and prevent future offending. This must seek to identify the key characteristics of online CSA offenders, risk factors for viewing IIOC, the effectiveness of current child protection measures, including the Disclosure and Barring Service, and the likely success of preventative measures to educate young people at an early stage about the impact of this crime on its victims. (Paragraph 86)
21. Based on inspections by HMICFRS and evidence received by witnesses, it appears that many police forces are woefully under-resourced for the volume of online child sexual abuse investigations they now need to undertake. It is unacceptable that officers are forced to investigate CSA cases with no specialist training at all, and that forces have insufficient resources to manage the risks posed to children by registered sex offenders, constantly playing 'catch-up' with a backlog of visits. We welcome efforts by the College of Policing to prioritise this issue, but we call on the Home Secretary to take urgent action to ensure that all forces have sufficient specialist CSA investigators, properly trained to undertake this vital and urgent child protection work. This may require more resources and capabilities to be provided at a regional level, as we will explore in Chapter 9. (Paragraph 94)

The police response to online CSA

22. We share the Justice Committee's concerns that police forces are not adequately equipped to handle the volume or type of digital evidence now generated, including in online child sexual abuse cases. Although reforms to the disclosure regime are clearly needed, this is undoubtedly having an impact on the speed of investigations, too, as identified by HMICFRS. It is also symptomatic of broader problems facing a police service which appears increasingly ill-equipped for the challenges of the

digital age. Addressing this will require fundamental reforms to the structure, culture and workforce of policing, which we will return to in chapters 7–9 of this report. (Paragraph 97)

23. Child sexual abuse online is reaching epidemic levels, and there is absolutely no room for complacency. We received strong assurances that the police are pursuing offenders and are not stepping back from this activity, despite the vastly-increased volume of demand. But the NCA estimates that 80,000 people in the UK present some form of sexual threat to children online—yet our figures show that only 2,017 charges were brought in the year ending March 2018. The figures we received also suggest a very large gap between the number of recorded IIOC crimes and the number of arrests, with just one arrest for every ten recorded incidents, and a reduced number of charges in the last year. Whatever the causes of this attrition—lack of capacity, lack of technological capability, or lack of expertise at a force level, for example—we are extremely worried about the number of children who might be at risk of abuse from unidentified offenders in the same home, community or school, or online. (Paragraph 103)
24. We are concerned that the police response to online CSA is still nowhere near the scale needed, especially given the risk that online CSA may either be an indicator of current or future contact child abuse or a contributing factor towards an offender engaging in physical child abuse in future. It is particularly troubling that an increasing number of IIOC cases are being abandoned without charge due to ‘evidential difficulties’, or because no suspect can be identified after an offence is detected. The technological capabilities available to officers are not keeping up with those being exploited by offenders, and many cases are being abandoned because offenders cannot be traced to a precise location. (Paragraph 104)
25. We welcome the Home Secretary’s recent announcement of additional resources, and we urge the Government to continue treating this as a high priority area for investment, ensuring that the police service has access to advanced tools to track down offenders and bring them to justice. This extremely dangerous crime cannot be treated simply as ‘too difficult to solve’. The NCA must also be supported to ensure that it can build the capabilities required to tackle offenders on the dark web. By the end of November, the Home Office should provide us with a breakdown of how the additional funding for CSA policing will be allocated. (Paragraph 105)

Rehabilitation

26. We welcome the personal commitment of the Home Secretary to lead action in this area, and we commend the work of the National Crime Agency and the National Police Chiefs’ Council’s lead, Chief Constable Simon Bailey, in seeking to combat the destructive and growing threat of child sexual abuse. We have serious concerns, however, about the current scale of the policing response to this growing crime, in the context of a relatively small number of convictions, an even lower number of custodial sentences, and evidence that most offenders are undergoing no rehabilitation at all. (Paragraph 110)
27. Relative to the scale of the problem, only a tiny number of offenders are being charged or convicted for the possession of IIOC—there were just 385 convictions last

year. The deterrent effect against potential offenders is therefore minimal. Many of those who may pose a threat to children online will continue to have direct contact with children. We are deeply concerned about the collective failure to protect those children, and a comprehensive strategy led by the Home Office is needed to address this. It must include engagement with other Government departments, as well as the police and criminal justice system, internet and tech companies, children's services, schools and community organisations. It should also review the interaction between the police and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) in responding to IIOC offences, to prevent dangerous contact with children. (Paragraph 111)

28. This evidence also calls for a major focus on prevention and child safety. All cases referred to police forces must lead to an investigation of whether or not the suspected offender is in contact with children, and whether action is needed to protect children through safeguarding work. Leaving children at risk because police forces don't have the capacity or expertise they need, or because of failings in co-ordination and the lack of a wider strategy against online child abuse, would be unforgivable. Without urgent action, future generations will look back and be appalled at how slow the system was to respond to this new threat. (Paragraph 112)
29. It is vital that the police continue to pursue these offenders and bring them to justice, but there is also a pressing need to tackle offending and recidivism. The Government must invest urgently in research on effective prevention work, including the rehabilitation of child sexual abuse offenders. (Paragraph 113)

The online space

30. Like many of the trends identified in this report, responsibility for cracking down on online child sexual abuse is falling almost entirely on an overstretched and under-resourced law enforcement community, with inadequate cooperation from the internet giants. While we acknowledge that the Internet Watch Foundation plays an important role in removing abusive material, law enforcement witnesses were clear that tech companies are not doing enough to reduce the number of child abuse images online. We agree with the Home Secretary that the web giants need to do much more to combat online CSA. The wealth, power and influence of these companies means that there is no excuse for complacency in removing illegal content from their platforms and ensuring the safety of their users. (Paragraph 118)
31. We urge the Government to include in its Online Harms White Paper the imposition of statutory duties on companies to cooperate with investigators in the pursuit of online child abuse offenders, including by providing more comprehensive intelligence packages to CEOP and other investigators. The Government should also establish a regulator with statutory powers to hold internet companies to account against a clear code of practice, developed in consultation with law enforcement experts. Failure to adhere to this code, such as providing inadequate protections against online grooming and the proliferation of child abuse images, should result in penalties being imposed, including fines and other sanctions as appropriate. (Paragraph 119)

Mental health work

32. We welcome the reduction in the use of police custody for individuals detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act. We remain concerned, however, that lessons are not being learned by all forces about the use of these powers in a lawful and appropriate way, including the use of restraint against individuals experiencing acute mental distress, and we are very troubled by the increase in the number of deaths in police custody. The Government should provide us with an annual update regarding progress against Dame Eilish Angiolini's recommendations, and explain why the number of deaths in police custody have increased in the last recorded year. (Paragraph 133)
33. If an individual requires a health-based place of safety for a mental health crisis, the police service's involvement in their care should end at the point at which they are sectioned. It is unacceptable that the majority of section 136 cases involve police transport to a health facility, frequently because an ambulance is not available in time. This is an inappropriate way to care for patients, and leaves police forces overstretched. We have also heard evidence of the police spending hours trying to find a treatment provider, and remaining in hospital with a mental health patient while an inpatient bed is found for them. These are risks which the NHS should be responsible for managing, and has the expertise to manage—it is completely inappropriate to leave the police to pick up the pieces in this way. The NHS is currently advancing Integrated Care Systems as an attempt to integrate local health and social care services more effectively. These should take into account the effects of local health needs on the police. (Paragraph 134)
34. From the evidence we received, it appears that some police forces see mental health training as a 'nice-to-have', rather than an essential part of their officers' knowledge base and skillset. We appreciate that it is extremely challenging to remove officers and PCSOs from the frontline in order to train them for two days, as per the College of Policing's guidance. But we urge forces to consider the cost of a single death in police custody of an individual experiencing a mental health crisis—not just in monetary terms, but to that individual's loved ones, and to society as a whole. It is ludicrous that officers receive a three-week course in police driving, while dealing regularly with acute mental health crises with just a few hours of training. The College of Policing should take immediate steps to mandate a minimum two-day mental health course for all officers and PCSOs. We urge chief constables to regard this as an investment rather than a chore. (Paragraph 139)
35. Joint triage schemes between the NHS and the police have been spoken of positively by many witnesses, and efforts to encourage data-sharing and cooperation between the police and local health providers are to be encouraged. We are concerned, however, that they are promoting further reliance on the police as the first-point-of-call for individuals who witness or experience a mental health crisis. People who require mental health treatment in a crisis need an urgent, NHS-led response, not a police car. (Paragraph 142)
36. In too many areas, the police are the only emergency service for those in crisis, and they are being used as a gateway to healthcare for those in desperate need of help. This is an extremely poor use of public funds and one of the worse examples

of cost-shunting between public services. The NHS is expected to receive a £20bn funding uplift in the upcoming Budget. This should take into account the significant disparity in funding for mental health, relative to physical health, so that the NHS is better able to support those with mental health needs, rather than relying on the police. (Paragraph 143)

Missing people

37. The demand on policing arising from cases involving missing people—particularly children—appears to be the result of a perfect storm generated by funding reductions to other public services, the extensive use of out-of-area placements for looked-after children, a lack of data and intelligence-sharing between the police and other public agencies, and an excessive dependence on the police as a service-of-last-resort for vulnerable individuals, including the safeguarding of children at risk of sexual exploitation and abuse. We do not lament the police’s involvement in this important area of work, but their increasing workload appears to be the result of failures in other services and in partnership working, rather than a political or strategic decision. We are also concerned that there appears to have been little progress since HMICFRS published its 2016 report on this subject. This is one of many areas in which the national policing lead seems to have insufficient leverage to enact fundamental change at a local level. (Paragraph 150)
38. We are concerned that there has been a serious lack of Ministerial leadership in relation to the threat of child sexual abuse in England and Wales, including the response to missing children, the proliferation of child abuse images, and the join-up between agencies on child protection work. Police activity is fragmented, under-resourced and subject to competing demands; information-sharing between agencies is woeful; rehabilitation for CSA offenders is virtually non-existent; and there is nowhere near enough proactive activity taking place to stem the tide of child abuse images online, and the associated growth in known paedophiles. We welcome the Home Secretary’s personal commitment to driving progress in this area. The Government should appoint a Commissioner for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse to work across departments and agencies, work closely with private and non-profit organisations, and produce a bold and comprehensive cross-Government strategy on child protection and the prevention of child sexual abuse. (Paragraph 151)
39. Even if our recommendations are implemented effectively, the police will still have an important role to play in protecting vulnerable people from harm, including managing the risk from sex offenders, referring vulnerable offenders to other agencies, and tracking down missing people. However, our findings strongly point to the need for agencies to be much more joined-up in their approach, with more pooling of resources and a less risk-averse approach to data-sharing. We return to this issue in the next chapter. (Paragraph 152)

Police funding

40. The Government must be clear and accurate about police funding, and the resource pressures facing forces. We welcome the Home Secretary’s commitment

to prioritising police funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR), and the Policing Minister's clear recognition that the service requires additional resources to enable it to meet changing demands. We agree with them. Policing urgently needs more money. We strongly recommend that police funding is prioritised in both the upcoming Budget and the next CSR. (Paragraph 164)

41. Given the complex challenges outlined in this report, we have no doubt that a failure to provide a funding uplift for policing would have dire consequences. Efficiency savings can only go so far, in the context of the challenges that forces now face: substantial increases in serious violence and volume crime; a rise in complex cases, including child sexual offences and domestic abuse; an ever-growing workload from safeguarding vulnerable people, and an explosion of internet crime, with the evidential challenges that creates. Without extra funding, something will have to give, and the police will not be able to fulfil their duties in delivering public safety, criminal justice, community cohesion and public confidence. (Paragraph 165)
42. We are extremely concerned by the National Audit Office's recent conclusion that the Home Office does not know whether or not the police system is financially sustainable, and cannot be sure that funding is being directed to the right places. Future investment must be strategic and evidence-based, ensuring that resources are focused in the areas in which they can have the most impact on crime prevention and harm reduction, and not just those areas that might attract the most favourable press coverage. (Paragraph 166)
43. The current model for police funding is not fit for purpose, and should be fundamentally revised and restructured. Such heavy reliance on the council tax precept for additional funding is also unsustainable. It is time to stop kicking this problem into the long grass, and create a funding settlement for forces that is fit for the 21st century, recognising the true cost of policing. This must be based on robust evidence on resource requirements arising from diverse and complex demands. It is also likely to require more resource to be channelled to regional levels, to address the structural challenges outlined later in this report. (Paragraph 167)
44. As we outlined in Chapter 5, the police service is playing an increasing role in managing vulnerability and risk across public services, and many individuals have complex needs which cross organisational boundaries. In Chapter 2, we referred to models involving the co-location of police officers or PCSOs with other agencies, to work on interventions for individuals in greater need of holistic support. The Government should undertake a review of models that enable the police to pool resources with other public agencies, and facilitate these arrangements where they would enable a more joined-up, effective and cost-efficient response. (Paragraph 168)
45. Many witnesses highlighted the challenges created by the short-term approach to police funding. This is an unnecessary obstacle to investment in innovation, and it disincentivises medium- and long-term financial planning. The Government should move to a longer-term funding structure, to enable the service to frontload investment in the technology that will enable it to make the best use of its resources and assets. The Police Transformation Fund is a piecemeal and ad hoc method for funding innovation and new technology in policing, and a much more coordinated, long-term approach is required. (Paragraph 169)

Police technology

Cyber and digital skills

46. We have serious concerns about the police service's digital capabilities, including the skills base of officers and staff and the technological solutions available to them. We were impressed by the digital and data exploitation capabilities available to counter-terrorism policing, but we note comments by Lynne Owens, Director General of the NCA, regarding the inequitable provision of resources available to other threats, including serious organised crime. Previous chapters have outlined our concerns about digital capabilities in other fields, including child sexual abuse and online fraud, and we fear this may be a systemic problem throughout the police service. (Paragraph 176)
47. Based on the National Digital Exploitation Service model, used for counter-terrorism policing, we believe that a prestigious national digital exploitation centre for serious crime—possibly with regional branches—would be better able to attract and retain talent, alongside the likes of GCHQ. It would also have the purchasing power to invest in innovative methods of digital forensics and analysis, from which all forces could then benefit. We call on the Government and the police service to take steps urgently to cost such a model, in time to account for the required funding in the next Comprehensive Spending Review. (Paragraph 177)
48. At force-level, there is a clear need to upskill the existing workforce and bring in more staff and officers with advanced cyber skills. We also endorse the Police Superintendents' Association's suggestion that the Special Constabulary could be transformed into an effective reserve force, and suggest that resources should be devoted to scoping this as a national model, focused on cyber and digital skills. (Paragraph 178)

Technology and data-sharing between forces

49. Police forces' investment in and adoption of new technology is, quite frankly, a complete and utter mess. We welcome the Policing Minister's recognition that police technology requires additional investment to enable the service to meet the challenges of the 21st century. This is clearly correct, although we do not think the level of investment is the only problem. Forces are facing rapidly-evolving threats from criminals who exploit new technology in advanced and innovative ways, yet their own technological solutions are not always up to the task. There are enormous opportunities for policing, including greater use of artificial intelligence and the exploitation of data, but the service is often failing to take advantage of them. (Paragraph 186)
50. We believe that the biggest failing in this area is not the level of funding, but rather the complete lack of coordination and leadership on upgrading technology over very many years. This is badly letting down police officers, who are struggling to do their jobs effectively with out-of-date technology. It is astonishing that, in 2018, police forces are still struggling to get crucial real-time information from each other, and that officers are facing frustration and delays on a daily basis. The National Enabling

Programme and the ongoing reforms to the Police National Database, though welcome, are woefully unambitious, and will not solve the problem. Criminals don't recognise police force boundaries, and neither should the data that is gathered on them. The Home Office must make it a clear and stated aim to unify all police databases and communications systems according to a clear timetable, with all new force-level contracts negotiated accordingly, so they can fit into a national framework or contract in future. (Paragraph 187)

51. Stronger national leadership from the Home Office on technology is essential—Ministers need to take ultimate responsibility for the failure of this crucial public service to properly upgrade its technology to deal with the threats of the 21st century. However, this must be accompanied by enhanced capacity and capabilities within the Department: its abject failure to deliver the promised savings from reforms to the Emergency Service Network (ESN) demonstrates what can happen when national projects are poorly managed. (Paragraph 188)

Police workforce and culture

Mandatory training

52. Policing is a challenging and complex vocation, and officers face increasingly difficult demands, requiring a high level of skill, knowledge and understanding. These demands may vary between rural and urban forces, but every force requires access to key specialisms, and every officer, PCSO or staff member—be they forensic analysts, child abuse investigators or safer schools officers—deserves to be given the tools with which to perform to the best of their abilities. This includes being equipped with evidence of 'what works', clear referral routes for certain incidents or scenarios, and relevant data from around the country. Based on what we have seen during the course of this inquiry, that is a long way from the current state of affairs. Training is a long-term investment in the most important resource that police forces have—their workforce. Without time to train and continuously learn, it will be even harder to meet the short-term challenges facing policing, and staff will be put under even greater pressure. (Paragraph 200)
53. Throughout this report, we have identified a number of areas in which specialist knowledge appears to be lacking, and in which underqualified and inexperienced officers are being forced to take on responsibilities for which they are inadequately prepared. We urge the Government and the College to review urgently the amount of training that is mandated, the scope for introducing compulsory licenses to practice for a wider range of specialisms, and the resource and cultural issues standing in the way of the provision of a higher level of specialist, continuous professional development for police officers and staff. (Paragraph 201)

New recruitment and training routes

54. This inquiry has not included a detailed examination of the College of Policing's plans for degree-level accreditation and apprenticeships for officers. We agree that police officers need to be able to move the service away from the sort of crisis interventions that result from negative inspections and complaints, and towards the maintenance

of consistent quality standards, based on accredited professional qualifications, a well-established evidence base, and high levels of practitioner knowledge. But forces must also be able to maintain diversity within their workforce, and ensure an increasingly-wide range of routes into policing, including continuing to encourage entry from those who have not pursued a degree. (Paragraph 202)

55. By March, the Home Office and College of Policing should publish a comprehensive impact assessment of the police apprenticeship (based on the plan to implement it from 2019/2020), including the likely impact on neighbourhood policing (time spent by new recruits in dedicated wards), response times to calls for service, the resources available for training existing staff and officers, and the diversity of new recruits. (Paragraph 203)
56. We are gravely concerned about the severe detective shortages being experienced by police forces in England and Wales, which is undoubtedly impacting on police welfare, access to justice for victims, and the safety and security of the general public. We welcome efforts to recruit detectives directly, provided they are given the requisite training and support, but this will only fill a quarter of existing vacancies. The Government should revisit Sir Thomas Winsor's previous recommendation for additional allowances for detectives, and consult the profession on their introduction. It must also work with the Police Federation, PSAEW and NPCC to identify ways of enhancing the support offered to detectives in managing their caseload and taking appropriate risks, providing the necessary funding to ensure that a detective career becomes a more attractive prospect for existing officers. (Paragraph 206)

Recruitment and retention problems

57. Although the detective shortage is one of the most acute problems facing the police workforce, and requires urgent action, a piecemeal approach to pay and workforce reform will ultimately be unsustainable. The evidence we have received suggests that new approaches to recruitment and reward are likely to be required across the police workforce, if the service is to respond effectively to growing and emerging demands. (Paragraph 207)
58. We welcome the focus by the leaders of the police service on problems with chief officer recruitment, including the very low number of applicants for each role. We urge the Government to undertake a review of the relationship between chief officers and PCCs, to identify issues on either side. It should also eliminate bureaucratic obstacles to promotion, addressing any problems with pension and taxation rules, to ensure that capable candidates are not disincentivised from taking on the enormous responsibility of running a police force. (Paragraph 210)

Police culture

59. It was striking that our roundtable participants—some of them relatively new to policing—were confident in identifying deeply-entrenched cultural barriers to reform in policing. These included the impact of rank structures and hierarchies,

including long chains of command; the effect of the PCC election cycles on reform, and the ability of forces to plan long-term; and the root causes of a systemic resistance to innovation and change. (Paragraph 216)

60. The College of Policing should undertake a review of barriers to innovation and reform, and ensure that the new Policing Education Qualifications Framework promotes a more open and innovative culture. While acknowledging the need to maintain discipline, this should encourage constructive challenge from officers at junior ranks, and discourage the promotion of ‘continuity at all costs’ over innovation and change. Police culture needs to shift away from blame-and-claim and towards learning from failure, and policing leaders need to take a much more consultative approach to their oversight of more junior colleagues. (Paragraph 217)

The role of the Home Office and allocation of responsibilities

61. As the lead department for policing, the Home Office must step up to the plate and play a much stronger role in policing policy. Many of the challenges outlined in this report could benefit enormously from national leadership. Throughout our report, we have identified coordination problems between forces—particularly over new technology. We have also identified weaknesses in assessing and investing in the response to new and changing patterns of crime, weaknesses in engaging other organisations in the fight against crime or in public protection, and a lack of strategic direction. In all of those areas, it should be the Home Office that takes responsibility. When it comes to influencing or partnering with global internet companies, the NHS or the education system, individual forces cannot match the power and influence of a central government department. We urge the Home Office to play a much stronger role in driving reform in key areas, such as data-sharing between public services, the negotiation of national technology contracts, and the regulation of internet companies. Sitting back and leaving it to individual police forces is irresponsible. We welcome the Policing Minister’s recognition that “the Home Office needs to take a stronger view on a number of things”, which appears to signify a major shift in departmental policy. (Paragraph 224)
62. The current allocation of responsibilities in policing at a national, regional and local level is broken, and in dire need of review. Policing structures remain largely unchanged since the 1960s, and whilst the creation of PCCs has enabled leadership and new partnerships within many force areas, collaboration between forces is still a problem in those areas where regional or national action is required. Local identity is a significant strength in UK policing, but our evidence on neighbourhood policing indicates that relationships with officers at a neighbourhood and community level are more important than the 43-force structure. As the Policing Minister acknowledged, the current structure is a significant barrier to the service’s ability to tackle national and transnational threats, which require an advanced level of specialist capability. (Paragraph 236)
63. We recognise that previous force mergers have been beset by difficulties, and that the Government is unlikely to reduce the number of forces. We believe that a more strategic, evidence-based approach is required. Before the end of November, the Home Office should launch a transparent, root-and-branch review of policing,

publishing proposals by the end of February, which should focus on the allocation of responsibilities and capabilities at a local, regional and national level. Based on what we have seen, we propose that local policing should be given the space to focus on community relations and local crime and disorder, including inter-agency working to reduce harm and address repeat offending. The driving force for restructures, such as mergers of whole forces, back offices, or between police and fire and rescue services, should be service improvement, rather than the hope of savings. At a national and regional level, forces need to pool resources and capabilities to a far greater extent, particularly for online crimes such as fraud, but also in complex areas where crimes often cross force borders, such as organised crime, county lines and modern slavery. The structure for counter-terrorism policing, which is frequently singled out for praise, could serve as a model for other areas of policing. (Paragraph 237)

64. An ambitious reform programme of this kind will be impossible without stronger national leadership, and a more dynamic and transparent approach to policing policy-making. It is vital that the operational independence of chief officers is maintained, and that PCCs are able to act on local priorities and local problems. But the current state of police ICT and communications systems is a striking example of the problems generated by this fractured system of policy-making and governance. (Paragraph 238)
65. The Government should create a National Policing Council, chaired by the Home Secretary and comprising representatives of the APCC, NPCC, officer/staff associations, College of Policing and HMICFRS. Proposals for reform could be put to a National Police Assembly comprising all PCCs and chief constables in England and Wales. The Home Office should consider key policy areas where decisions of the Council and Assembly could then be binding on all forces. (Paragraph 239)
66. This report has set out the many complex and changing demands on policing in the 21st century, in the context of a system of funding and governance that is ill-suited to dynamic reform. In the absence of strategic direction from the Home Office, operating under a fractured leadership structure, forces are plugging the gaps left by other public services in an attempt to protect the most vulnerable people from harm. In the meantime, 'traditional' crimes such as violence and theft are on the increase, and an overstretched justice system is bringing forward a decreasing number of charges. It is time for the Government to demonstrate clear ownership of policing policy and funding, and stop abdicating responsibility. The Home Secretary must make it clearer to the police service what areas he expects it to prioritise, where to focus its limited resources, and what he will do to drive much-needed reform at a national level. (Paragraph 240)

Formal minutes

Monday 22 October 2018

Members present:

Rt Hon Yvette Cooper, in the Chair

Stephen Doughty Stuart C. McDonald

Kate Green Alex Norris

Tim Loughton Douglas Ross

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

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

Paragraphs 1 to 240 read and agreed to.

Annex and Summary agreed to.

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

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

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

[Adjourned till Tuesday 23 October at 2.15 pm]

Witnesses

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

Tuesday 24 October 2017

CC Dee Collins, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police, **CC Gareth Morgan**, Chief Constable of Staffordshire Police, **CC Dave Thompson**, Chief Constable of West Midlands Police and National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Finance, and **CC Sara Thornton**, Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council

[Q1–53](#)

Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley, National Lead for Counter-Terrorism Policing, Metropolitan Police

[Q54–113](#)

Tuesday 7 November 2017

Cressida Dick CBE, QPM, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service

[Q114–170](#)

Tuesday 14 November 2017

David Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, **Kathryn Holloway**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Bedfordshire, **Sue Mountstevens**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Avon and Somerset, and **Paddy Tipping**, Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire

[Q171–206](#)

Rt Hon Sadiq Khan, Mayor of London

[Q207–242](#)

Tuesday 9 January 2018

T/Commander David Clark, National Co-ordinator for Economic Crime, City of London Police, **Richard Piggin**, Campaign Manager, Which?, **Detective Superintendent Nicky Porter**, Financial Investigations Unit, Serious Crime Division, Greater Manchester Police, and **Katy Worobec**, Managing Director, Economic Crime, UK Finance

[Q243–310](#)

Tuesday 13 March 2018

Dr Helen Beckett, The International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking, University of Bedfordshire, **Cassandra Harrison**, Director, Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, **Elaine McConnell**, Chief Executive Officer, The Lucy Faithfull Foundation, and **Adam Pemberton**, Corporate Director of Strategy and Performance, Barnardo's

[Q311–345](#)

Chief Constable Simon Bailey, Lead for Child Protection, National Police Chiefs Council, **Will Kerr**, Director of Vulnerabilities, National Crime Agency, and **Chief Inspector Ronnie Egan**, District Commander, Chelmsford and Maldon District Policing Area, Essex Police

[Q346–383](#)

Tuesday 1 May 2018

Dame Vera Baird DBE QC, Lead for Victims, Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, **Chief Inspector Michael Brown OBE**, Mental Health Co-ordinator, National Police Chiefs' Council, **Sophie Corlett**, Director of External Relationships, Mind, and **Chief Constable Mike Veale**, Chief Constable, Cleveland Police, and NPCC Lead for Missing Persons

[Q384–421](#)

Chief Superintendent Jeff Boothe, Commander, South Area Basic Command, Metropolitan Police, **Alison Hernandez**, Police and Crime Commissioner, Devon and Cornwall, and Deputy APCC Lead for Local Partnerships and Policing, **Andy Higgins**, Research Director, Police Foundation, and **Garry Shewan**, Former Assistant Chief Constable, Greater Manchester Police

[Q422–443](#)

Tuesday 19 June 2018

Rt Hon Nick Hurd MP, Minister of State for Policing and the Fire Service, and **Scott McPherson**, Director General of the Crime, Policing and Fire Group, Home Office, and **CC Sara Thornton**, Chair of the National Police Chiefs' Council

[Q528–603](#)

Mike Cunningham QPM, Chief Executive Officer, College of Policing, and **Sir Thomas Winsor**, HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary

[Q604–643](#)

Tuesday 5 June 2018

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

[Q444–527](#)

The following witnesses gave evidence on Immigration to the Home Affairs Committee in the previous Parliament. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Tuesday 28 March 2017

Gloria Laycock, Professor of Crime Science, University College London,
Tim Newburn, Professor of Criminology and Social Policy, London
School of Economics and Political Science, and **Andromachi Tseloni**,
Professor of Quantitative Criminology, Nottingham Trent University

[Q1–55](#)

Katy Barrow-Grint, Chief Inspector, Local Policing, Thames Valley Police,
Tom Gash, Honorary Senior Lecturer, Jill Dando Institute of Security and
Crime Science, University College London, **Blair Gibbs**, Expert Adviser,
Behavioural Insights Team, and Associate, Crest Advisory, and **Dr Rick
Muir**, Director, Police Foundation.

[Q56–92](#)

Published written evidence

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

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

- 1 ADS ([PFF0018](#))
- 2 APCC ([PFF0001](#))
- 3 Barnardo's ([PFF0008](#))
- 4 Big Brother Watch ([PFF0017](#))
- 5 Centre of expertise on child sexual abuse (CSA) ([PFF0016](#))
- 6 City of London Police ([PFF0003](#))
- 7 Greater Manchester Police ([PFF0006](#))
- 8 Greater Manchester Police, Rochdale District ([PFF0022](#))
- 9 Home Office ([PFF0019](#))
- 10 Kathryn Holloway, PCC for Bedfordshire ([PFF0002](#))
- 11 Liberty ([PFF0012](#))
- 12 Metropolitan Police Service ([PFF0004](#))
- 13 National Crime Agency ([PFF0007](#))
- 14 National Crime Agency ([PFF0011](#))
- 15 National Crime Agency, National Police Chiefs' Council and the Metropolitan Police ([PFF0021](#))
- 16 National Police Chiefs' Council ([PFF0013](#))
- 17 National Police Chiefs' Council ([PFF0015](#))
- 18 Police Now ([PFF0020](#))
- 19 The Children's Society ([PFF0010](#))
- 20 The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking ([PFF0014](#))
- 21 The Lucy Faithful Foundation ([PFF0009](#))
- 22 UK Finance ([PFF0005](#))

The following written evidence was received by the previous Home Affairs Committee before the general election in 2017. It can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website

- 1 ADS Group ([PFF0033](#))
- 2 Age UK ([PFF0073](#))
- 3 Association of Convenience Stores ([PFF0024](#))
- 4 Association of Police and Crime Commissioners ([PFF0057](#))
- 5 Axon Public Safety UK Ltd ([PFF0042](#))
- 6 Barnardo's ([PFF0069](#))
- 7 Barry Copping, Police and Crime Commissioner for Cleveland ([PFF0056](#))
- 8 Barry Loveday and Chris Lewis, University of Portsmouth ([PFF0003](#))
- 9 Big Brother Watch ([PFF0047](#))
- 10 Bournemouth University ([PFF0015](#))
- 11 British Medical Association (BMA) ([PFF0053](#))
- 12 British Retail Consortium ([PFF0022](#))
- 13 Campaign Against Antisemitism (CAA) ([PFF0039](#))
- 14 Chief Constable Dave Thompson, West Midlands Police ([PFF0017](#))
- 15 Chief Constable Debbie Simpson, Dorset Police ([PFF0018](#))
- 16 Chief Constable Mick Creedon, Derbyshire Constabulary ([PFF0006](#))
- 17 Chief Constable Olivia Pinkney, Hampshire Constabulary ([PFF0009](#))
- 18 Chief Constable Simon Edens, Northamptonshire Police ([PFF0019](#))
- 19 City of London Police ([PFF0065](#))
- 20 Cityforum Limited ([PFF0030](#))
- 21 Clive Grunshaw, Police and Crime Commissioner for Lancashire ([PFF0059](#))
- 22 College of Policing ([PFF0076](#))
- 23 Crest Advisory ([PFF0046](#))
- 24 Dame Vera Baird QC, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northumbria ([PFF0068](#))
- 25 David Jamieson, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner ([PFF0066](#))
- 26 David Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire ([PFF0070](#))
- 27 David Munro, Police and Crime Commissioner for Surrey ([PFF0023](#))
- 28 Digital Policing Portfolio ([PFF0040](#))
- 29 Disabled Police Association ([PFF0027](#))
- 30 Dr Adrian James, University of Portsmouth ([PFF0008](#))
- 31 Dr Loretta Trickett and Paul Hamilton, Nottingham Trent University ([PFF0031](#))
- 32 G4S ([PFF0049](#))
- 33 GLA Conservatives ([PFF0014](#))
- 34 Home Office ([PFF0037](#))
- 35 Home Office ([PFF0077](#))
- 36 Human Rights, Big Data and Technology Project ([PFF0052](#))

- 37 Katy Bourne, Police and Crime Commissioner for Sussex ([PFF0050](#))
- 38 Keith Hunter, Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside ([PFF0013](#))
- 39 Lady Iveta, Kurpniece ([PFF0001](#))
- 40 Letter from the Chair to Chief Constable Simon Bailey, National Police Chiefs' Council Lead on Child Protection, 28 February 2017 ([PFF0062](#))
- 41 LexisNexis Risk Solutions ([PFF0058](#))
- 42 Mark Burns-Williamson OBE, Police and Crime Commission for West Yorkshire ([PFF0061](#))
- 43 Martyn Underhill, Police and Crime Commissioner for Dorset ([PFF0025](#))
- 44 Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) ([PFF0063](#))
- 45 MEDI@4SEC ([PFF0016](#))
- 46 Metropolitan Police Service ([PFF0055](#))
- 47 Michael Lane, Police and Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton ([PFF0045](#))
- 48 Mr Guy Ferguson ([PFF0048](#))
- 49 Mr Michael Rawson ([PFF0004](#))
- 50 Mr R ([PFF0034](#))
- 51 National Centre for Cyberstalking Research, University of Bedfordshire ([PFF0011](#))
- 52 National Crime Agency ([PFF0051](#))
- 53 National Police Chiefs' Council ([PFF0035](#))
- 54 Office of the South Yorkshire PCC ([PFF0026](#))
- 55 Organised Crime Portfolio ([PFF0007](#))
- 56 Paddy Tipping, Police and Crime Commissioner for Nottinghamshire ([PFF0021](#))
- 57 Police Federation of England and Wales ([PFF0067](#))
- 58 Police Superintendents' Association of England and Wales ([PFF0044](#))
- 59 Privacy International ([PFF0064](#))
- 60 Professor Philip Hancock, Dr Pasi Ahonen and Dr Danielle Tucker, Essex Business School ([PFF0020](#))
- 61 Stephen Mold, Police and Crime Commissioner for Northamptonshire ([PFF0032](#))
- 62 Susannah Hancock, Chief Executive, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex ([PFF0054](#))
- 63 Temporary Chief Constable Dee Collins, West Yorkshire Police ([PFF0010](#))
- 64 The Centre for Public Safety ([PFF0043](#))
- 65 The Children's Society ([PFF0072](#))
- 66 The Police Foundation ([PFF0041](#))
- 67 The Police Foundation supplementary ([PFF0075](#))
- 68 The Police ICT Company ([PFF0029](#))
- 69 Tony Lloyd, Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester ([PFF0071](#))
- 70 UNISON ([PFF0028](#))
- 71 Universities' Police Science Institute, Cardiff University ([PFF0012](#))
- 72 uWatch Ltd ([PFF0002](#))
- 73 Youth Justice Board for England and Wales ([PFF0060](#))

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website. The reference number of the Government's response to each Report is printed in brackets after the HC printing number.

Session 2017–19

First Report	Home Office delivery of Brexit: customs operations	HC 540 (HC 754)
Second Report	Immigration policy: basis for building consensus	HC 500 (HC 961)
Third Report	Home Office delivery of Brexit: immigration	HC 421 (HC 1075)
Fourth Report	UK-EU security cooperation after Brexit	HC 635 (HC 1566)
Fifth Report	Windrush: the need for a hardship fund	HC 1200 (HC 1558)
Sixth Report	The Windrush generation	HC 990 (HC 1545)
Seventh Report	UK-EU security cooperation after Brexit: Follow-up report	HC 1356 (HC 1632)
Eighth Report	Policy options for future migration from the European Economic Area: Interim report	HC 857
Ninth Report	Domestic Abuse	HC 1015
First Special Report	The work of the Immigration Directorates (Q1 2016): Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 541
Second Special Report	Asylum accommodation: Government Response to the Committee's Twelfth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 551
Third Special Report	Unaccompanied child migrants: Government Response to the Committee's Thirteenth Report of Session 2016–17	HC 684
Fourth Special Report	Home Office delivery of Brexit: customs operations: Government Response to the Committee's First Report	HC 754
Fifth Special Report	Immigration policy: basis for building consensus: Government and Office for National Statistics Responses to the Committee's Second Report	HC 961

Sixth Special Report	Home Office delivery of Brexit: immigration: Government Response to the Committee's Third Report	HC 1075
Seventh Special Report	The Windrush generation: Government Response to the Committee's Sixth Report	HC 1545
Eighth Special Report	Windrush: the need for a hardship fund: Government Response to the Committee's Fifth Report	HC 1558
Ninth Special Report	UK-EU security cooperation after Brexit: Government Response to the Committee's Fourth Report	HC 1566
Tenth Special Report	UK-EU security cooperation after Brexit: Follow-up report: Government Response to the Committee's Seventh Report	HC 1632