PEEL: Police efficiency 2016

A national overview

Contents

Foreword

This report sets out the national themes that HMIC has found in its 2016 inspection of police efficiency.

Overall it is a positive picture, with a large majority of forces graded as 'good' or 'outstanding'. We have seen good progress since last year, with forces clearly taking seriously areas that HMIC identified for improvement.

There is a different context to efficiency this year. The announcement in November 2015 that police funding would remain the same in cash terms means that policing has an opportunity to think differently about finance and investment. It does not, however, mean there is no longer a financial challenge. Changing crime types, new technologies and different public expectations mean that important and difficult decisions still need to be made, especially in the context of reduced funding for many of the police's partner agencies.
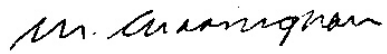
Many forces are taking the opportunity to invest in change programmes that will allow them to be more efficient in the future. There is still some uncertainty about what that future holds. It will, however, mean forces will need a range of skills that they do not necessarily have: business, organisational change and digital skills. Forces need to think in terms of the capability of their workforces rather than just personnel numbers when reviewing workforce plans. The opportunities and challenges presented by digital technology will become increasingly important.

Forces have much to do to catch up with current technology and must look to the future. Many of the information and communication systems used in policing were created some time ago and have not kept pace with the demands that forces now face.

This is particularly true when it comes to sharing information effectively and working closely with other forces and local public sector organisations. While in many other ways policing is taking important steps to improve professionalism, efficiency and organisational structures, it is now urgent that forces establish consistent standards on how they can share ICT systems and data, working with national organisations such as the Police ICT Company. This consistency should provide a stronger network to help forces to create innovative solutions, both to meet local policing needs and to disseminate data across geographical boundaries.

I would like to thank all the forces for welcoming and supporting our inspection teams again this year. HMIC will return to inspect the efficiency of policing in England and Wales in 2017. We will expect to see significant developments in the scale and ambition of the plans that forces, working closely with their police and crime

commissioners, aim to implement. There is still scope for forces to transform the way in which they operate and it is vital that the pace and urgency of change continues to be central to how forces consider their plans for the future.

Michael Cunningham QPM
HM Inspector of Constabulary

Summary and main findings

This is the second national report on police efficiency produced as part of HMIC's PEEL programme. It covers the financial year 2015/16, based on inspections carried out between March and July 2016, and is published alongside individual reports on the efficiency of each of the 43 Home Office-funded police forces in England and Wales.

The overarching question considered by this report is the same as last year: "How efficient are the police at keeping people safe and reducing crime?"

The findings of this report should be seen within the wider financial context. Between 2010/11 and 2015/16, central government funding for the police service in England and Wales fell by £1.7 billion, or 19 percent in cash terms. Police forces have met the required budget reductions over the last five years successfully. HMIC's 2015 efficiency report[1] showed that most forces had plans in place for further reductions in their budgets.

In November 2015, the Government announced, as part of its spending review, that "overall police spending [would be] protected in real terms over the Spending Review period to enable the police to continue to adapt to emerging crime threats, and to train more firearms officers, while taking further steps to improve efficiency".[2]

While this is a more favourable funding settlement for policing than was expected, reductions in spending by other public services will still create additional pressure for police forces.

This year's report focuses on the following three questions:

- How well do police forces understand their current and likely future demand?

- How well do police forces use their resources to manage current demand?

- How well are police forces planning for demand in the future?

Each police force is given one of four grades for each of these three questions, as well as an overall grade. The four grades are: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. The grades for all police forces are available on HMIC's website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/peel-2016/

---

[1] *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015*, HMIC, October 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2015/

[2] Home Office's Settlement at the Spending Review 2015, HM Government, November 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/news/home-offices-settlement-at-the-spending-review-2015

In writing this report, we have considered a range of data and documents submitted by police forces, and we have carried out fieldwork in each force, including interviews with the senior officers and staff responsible for finance, organisational change, human resources and performance. HMIC inspectors also held focus groups with officers and staff in each force. This year we have looked closely at the assumptions each force has made about the future and we have focused in more detail on forces' plans and strategies than we did last year. Full information on last year's inspection and the full inspection methodology for this year's inspection can be found on HMIC's website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/

Main findings

Two forces have been graded as outstanding, 33 forces as good and eight forces as requiring improvement. This year no force has been graded as inadequate. As with last year, the majority of forces have been rated as good. Three fewer forces have been graded as outstanding compared with last year; the number of forces graded as requiring improvement has remained the same.

Most forces have a good understanding of the demand for their services (for example, 999 and 101 calls). Forces are being proactive in seeking out other types of demand, such as crimes that are less likely to be reported and in communities who are less likely to trust the police.

Most forces have shown their developing understanding of demand in the way that they allocate their resources. However, many forces do not understand the skills and capabilities of their workforce well enough to match the most appropriate resources to that demand.

Almost every force is able to demonstrate some progress in improving collaborative working with other forces and other local public sector organisations. However, only a small number were able to demonstrate clearly the benefits resulting from this work. Some forces need to improve their joint working arrangements quickly in order to manage likely changes in demand on their services.

A small number of forces have impressive plans to develop their workforce and/or ambitious plans for joint working with local public sector organisations such as local authorities. We found evidence to suggest that some forces have reduced the pace and ambition of their plans since last year, but it is too early to say whether this is a result of the financial settlement being more positive than expected. These findings could reflect the relatively short time between the settlement announcement and this inspection, and that the May 2016 police and crime commissioner elections had only just taken place when we started our inspections.

Most forces still plan to make savings this financial year, mainly continuing previous change programmes, and have made sensible mid-term financial provisions, meaning we are less concerned about the potential continued financial future of forces than we were in 2015.
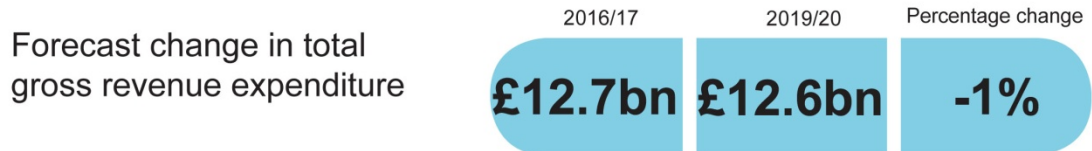
A high number of forces are in the process of recruiting new officers. It is disappointing that only a small number of forces have a sufficiently clear sense of the skills (for example, digital skills) that they are looking for in new recruits. We would have liked to have seen more examples of forces taking advantage of programmes such as Police Now and Direct Entry to bring in people with new ways of thinking and new approaches.

While almost all forces intend to make use of mobile technology, digital skills remain a significant gap. Police forces continue to struggle with the large number of different ICT systems and, in particular, how they work together to share and search for data.
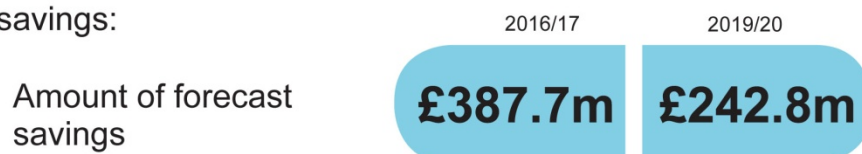
Efficiency in numbers

£ Financial position

Forecast change in total gross revenue expenditure

2016/17	2019/20	Percentage change
£12.7bn	£12.6bn	-1%

Forecast savings:

Amount of forecast savings

2016/17	2019/20
£387.7m	£242.8m

Percentage of gross revenue expenditure

2016/17	2019/20
3%	2%

🔔 Workforce

Planned change in officer numbers

2015/16	2019/20	Percentage change
124,100	121,400	-2%

Planned change in total workforce

2015/16	2019/20	Percentage change
200,600	194,100	-3%

Officer cost per head of population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016

England and Wales force average
£98

Workforce cost per head of population in the 12 months to 31 March 2016

England and Wales force average
£143

Calls for assistance

999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

England and Wales force average

124

Recorded crime

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

2014/15	2015/16
55	**60**

Percentage change in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2016

England and Wales force average

+9%

Victim satisfaction

Victim satisfaction with the overall service provided by the police 12 months to 31 March 2016

England and Wales force average

84%

For force-specific information please see the individual force reports, available on HMIC's website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2016

Context

Over the past six years, the police service in England and Wales has seen significant reductions in funding, with the level falling every year in cash terms, and by £1.7 billion, or 19 percent, in cash terms since 2010/11. In the same period, the police workforce reduced from 243,900 officers, PCSOs and other staff in 2010 to 200,600 in 2016.

According to the Crime Survey for England and Wales, measured crime fell by 28 percent between 2010/11 and 2014/15.[3] It should be noted that reported crime is only a part of police forces' work; the College of Policing has estimated that reported crime accounts for about 20 percent of police demand.[4] We should not assume that crime will continue to fall. An important part of what HMIC inspects is how well forces are planning for the future.

Figure 1: Index of police funding, workforce and crime in England and Wales from 1995/96 to 2015/16 (1995/96 = 100)
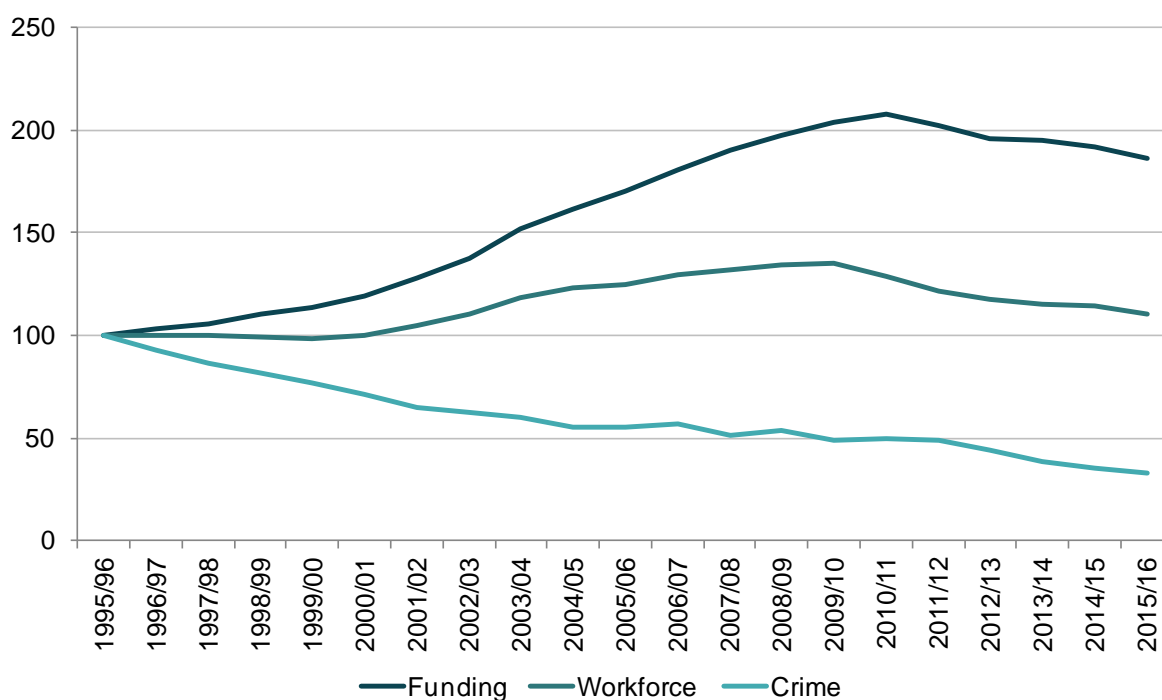
Source: Home Office financial data, Home Office police workforce statistics and Crime Survey for England and Wales

---

[3] *Crime in England and Wales, Year Ending March 2015*, Office for National Statistics, 2015. Available from www.ons.gov.uk/ons/rel/crime-stats/crime-statistics/year-ending-march-2015/index.html

[4] *College of Policing analysis: estimating demand on the police service*, College of Policing, London, 2015. Available from www.college.police.uk

The 2015 spending review maintained central government funding in real terms, but forces are still expected to reduce costs in the long term. While HMIC does not underestimate the continued financial challenges that most forces continue to manage, as the figures below demonstrate, they have considerably more funding in the next financial period than they had been planning for earlier this year.
Some forces were planning to reduce the level of service they provide significantly and it is right that these forces have scaled back their plans in light of the financial settlement. However, funding reductions elsewhere, particularly for local councils, are likely to create greater pressures on policing. Despite these significant challenges, there still remains considerable scope for forces to continue to improve the efficiency of their organisations. The funding settlement should enable forces to make sensible investments – in new ways of working, new ICT systems and new property or buildings – that will help them to make sustainable spending reductions in the medium to long term, provided they are well planned and managed.

Figure 2: Total estimated savings for the period 2016/17 to 2019/20
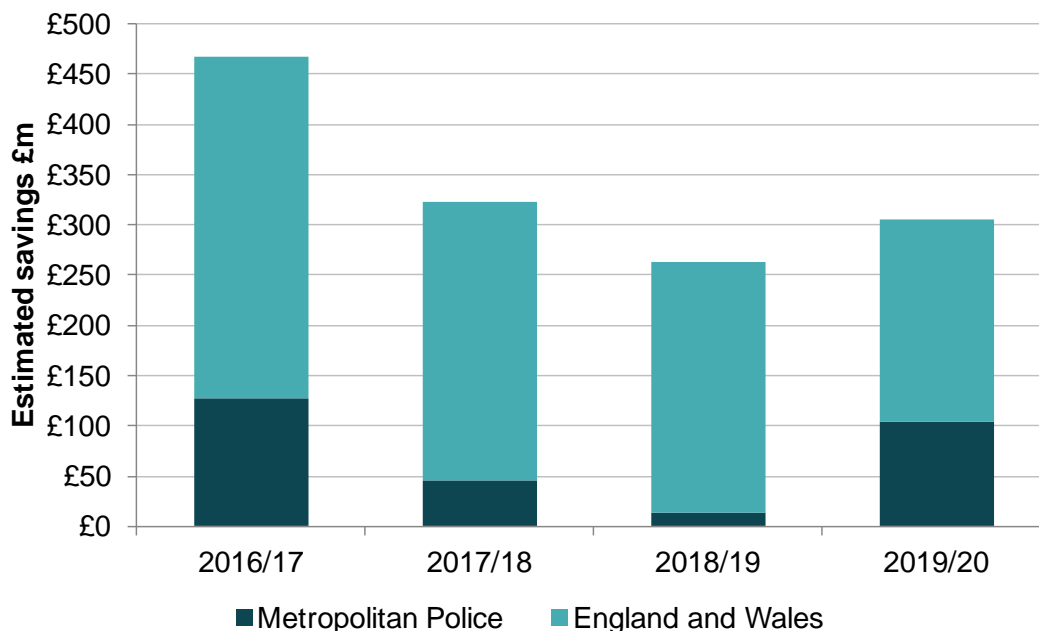
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

Figure 3: Planned savings over period 2016/17 to 2019/20 as a proportion of 2016/17 gross revenue expenditure (GRE)

Legend: ■ Planned savings as proportion of 2016/17 GRE — England and Wales
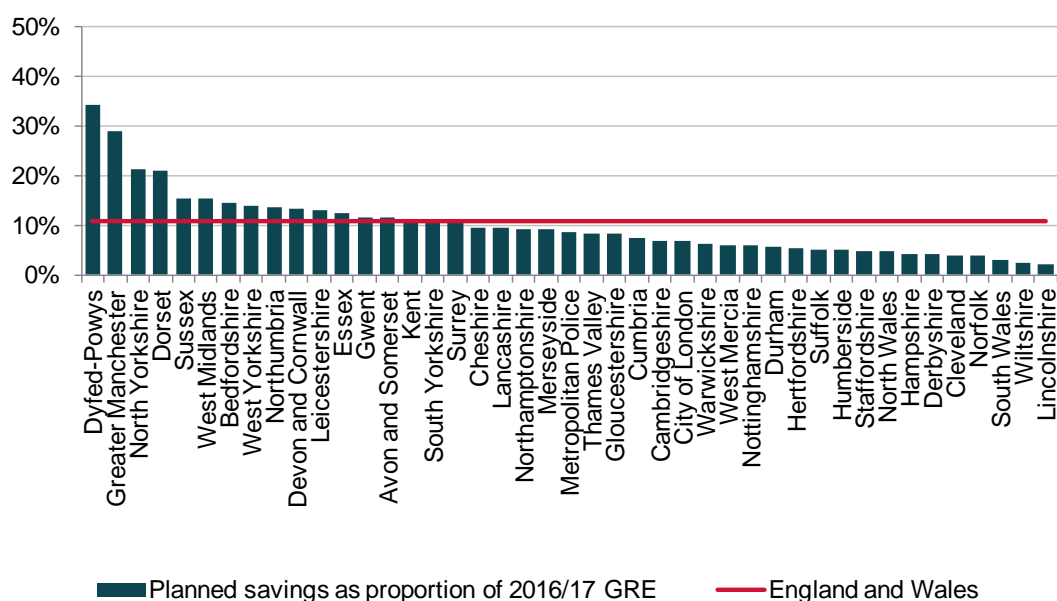
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

Technology has enabled new crimes to develop, such as stealing personal data from computer systems. It has also allowed old crimes to move online, where the visibility and reach of the internet magnifies the impact on the victim. However, it also enables police officers to access information quickly and to improve the ways in which the public can obtain information and services from the police. Technology should enable officers to spend more time on the streets, providing the service that the public expects from them. For example, when officers are able to use mobile devices to verify a suspect's identity or fill in forms without returning to a police station, officer time can be used more efficiently. Policing depends on all of these complex ICT systems and connections being accessible and effective, while also helping to make operational and business improvements. Unfortunately, this is not always the case. Many forces that adopted new technology early on now have outdated systems that hold them back. The current financial situation provides forces with an opportunity to create clear and coherent future plans, underpinned by investment in technology. This is an opportunity that should not be wasted and forces must work more closely with each other and with local partner organisations to take advantage of it.

After a long period when most forces were not recruiting new officers, forces can now expand their workforces in several different ways, including through volunteers, new police staff, new officers and schemes such as 'Police Now'[5] and direct entry.[6]

---

[5] Police Now scheme. For more information see: www.policenow.org.uk/

[6] Fast Track and Direct Entry programmes, College of Policing. For more information see: http://recruit.college.police.uk/Officer/leadership-programmes/Pages/Fast-Track.aspx

The savings each force intends to make in its workforce spending are illustrated in the graph below. Forces should be taking advantage of these opportunities to bring new and different skills into a workforce that has remained relatively static over recent years. They should consider how they can increase their capabilities in long-term planning, digital technology and partnership working. Also, they need to look at how to develop management teams that will encourage innovative thinking, rather than reinforce existing ways of thinking.

Figure 4: Savings split between pay and non-pay savings 2016/17 (planned)
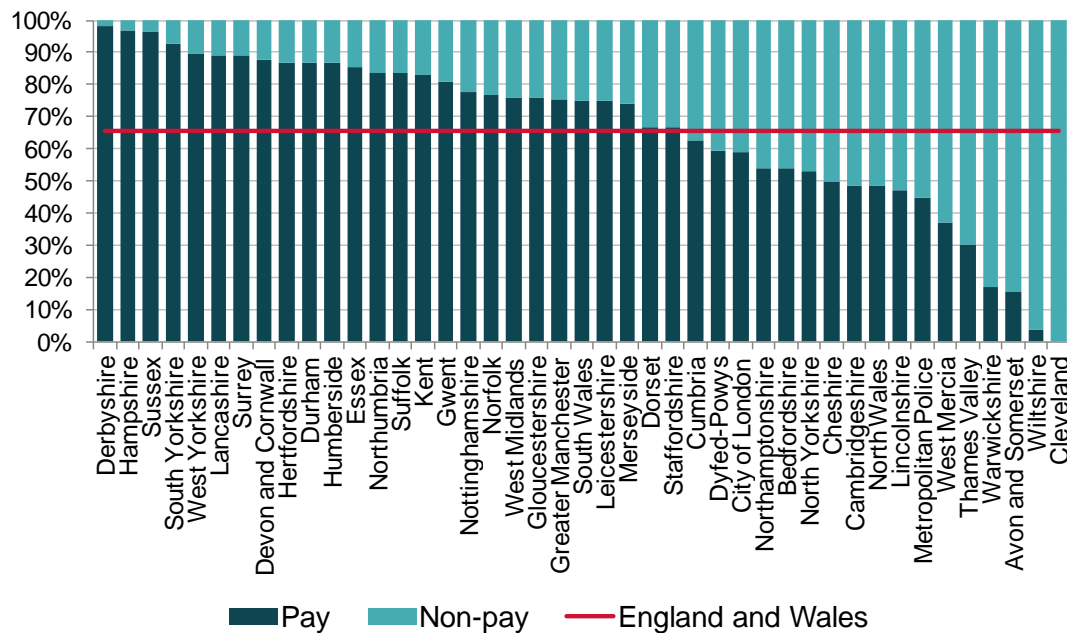
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection

Similarly, forces should consider how they can work with other organisations. After several years of reducing resources, forces will need to work with other agencies in their local areas to ensure they manage demand together and that the best services are provided to the public while reducing duplication and unnecessary demand. They will also need to work with their communities (for example, with volunteer groups) to manage demand.

Understanding demand

Summary

Most forces have a good understanding of the current demand for their services (for example, 999 and 101 calls). They are focusing on this demand as their main way of understanding their work.

Forces understand the importance of proactively seeking out demand that may otherwise be hidden or demand that is passed to them by partner organisations or officers and staff in other parts of the force. Most forces have plans in place to meet some of this proactive demand, but only the best have a detailed strategy.

Many forces only consider whether their plans for change achieve what they originally intended, rather than looking for any unintended consequences – whether positive or negative – for the rest of the organisation. This can mean that forces claim the changes they have made have had a positive effect when in fact they are simply shifting problems to a different part of the force.

Forces are making very broad assessments of likely trends for the future on the basis of limited evidence. Many forces said that they were worried about significant increases in future demand for policing, as a result of greater numbers of crimes such as child sexual exploitation and cuts to other public sector organisations. However, few forces were able to provide detailed evidence of how they were gathering relevant information from partners and assessing the potential implications of these trends. This detailed work is essential if forces are to prepare efficiently for the future.

HMIC inspected how well forces understand the full range of their demand, from how well they reacted to 999 calls, crime reports and other calls for a police service, to how well they uncover demand that might otherwise go unreported or unnoticed. We have also inspected how well police forces understand how their demand and the expectations of them are likely to change in the future.

Reactive demand

HMIC defines demand as the amount and type of service that the public and other organisations require from the police. At its most simple, it encompasses the 999 and 101 calls the police receive, as well as work in their communities protecting victims of crime and pursuing offenders. We refer to this as reactive demand, because it is usually a result of the police reacting to calls for a policing service. There are other types of demand that need to be considered, such as crimes that tend to take place behind closed doors like child sexual exploitation, which are not reported or are hidden, or work to prevent crime before it occurs, which continues to

be an increasingly important part of how the police operate. We refer to this as proactive demand, because it generally requires some action from the police or other agency to uncover it. Finally, demand for services can also come to the police from other organisations (such as social services and hospitals), from other forces and from other parts of the force, rather than directly from the public. While forces often deal with this final type of demand in a reactive way, the best forces take a proactive approach to understand it properly and work to manage it in the most efficient way.

Figure 5: Emergency 999 calls recorded by force 12 months to 31 March 2016, per 1,000 population

999 calls per 1,000 population — England and Wales
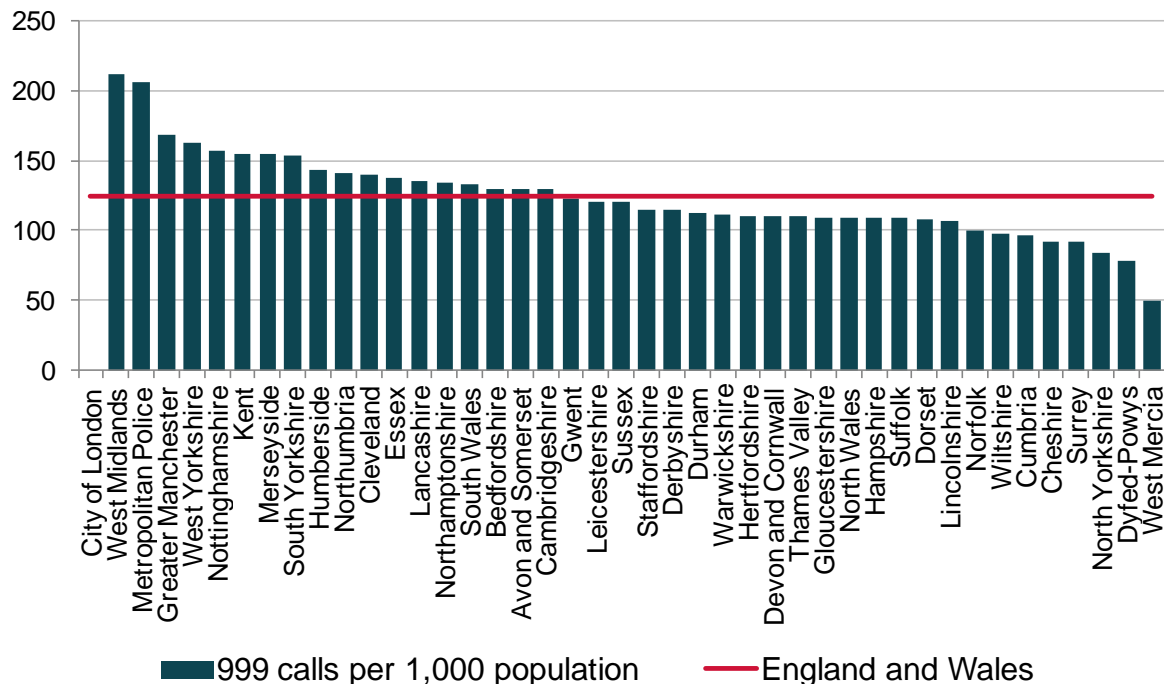
Source: Home Office annual data requirement
Note: City of London Police does not directly receive 999 calls because these are received by the Metropolitan Police Service on behalf of City of London Police.

HMIC considers a police force efficient if it has a good understanding of all of its demand on its services, has a clear and rational process for assigning resources to meet that demand and is making realistic plans about how it will meet that demand in the future. A good understanding of this demand is vital to ensure efficient policing in a force. In this year's inspections, HMIC found that most forces have a good understanding of their reactive demand, as we also found last year. There has been a shift in emphasis since last year, with forces focusing much more clearly on demand as the primary way of understanding the depth of their day-to-day work.

Following work undertaken with the College of Policing, nearly all forces have completed an analysis of what reactive demand is on a typical day. Most have gone further and used software to analyse the demand on their services. A good example of this is Avon and Somerset Constabulary, which uses commercially available software to analyse the calls it receives for a police service, real-time workforce

activity, future workforce availability and trends in offending patterns to produce digitally a map of its workforce against projected demand and so determine the volume and complexity of individuals' workloads. This allows sophisticated analysis, such as predicting offending peaks and highlighting heavy workloads. HMIC concluded last year that forces varied in their ability to understand their reactive demand. Some variation remains this year. However, the best forces have moved on considerably and have a much more sophisticated understanding of the range of the demand on their services. There are also fewer forces that do not have a good understanding of their reactive demand. In general, forces are much better equipped to analyse and to understand their demand than they were last year. This means that the police service as a whole is better equipped to understand demand, allocate resources and plan for protecting the public.

Proactive demand

In evaluating forces' understanding of demand this year, HMIC looked beyond how well forces deal with the crimes reported to them. We also inspected the extent to which forces actively uncover demand that would otherwise not come to their attention ('proactive demand'). This includes crimes that are less likely to be reported such as domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation, crime in communities which are more reluctant to trust or work with the police, and demand passed to the police by other agencies and services. All of these factors, if not fully understood, can lead to forces being faced with large amounts of new demand for services (for example, the surge in the reporting of historical child abuse after several high-profile cases). We expect forces to be taking steps to seek out this under-reported demand and to plan their resources accordingly. We have also considered the extent to which each force understands the unnecessary demands it places on itself, for example by having inefficient processes or creating bureaucracy (called 'internal demand').

HMIC found that there is a wide understanding of the importance of proactive demand, the consequences of failing to understand it properly and the need to address it. Most forces have some level of planning in place – often focused on specific crime types such as sexual exploitation, crime such as female genital mutilation and domestic abuse – to meet some of their proactive demand. The best forces, however, have a detailed high-level plan across a number of areas to uncover and deal with proactive demand. This is often linked to a comprehensive communications strategy and a close working relationship with local partner organisations.

For example, Cheshire Constabulary carries out a 'strategic assessment' that identifies areas in which it does not have a good enough understanding to be able to assess accurately the demand that these areas create. The constabulary then commissions information-gathering internally and exchanges information with partner organisations to improve its understanding. This led the constabulary to work with

the local authority trading standards department to develop a more complete picture of modern slavery; for example, by working closely with car wash businesses within Cheshire. It also ran a series of conferences aimed at rural communities and businesses to build stronger links with them and increase the likelihood that they will report crimes to the police.

In another example, Norfolk Constabulary works with charities that aid survivors of forced marriage and the survivors of abuse to build better relationships with them, to develop a better understanding of the scale of these crimes and to help improve the ways officers respond to and support survivors. The constabulary has also taken steps to identify issues of particular relevance to its area; Norfolk is one of the counties with the highest median age in the UK, so the constabulary is undertaking work on the effect of dementia on police demand.

HMIC sought evidence that forces have routine systematic arrangements in place to analyse and review new and existing ways of working, in order to avoid unnecessary or unintended burdens on officers and staff. Only the highest performing forces have such arrangements in place. A good example is Durham Constabulary, which has completed some work to understand in great detail the demands placed on its crime teams, response teams and safeguarding teams. The constabulary first identifies what teams have to do and what the legal requirements are. It then identifies what resources have been allocated to work, and whether they are actually available or not. It then identifies what level of risk the work presents, what pressures it may place on other parts of the force, what technology is needed and whether any training is required. So far this work has resulted in 35 recommendations to reduce demand and unnecessary bureaucracy, while increasing efficiency.

The strongest forces not only understand demand that is generated within their organisation but also include it in their understanding of demand as a whole. South Wales Police's sophisticated demand model recognises internal demand and misplaced demand (such as calls being routed to the wrong place), which has enabled it to change processes and route fewer calls through its switchboard.

Unfortunately, such examples are rare. Many forces only consider the effect of changes in terms of whether they achieve the specific changes they originally intended, rather than any unintended positive or negative effect. Often this means that forces claim a more significant positive effect for the changes they have made because they have not identified problems that the changes have caused elsewhere. Often there is no force-wide governance process to understand the effect of changes, relying instead for example on programme teams to identify the consequences. HMIC is concerned that a sizeable minority of forces have no real processes in place to understand internal demand at all. The changes put in place by the few forces who do understand the demand on their services show the clear

benefits of doing so. Forces putting new processes in place should have a clear idea of the impact of these changes, and should aim to make their systems as efficient as possible.

Changing demand

In order to have a strong understanding of demand, forces need to understand not only the current demand on their services, but also how that demand is changing, as demonstrated by the graph below. If forces are not anticipating changes in the demands that they face, then they are likely to become increasingly inefficient.

Figure 6: Change in emergency 999 calls recorded by force from 2010/11 to 2015/16
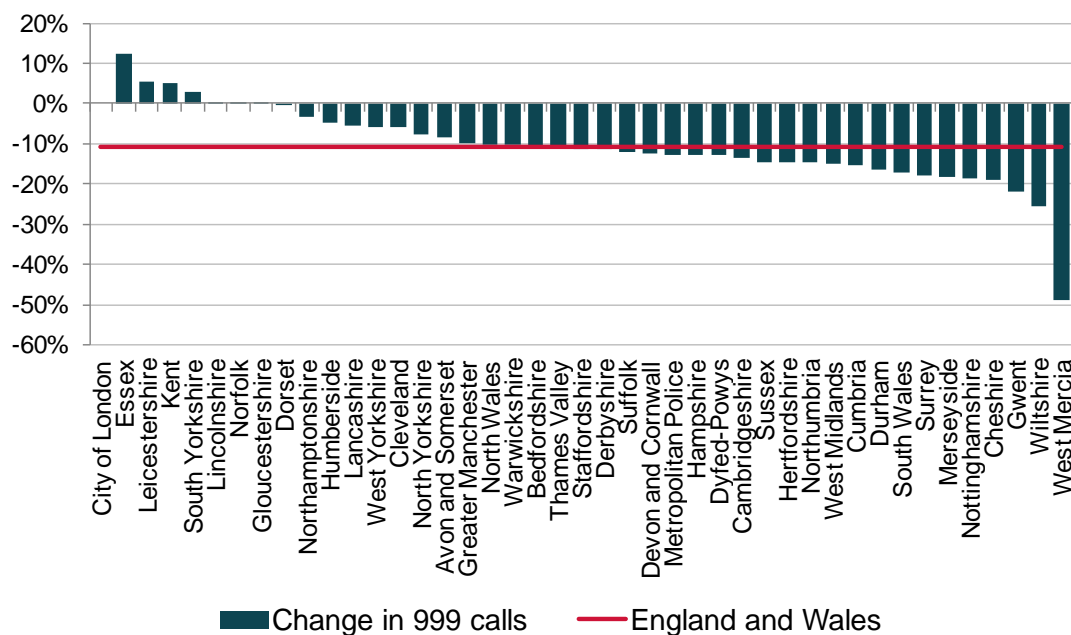
Source: Home Office annual data requirement

Demand on policing services is influenced by a range of factors, from changing public need and expectations, new and emerging types of crime (such as cyber-crime, modern slavery and human trafficking) and developments in technology, to environmental events such as flooding. Most forces have some understanding of these areas, and many have processes in place to analyse some of the factors that influence changes in demand. However, in common with our findings in relation to internal demand, few forces have robust or consistent processes to identify or assess the effect that these changes are likely to have.

Although forces are in a better position to understand changes in demand for services than they were last year, most forces are making very broad assessments of likely trends on the basis of little evidence and are unable to show clearly what the likely consequences of that change in demand will be.

Higher-performing forces are able to identify in detail the way that both technology and their communities are changing. They are also more likely to have a culture that embraces change and the need for change. This enables them to make meaningful assessments of the likely effect of these changes on demand. For example, West Midlands Police has used academic research and public perception surveys to understand the changing demographics in its area and how public expectation affects likely future demand. The force has used this to change the way it allocates resources to meet demand (for example, through multi-agency working), but also to provide different routes for the public to access police services, such as through a new website. West Midlands Police is among the few forces that can demonstrate that it is considering the effect of public expectations on potential future demand – most forces are only thinking about how they can make better use of technology.

Many forces commented that they would welcome greater support at a national level to help them develop their approach to assessing future demand. This would appear to be a natural extension to the work the College of Policing has been leading with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in relation to demand. While such work would be helpful, individual forces can and should continue to do more to understand likely trends and changes within their areas.

Meeting demand

Summary

Most forces have reflected their developing understanding of demand on their services in the way they assign and allocate resources. The best-performing forces have sophisticated software models that analyse demand and can match available resources to current and predicted demand on their services. In contrast, the poorest performing forces do not have effective systems to analyse demand and this regularly leaves them without enough available officers or staff to respond quickly to calls from the public at particular times.

Most forces have an unsatisfactory understanding of their workforce (in terms of the skills the workforce has and any skills gaps). Although many forces have some form of database for recording workforce skills, it is often limited in scope and few forces can demonstrate that they make consistent use of the available information when allocating roles. This limits the ability of forces to identify their gaps in staffing and to recruit to fill these roles. This makes it harder for them to manage the demands placed on them.

HMIC was pleased to find that every force can demonstrate some form of collaborative work with other organisations, although the scale and scope vary widely. Most forces now not only work with other forces, but also with local authorities, health authorities, fire and rescue services, charities and a range of other organisations. However, in a small number of forces collaborative working remains limited in scope and scale and many forces are still not able to demonstrate clearly the benefits of their collaborative or partnership working. As a result, they are not taking full advantage of efficiencies they could make.

A few higher performing forces can prove that they have made efficiencies from their change programmes, but most forces have a limited ability to do this. Many forces focus on successfully reducing overall costs and worry less about making the most of the full benefits of change. Few forces appear to have a sophisticated understanding of any unintended consequences (positive or negative) of these changes on their workforce.

HMIC inspected how effectively forces match resources to demand. This includes how well forces understand the level of service they can provide for different levels of cost, how well forces understand the resources available to them, how well forces cope with change and the extent to which forces work with others.

Matching resources

In order to operate efficiently, police forces need to have a clear understanding of the resources available to them and the demand for their services that they need to meet. In particular, a force must have a comprehensive and sophisticated understanding of its workforce. A higher performing force should know what level of service it can provide within current resources and be able to assess the level of service it could provide with greater or fewer resources. This understanding should be detailed enough to cover the full range of services that police forces undertake; for example, managing road traffic incidents or investigating burglaries.

The increased focus that most forces now have on demand has led to many redesigning their structure to provide a better policing service, putting in place new shift patterns and ways of working. The best-performing forces have sophisticated operating models that can, in real time, match available resources to current and predicted future demand. For example, South Wales Police has a sophisticated process for predicting and understanding demand and for deploying staff.

While most forces do not match their resources to their demand with this level of sophistication, different ways of managing resources are found in all forces, often based on THRIVE[7] (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) principles. However, in a sizeable minority of forces, HMIC found that insufficient staff and officers are available to resource their operating model. In nearly all instances this was the result of an inefficient operating model or poorly designed change programme. Often this was because forces failed to understand fully their demand or persisted in implementing new models despite mounting evidence that they were not adequately resourced to meet this demand.

A number of forces have shortages of police staff, particularly in their contact centres. This is due, at least in part, to the fact that many forces cut costs by reducing the numbers of police staff much more than police officers. While the nature of the employment of both groups may have meant forces had little choice about this, HMIC is concerned that some forces are now recruiting new police officers rather than considering all possible recruitment options for meeting current and predicted demand. The focus on recruiting police officers rather than police staff may also exacerbate the problems set out below in relation to bringing new skills into policing.

Having efficient systems in place to analyse and predict levels of resourcing that a force needs in place is an important part of resourcing demand, but not the only important factor. HMIC also inspected how well forces understand the level of

---

[7] As part of the second stage of the National Decision Model, police officers are expected to apply a judgment in relation to the threat of risk and harm to the public, during spontaneous incidents or planned operations.

service they can provide for different levels of cost. For example, a force with a strong understanding of service levels and costs may find that it can decrease costs by 10 percent in one area with little effect on the service provided, but that a decrease of 1 percent in another area could be very damaging. This is also true of areas of investment, where forces need to understand where small increases in funding could have a large effect on service provision. Having this understanding should enable forces to decide the optimum levels of investments and savings across the range of services they provide. However, HMIC found that the ability of forces to do this varies greatly.

Some forces have a very sophisticated understanding of service levels and costs. For example, West Midlands Police undertakes regular priority-based budgeting exercises. Priority-based budgeting is an approach to budgeting that allocates the force's resources in line with already established (and usually published) priorities, rather than looking only at changes from the previous year's budget, as is the case in traditional budget planning. Each department and unit in West Midlands Police must set out the level of service that it intends to provide for its budget, and so the force has a sophisticated understanding of the overall level of service it can offer and what it will cost. The force has saved £60m over the last four years using this process. This sort of process not only allows for sophisticated planning of service levels, but also allows forces to react more quickly to unexpected changes in demand, because they can readily understand the effect of re-allocating resources.

Although the general position on meeting demand is better than last year, many forces still have a relatively unsophisticated understanding of service levels and costs. The poorest performing forces are largely reactive in their approach, responding to demand as it presents itself, rather than planning for the service levels they intend to provide. All forces should have a sophisticated understanding of service levels and costs, whether they use priority-based budgeting or other similar techniques.

Workforce and skills

In this inspection, HMIC has considered how well forces understand their workforce, with a particular focus on skills of officers and staff. Police forces in England and Wales spend more than three-quarters of their budget on their workforces and so any consideration of the police's ability to manage resources must consider their ability to manage their workforces. In the past, most forces focused on simply making sure they had enough officers, rather than considering what specific skills officers had or needed, with the exception of some specialist areas such as firearms policing. However, as workforces have reduced in size (as shown in the figures below), and crimes such as modern slavery and cyber-crime have made policing

more complex, it is increasingly important that forces not only deploy the right numbers of officers and staff to meet demand, but also deploy officers and staff with the right skills.

Figure 7: Actual and planned workforce change (%) from 2009/10 to 2019/20
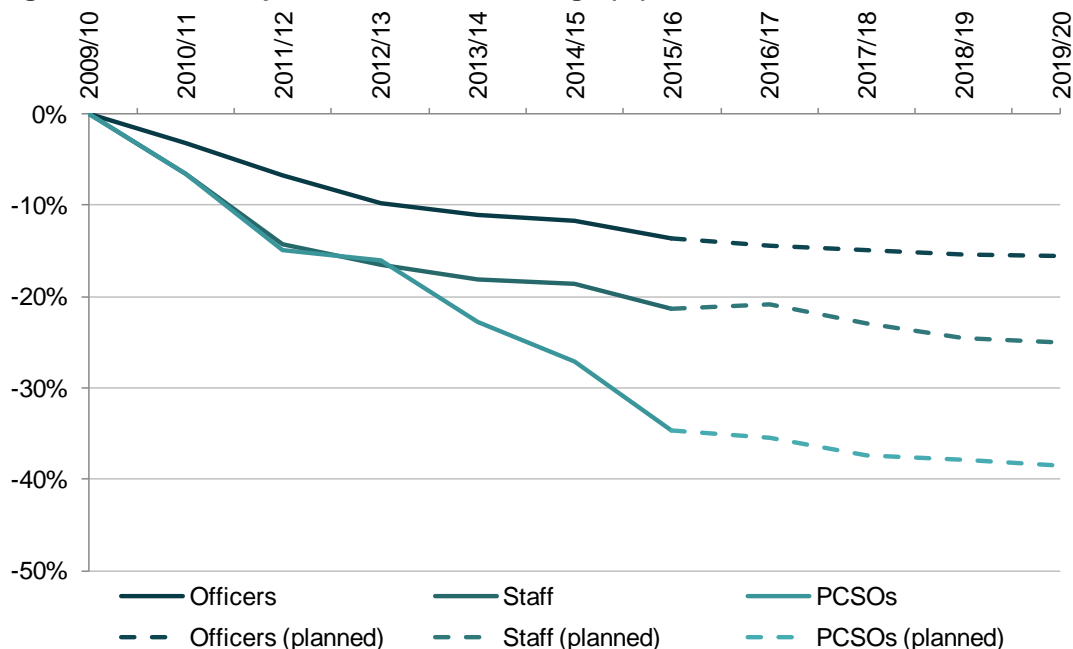
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection and Home Office workforce statistics

Figure 8: Actual and planned changes in workforce full-time equivalent (FTE) from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020

	March 2010	Actual difference between 2010 and 2016		March 2016	Planned difference between 2010 and 2016		March 2020
		Number	Percent		Number	Percent	
Police officers	143,700	-19,700	*-14%*	124,100	-2,700	*-2%*	121,400
Staff	83,200	-17,700	*-21%*	65,500	-3,200	*-5%*	62,300
PCSOs	16,900	-5,900	*-35%*	11,000	-600	*-6%*	10,400
Workforce total	**243,900**	**-43,200**	***-18%***	**200,600**	**-6,500**	***-3%***	**194,100**

Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection and Home Office workforce statistics

Figure 9: Planned change in total police workforce from 2015/16 and 2019/20 by force

Planned change in workforce FTE ▬▬ England and Wales
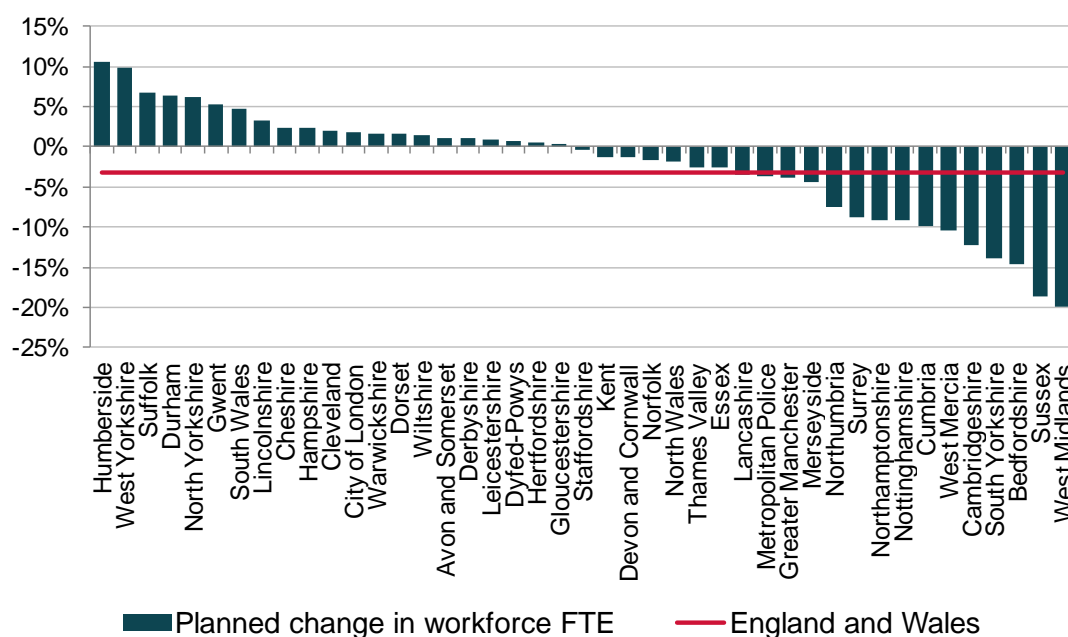
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection and Home Office workforce statistics

In order to demonstrate this, forces need to have a detailed understanding of the skills they need in their organisations and what skills they actually have, as well as comprehensive plans in place to bridge any gaps. As was the case last year, HMIC found this to be the weakest area that we inspected, with a clear majority of forces having an unsatisfactory understanding of their workforces (in terms of the skills they have and any skills gaps).

While many forces have some sort of skills database, it is often very limited in scope, focusing on accredited skills such as public order or advanced driving. Few forces keep their skills databases up to date and even fewer can demonstrate that they make consistent use of the information contained within it when allocating roles. HMIC observed that forces use these databases most frequently to identify officers and staff with relevant language skills to help with individual cases. Although this is useful, it is insufficient.

This lack of understanding is exacerbated by the failure of most forces to have adequate individual performance management processes in place. Many forces have some form of formal individual performance management system, and in some forces they are mandatory, but in the vast majority of forces they are process-led and often superficial, and do not provide any real collective insight into the skills of the workforce.

Such processes should not be overly complicated. It is possible for a force to have a good understanding of the skills of its workforce without having a performance development review (PDR) process. Durham Constabulary, for example, now has a PDR process in place, but at the time of our inspection had instead performed a detailed analysis of all roles in the force. The constabulary was able to demonstrate

a rigorous process involving line managers establishing where the skills of postholders fell short of the profile written for the role, and developing a detailed training plan.

However, without robust structures to understand and make use of the skills of officers and staff that are available to forces, police resources are not being used as well as they could be. It is vital for forces to carry out a thorough analysis of the skills of their workforces, to ensure that this information is up to date and to use it to inform deployment.

Collaboration

Working together with other forces and agencies has long been accepted as an important tool for forces to ensure that they are providing more efficient and effective services. Most forces have a range of collaborative work in place, from shared procurement frameworks through to fully joined-up services across all areas, up to and including the chief officer team. As force collaborations become more mature HMIC recognises that, while increased collaborative working is generally positive, forces need to analyse the benefits of collaborating effectively both with other forces and with other agencies, and to make informed and intelligent decisions about collaborative working arrangements.

In 2016, every force was able to demonstrate some form of collaborative work, although in a small number of forces this was limited to long-standing and low-level work with the neighbouring force, with no real understanding of the benefits or purpose behind the collaboration.

Most forces now not only work with other forces in their immediate areas, but also with local authorities, health authorities, fire and rescue services, charities and a range of other organisations. Many forces share premises and even headquarters with other local services.

Other forces have gone further. For example, Northamptonshire Police's shared rural intervention vehicle can be deployed for a wide range of tasks and is used in joint investigations into cases of arson. The force also shares an emergency planning team with the fire service, which plans all civil contingency and preparedness and is based in the fire service's headquarters. North Wales Police has a joint arson prevention unit. In Cambridgeshire Constabulary, the Safer Peterborough Partnership is a multi-agency initiative aimed at improving the efficiency and effectiveness of responding to crime and disorder. There are 60 Cambridgeshire Constabulary staff in the unit, along with 23 other agencies including housing enforcement, social landlords, the troubled families' initiative, the anti-social behaviour (ASB) team and fire officers. This joint approach increases the speed of information exchange and improves the understanding of the range of powers and responsibilities each agency has, which in turn improves problem-solving decisions.

The strongest forces work in partnership, not only to respond to demand, but to ensure demand is dealt with consistently across services and to reduce demand through community crime prevention and early intervention.

Cheshire Constabulary takes part in the 'Altogether Better' programme, which integrates public services to support troubled families and domestic abuse victims. The programme offers a single point of entry to people for triage (initial assessment) and needs assessment services. By exchanging information across a range of partner organisations in Cheshire and responding quickly to changes in circumstances, demand on all agencies is reduced and service provision is improved for victims from the first point of contact. The constabulary also works in partnership with local authorities and schools, with the aim of safeguarding and supporting children and young people who have been involved in, heard or witnessed a domestic abuse incident. Following such an incident, children will often arrive at school distressed, upset, worried and unprepared. Operation Encompass aims to ensure that appropriate school staff are made aware early enough to support children and young people in a way that means they feel safe and included. By working with these organisations, Cheshire Constabulary helps them deal with these issues early, reducing later demand.

Lancashire Constabulary holds 'early action' meetings with a range of public service partners, including local authorities and the health service. These identify those people who access services frequently and set out plans to ensure high quality service is provided as well as reducing future demand. This programme of early intervention work is overseen by the 'early action oversight board', chaired by an assistant chief constable. The force have up-to-date information about reducing resources across other public sector partners working on the early action programme.

While there are some good examples of strong partnership working within and outside policing, there remain a number of missed opportunities. Some areas of joint working have not changed much since last year and some forces have cancelled plans for further collaborative work. In at least one case, this was because the force made an informed decision not to go ahead based on the lack of worthwhile benefits. However, this is not always the reason.

HMIC found that there are still too many examples of forces unable to demonstrate clearly the benefits of their collaborative or partnership working, and which are not taking advantage of potential efficiencies that can be made. In some cases this has led forces into collaborative working arrangements that may have little benefit for the public or for the efficiency of the force, and may actually be causing the force to perform less well. HMIC also observed that collaborative working with other police forces is much less ambitious in large metropolitan forces, where the focus tends to be on jointly buying equipment and services rather than wider joint working.

However, these forces do tend to work more closely with other local public sector organisations. The most notable example of this is Greater Manchester Police, where all public services, including policing, now come under the remit of the interim Mayor. Such examples of growing local devolution appear likely to be an increasing part of policing in the future.

Change management

The last few years have seen a great deal of change in the resources available to, and expectations of, policing. As a result, every police force has started (and in most cases completed) the initial phases of large-scale change programmes. These programmes have been aimed mainly at making savings from existing ways of working. Some forces have undertaken more comprehensive change programmes, fundamentally redesigning the way they provide services. Whatever the scale of change, all forces should have good processes in place to realise the intended benefits of change programmes, and should be monitoring the effect of change on the workforce to avoid negative consequences.

In the last PEEL efficiency inspection, HMIC found that forces' change programmes were focused largely on cost savings, rather than wider benefits for the public and the organisation. This year, HMIC found that a few higher performing forces were able to demonstrate efficiency benefits from previous change programmes. Greater Manchester Police has appointed external consultants to scrutinise the benefits arising from its information systems transformation programme (the provision of mobile data terminals). This has enabled the force to make realistic predictions of £1m per year cash savings and 15 percent efficiency savings. The force also uses customer satisfaction surveys as an indicator to evaluate the effect of change. For example, having identified declining victim satisfaction ratings for overall treatment from officers and staff, the force has introduced customer service training for all staff who come into contact with the public.

Staffordshire Police has a benefits realisation team that monitors all proposed changes and reports to chief officers if the benefits specified in the force's business case are not being realised. For example, the benefits of the force's recent mobile data project are being monitored using geo-location tracking to ensure that police vehicles (and therefore officers) are spending more time out in communities rather than in police stations. The force also uses benefits realisation software to identify potential resource reductions, which has come up with a further £1m in possible savings.

However, the ability of forces to monitor the effect of changes is generally unsophisticated. Many forces focus on whether they have reduced overall costs successfully to meet savings requirements. Provided this is the case, they often are not as prepared to maximise all the benefits of change. HMIC believes this has

contributed to the large number of forces that have failed to improve services by changing the way they provide them. In several cases, new operating models have had significant negative effects on the force's ability to meet demand.

Change, however necessary overall, is likely to have at least some negative effect in the short term, even if that is only when the workforce learns new policies or procedures. However, even short-term changes can have lasting effects on staff wellbeing. Unfortunately, few forces could demonstrate a clear understanding of this. A notable exception is Essex Police, which routinely reviews its change programmes, including how its workforce views changes, in order to understand the effect the changes are having on the force. The transformation board, chaired by the police and crime commissioner, holds the chief constable to account for these changes. However, many forces consider the effect of change on their workforce to be more of a communications challenge – i.e. how do they 'sell' the changes to the workforce, rather than using feedback as a tool to understand whether they have made the right changes. HMIC believes that all forces should monitor the effect of change on their workforce, and we will return to this issue in future inspections.

Planning for the future

Summary

The quality and ambition of the plans that forces have for their future are highly variable. The highest performing forces have a single coherent and ambitious plan for the future that impressively brings together ways of developing the size, skills and background of their workforce, ways of improving their ICT systems, and how they intend to manage continuing financial issues. However, many forces are only able to plan separately for each of these areas and so do not give enough scrutiny to how individual plans are likely to affect each other.

A few forces are making very positive plans that focus on specific areas, such as greater integration with partner organisations (often the fire service) or improved ICT. HMIC found evidence to indicate that some forces have reduced the pace and ambition of their plans since last year, but this may be as a result of the timing of our inspection. Few forces have workforce plans that are particularly innovative. Most forces are recruiting new officers, but with a limited understanding of the skills they need. A number of forces are seeking transferees from other forces to increase the number of their detectives who have experience of working with vulnerable people. HMIC had hoped to see much more innovative use of police staff, PCSOs, special constables and volunteers to bring in new and under-represented skills to the police workforce.

Most forces still plan to make savings this financial year, largely continuing previous change programmes. The majority of forces have made sensible mid-term financial provisions, which reduce the level of concern we raised in our 2015 efficiency report[8] about the financial future of forces. However, HMIC continues to believe that rapid changes in demand and public expectations of policing mean that more work is needed to establish at an earlier stage those forces that could struggle to respond quickly to such swiftly developing significant challenges.

A few forces have very impressive and innovative plans to work with other forces, other emergency services and other agencies in their local areas. A similar number of forces have little ambition to increase their joint working beyond a few disconnected projects, often focused on a specific function such as firearms policing or forensics. A good example is mental health work. HMIC commented last year that the best forces had good joint working relationships with health authorities to cope with demand on services from people with mental health problems. Nearly all forces now have some services in place; the best-performing forces have good access to mental health expertise within their control rooms and on the front line, and are

---

[8] *PEEL: Police efficiency 2015*, HMIC, October 2015. Available from:
www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2015/

therefore able to manage demand more efficiently with health authorities. While this represents positive progress, it will take a sustained effort on the part of both police and other local partners to make sure demand related to mental health is managed appropriately.

A number of forces have impressive projects underway to increase their digital capabilities, such as Staffordshire Police's work with the private sector company Boeing on a range of technology projects including ICT, or South Wales Police's predictive deployment tool discussed above. However, very few forces have a coherent plan to transform the way they provide services using all of their ICT systems. In most cases, forces' ICT was designed to support their existing ways of working, rather than influencing the design of new ways of working. Very few forces are focusing on developing their officers' or staff's digital skills or ensuring that ICT and new technology is at the core of their day-to-day work. A number of forces have struggled to implement new ICT systems.

While forces are aware of the deficiencies in their current ICT systems, and despite the work of the Police ICT Company, too many forces still rely on bespoke outdated ICT systems and continue to invest very significant amounts of money in devices and systems that their ICT infrastructure cannot cope with. HMIC believes that forces must produce clear, mandated ICT network standards within which individual forces can operate flexibly.

HMIC inspected the scope, ambition and practicality of forces' plans and strategies, as well as the extent to which they were integrated in a single planning process. Also, we inspected the extent of and justification for forces' savings and investment plans.

Strategic plans

With ever-changing communities, rapidly improving technology, reducing resources and an evolving new set of skills required of their workforces, forces need strong, realistic and innovative plans to be able to provide efficient and effective policing. HMIC has considered what each force's plans aim to achieve, as well as how realistic forces' assumptions are, how ambitious and innovative their thinking is, how integrated their strategies are and whether they appear likely to meet future challenges.

We have found that the quality and ambition of the plans that forces have for the future are highly variable. Only the highest performing forces can demonstrate that their plans are fully integrated into a comprehensive approach; for example, with ICT plans informing workforce plans and vice versa. Durham Constabulary has considered thoroughly how its future workforce and ICT capabilities will be integrated. The constabulary has an ambitious and comprehensive ICT strategy that

is closely aligned with its workforce and service plans. Investment in ICT will enable the constabulary to carry out work it is already doing more efficiently and improve the way it provides services.

We understand that the timing of our fieldwork will have had an influence on our findings. The May 2016 elections for police and crime commissioners were only a few weeks before our fieldwork began, and so many forces had a new PCC in place and a new police and crime plan was still in development. That will have limited the extent to which forces could plan for the future, although not the extent to which they could start to develop and test assumptions about what the future might hold.

A few forces' plans for the future could be described as transformational or highly innovative, but they are in the minority. Essex Police has innovative plans to reduce their estate through increased use of shared 'hubs' with partner organisations across the county, more mobile technology and a new force website which will enable better digital contact with the public and better management of demand by directing the public to the most appropriate agency. Similarly, Derbyshire Constabulary has innovative plans to reduce the police estate (including more shared premises with the fire service and shared training facilities) and increased use of mobile data devices.

HMIC found that few forces have particularly innovative workforce plans. The nature of the employment of police officers means they tend to be in post much longer than other public or private sector workers, meaning forces need to think about different ways of bringing new skills into a predominantly static workforce. HMIC had hoped to see much more innovative use of PCSOs, special constables and volunteers to bring new skills into the police workforce. Even forces that have recently conducted large-scale recruitment for special constables or PCSOs have not really considered what skills might be needed beyond basic operational skills.

Some forces are thinking about skills in the context of recruiting police officers. Lancashire Constabulary and Wiltshire Police have both recently recruited a number of transferee police officers from other forces, looking for officers with specific skills – such as firearms policing, cyber-crime and safeguarding children – that they knew they were lacking in their existing workforce. Although most forces are now recruiting police officers, very few are taking this skills-based approach. Many forces are focusing their recruitment solely on broadening diversity. While this is certainly an area they should be focused on, forces nonetheless need to understand the skills and expertise that will be needed for effective policing in the future. Too many forces are recruiting officers solely from their existing workforces (PCSOs, special constables and control room staff) rather than opening recruitment up to people with different skills and backgrounds. This has led to a shortage of control room staff in many forces, who are vital for the effective management of demand, when control room staff become police officers and are not able to be replaced.

Some forces' plans appear unlikely to bring about changes that are necessary for the force to run efficiently. This is not a widespread problem, but there are a small number of forces that are unable to meet their current level of demand for services and do not have adequate plans in place to do so in the future. This is, in some cases, exacerbated by the force failing to have sufficient understanding of its demand to know how much of it is not being met. These forces often do not have the capacity to develop coherent or effective change programmes because they are too focused on responding to immediate operational crises, resulting in a potential negative spiral in terms of performance.

While most forces are in a better position than that, too many do not have useful plans, either because they are not ambitious enough in what they are trying to achieve, not sufficiently integrated, or not realistic. Larger forces are able to draw on higher levels of expertise in planning, but also often struggle to implement change quickly and consistently. Smaller forces tend to be more realistic in their ambition, but with more limited resources, they often are not able to be as ambitious as larger forces. Many forces are now trying to build up internal expertise in planning, to enable the establishment of better plans in the future. However, a significant proportion of forces still either do not have the right skills or remain overly dependent on short-term consultancy contracts that focus more on designing new operating models than on implementation.

Saving to invest and investing to save

Police forces have made significant financial savings over the last five years, which has enabled them to reduce their costs and protect frontline policing. They continue to face financial challenges and it is vital that they continue to seek improved efficiencies and reduce costs so that they can not only balance their budgets, but also invest in improving their capability in the future. Forces must find different ways of transforming the way they work, which may include plans to establish joint working arrangements with other organisations or investing in ICT to improve operational efficiency.

HMIC does not underestimate the continued financial challenges that most forces face, and funding reductions elsewhere in the public sector, particularly for local councils, are likely to place greater pressures on policing as a service of last resort. However, the recent funding settlement for policing should enable forces to make sensible investments – in new structures, new systems and new approaches to accommodation – that will enable them to make sustainable spending reductions in the medium to long term, provided they are well planned and managed. Most forces are continuing to make savings this financial year and, as shown below, are planning to reduce surpluses and reserves, effectively carrying out plans that were initiated in England and Wales over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20.

Figure 10: Net addition to/withdrawal from reserves in England and Wales over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20
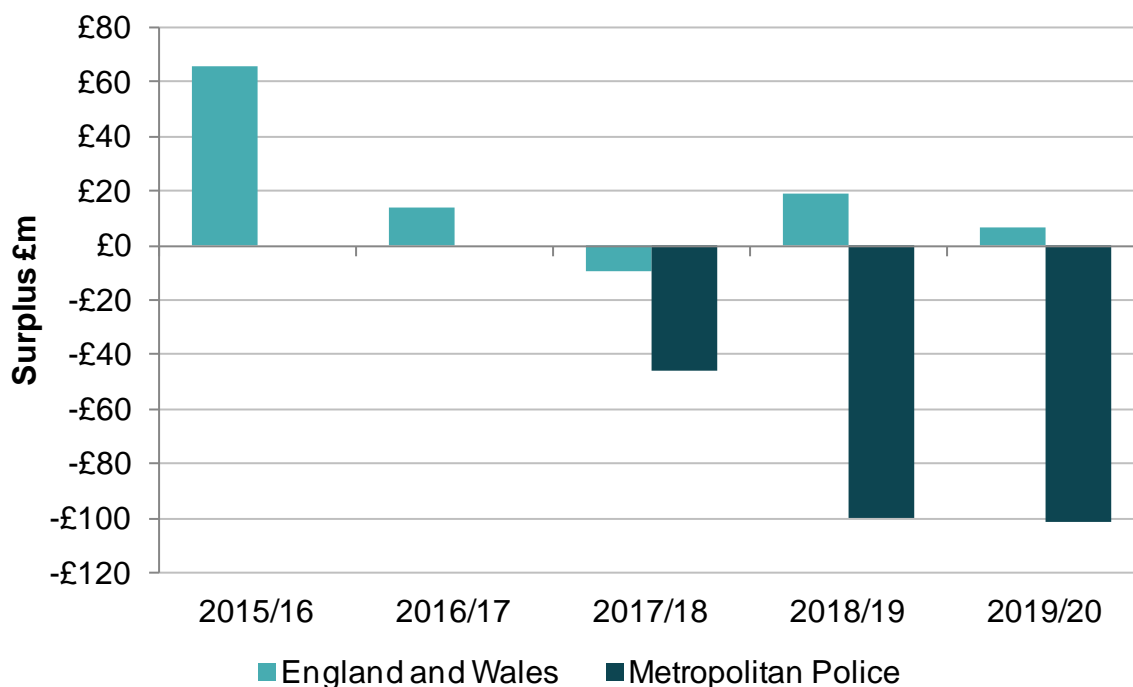
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection
Note: Above £0 equals an addition to reserves while below £0 equals an outstanding budget gap after use of reserves.

Figure 11: Unallocated police reserves as a proportion of gross revenue expenditure 2016/17 (planned) and the Audit Commission suggested benchmark for prudency
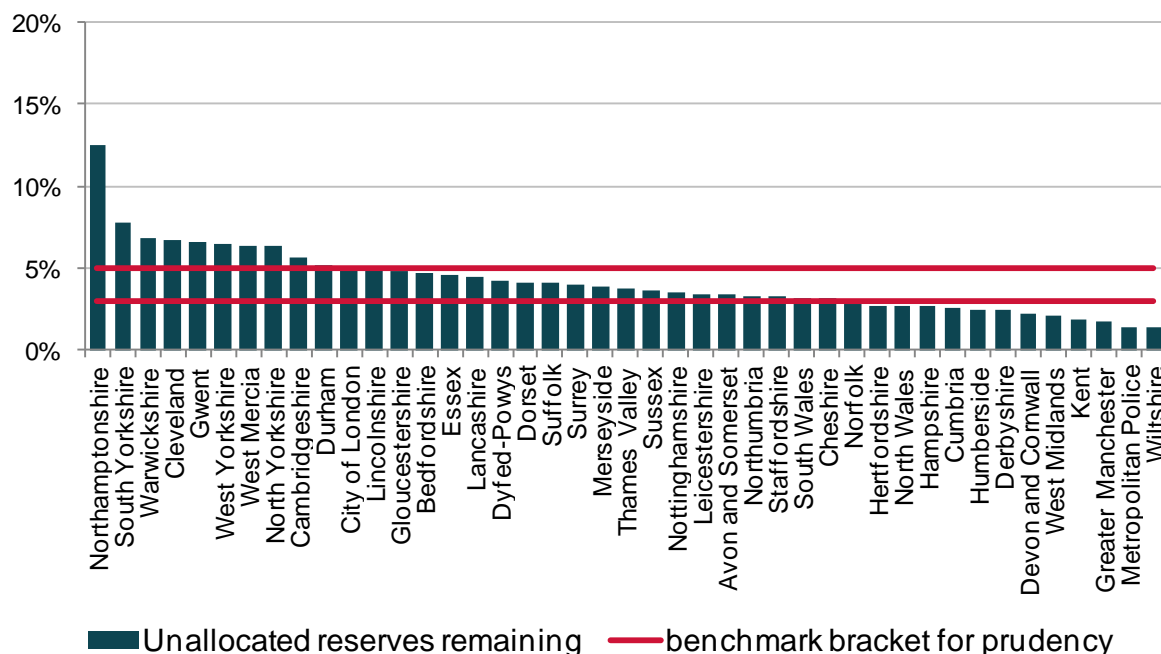
Source: HMIC Efficiency data collection
Note: An Audit Commission survey advised 3 percent to 5 percent of general reserves remaining as a proportion of gross revenue expenditure as a benchmark bracket for prudent financial planning. See annex A for further information.

HMIC recognises that forces face a wide variety of factors, including their relative financial position and levels of demand, that will influence their decisions on what to invest in. Forces that are struggling to meet their current demand will often rightly be focused on dealing with their immediate difficulties rather than seeking to progress complex new systems. It will be important for forces in this position, once they have resolved their immediate issues, to be able to learn quickly from forces in a more advanced position, and they may need greater support from others in policing to do this. Often referred to as 'peer support', this should be an increasingly significant part of how new developments within policing are rapidly and effectively disseminated across different forces.

What is much more variable is the approach that forces are taking to investing the savings they are making. Those forces with limited reserves and that are struggling to meet current demand are focused primarily on recruiting additional officers to meet this demand for services. A number of these forces have made significant and wide-ranging decisions about collaborative working, shared buildings and offices and other services. It is unsurprising that these forces are recruiting additional officers and staff, because many have limited capacity to design or successfully bring about significant change. HMIC is concerned about these forces because there is a chance they will fall further behind other forces and they will need to be able to change rapidly at some point in the future.

The highest performing forces are in a position to invest in areas that should improve their ability to manage demand in the future and are actively doing so in a coherent manner. Durham Constabulary is using technology designed to reduce demand such as electronic tagging, body-worn cameras and mobile data. The constabulary is also exploring income-generation opportunities through the provision of training for overseas forces and the private sector.

Some forces are investing in specific capabilities such as greater integration with partners (often the fire service) or improved ICT, rather than bringing about significant change across their services. Although limited, this still serves a useful purpose because some of these forces are developing best practice that leads the way for others to adopt new processes across policing.

There remain, however, a number of forces that do not fall into either category, and are making no significant investment in transforming the way they provide policing or in any specific capability. Often these are forces with stable finances and a fairly predictable set of demands on their services. These forces are not failing, and they continue to provide an acceptable service to the public and meet the demands placed on them. While HMIC can understand that there can be advantages in waiting for other forces to try new ideas first, it is disappointing that some forces that may be high performing in other areas seem to lack innovation and ambition.

This is especially disappointing in the light of specific funds available to forces to pay for innovative and transformational work. HMIC believes the transformation fund[9] can be best used to develop an increased capability to design and implement change at local and regional levels, particularly in areas that enable best practice such as consistent data standards and improved local and national ICT systems.

Successful bids that are starting to follow this approach include £700,000 for West Yorkshire Police to explore a way to enable a crime scene image (such as a fingerprint or shoe print) to be transmitted digitally from the crime scene to speed up analysis; £4.06m for Norfolk Constabulary to continue to fund action plan co-ordinators and analysts to combat child sexual abuse and exploitation; and £1.5m for Hampshire Constabulary, in collaboration with Surrey, Sussex and Thames Valley police forces, to improve information-sharing through a digital ICT platform. These are positive examples of policing working to reform itself.

Planning to work with others

Some forces have very impressive and innovative plans to work with others, be they with other forces, other emergency services or other agencies in their area. A number of forces, such as Lancashire Constabulary and Northamptonshire Police, intend radically to change their approach to policing through ambitious joint early intervention work with a range of service providers. Although this is in its early stages in both forces, it is very impressive in its scope. Many forces have well-established and mature collaborations with other police forces. Some, such as the East Midlands Special Operations Unit, focus on specific aspects of policy such as serious organised crime, forensics and counter-terrorism. Other forces, such as Warwickshire and West Mercia, and Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire, have 'broad collaborations' that mean the forces effectively work as one organisation in respect of a broad range of functions.

Poorer performing forces, however, have little ambition to increase their joint working beyond a few disconnected projects focused on a specific function such as firearms or forensics. HMIC appreciates that in some areas – particularly in forces covering geographically large areas – joint working is more difficult, but we think that forces that are not ambitious in this are missing opportunities to provide better services at lower cost. Forces would benefit from a clearer central direction and more targeted support about how to form more ambitious alliances with other forces and organisations.

---

[9] *Written Statement to the House of Commons on the Police Grant Report England & Wales 2016/17*, 4 February 2016, HCWS510 Available from: www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-statement/Commons/2016-02-04/HCWS510/

Digital and ICT

Working digitally is necessary for efficient and effective policing. Increasingly, the public expects to be able to access services online, and digital skills are becoming an increasingly important part of police work, not least in the investigation of crime.

In general, policing is less advanced than the private sector in terms of adopting digital technology and working practices. Digital work in policing is too often about exciting technology projects, rather than identifying the best technology to support a fundamental and coherent plan to transform services. Disappointingly, very few forces are developing digital skills in their workforce, and none is taking full advantage of the skills that police staff, PCSOs and special constables and volunteers can bring to forces. Some are using the digital skills of existing volunteers, but none is recruiting volunteers specifically to access these skills.

Similarly, few forces are ensuring that ICT is at the centre of their thinking. Often, ICT departments are disconnected from other parts of the organisation, except when procurement is needed. This means that forces are not giving adequate thought to ICT and other digital solutions in the design of new operating models or workforce and financial strategies. In poorer performing forces, the head of ICT does not feel able to challenge senior officers or staff, resulting in the force procuring devices or systems that are not sustainable or do not easily link into other systems. The strongest heads of ICT play an important role in influencing how a force changes and develops, including making sure that forces have a structured approach to procuring devices and systems.

HMIC drew attention last year to the issue of the deleterious effects of older ICT systems. This remains a significant problem. Too many forces have large numbers of individual, bespoke legacy systems that only a small number of individuals know how to maintain. In order to fix this, forces need to give serious thought to the ICT architecture that they are designing. This is more important, and more difficult, than the effective procurement of individual devices. Continuing to invest very significant amounts of money in devices and systems that their ICT architecture cannot handle is too common.

That does not mean that every police force should have the same ICT system. There is considerable scope for variation, provided that systems can connect to one another and exchange information. However, bespoke solutions tend to be more expensive and the police service as a whole would benefit from having access to a number of 'off-the-shelf' products that would simplify procurement, reduce costs and increase consistency. The Police ICT Company has achieved some positive results with individual suppliers, but currently lacks the mandate and resources to bring about the level of change it would wish to in this area. Equally, the work of the

National Police Chiefs' Council on digital contact with the public, investigations and links to the wider criminal justice system has the potential to help bring about change in this area.

It is essential that police and crime commissioners and chief constables commit to working collaboratively with the Police ICT Company to bring about radical improvements to the use, procurement and role of information technology systems, especially in relation to their interoperability.

Glossary

ASB	anti-social behaviour
anti-social behaviour	conduct that has caused, or is likely to cause, harassment, alarm or distress to any person; conduct capable of causing nuisance or annoyance to a person in relation to that person's occupation of residential premises
capability	ability to carry out a particular function
capacity	resources available to carry out a particular function
central government funding	amount of money police forces receive from the government
chief officer	in police forces outside London: assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable; in the Metropolitan Police Service: commander, deputy assistant commissioner, assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and commissioner; in the City of London Police: commander, assistant commissioner and commissioner; includes a member of staff who holds equivalent status to an officer of these ranks
child sexual exploitation	sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person receives something (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts or money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual acts

collaboration	arrangement under which two or more parties work together in the interests of their greater efficiency or effectiveness in order to achieve common or complementary objectives; collaboration arrangements extend to co-operation between police forces and with other entities in the public, private and voluntary sectors
College of Policing	professional body for policing in England and Wales, established to set standards of professional practice, accredit training providers, promote good practice based on evidence, provide support to police forces and others in connection with the protection of the public and the prevention of crime, and promote ethics, values and standards of integrity in policing; its powers to set standards were conferred by the Police Act 1996 as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; under section 40C, Police Act 1996, the Home Secretary has power to direct the College, requiring it to exercise any statutory function vested in the College, and to carry out such other duties for the purpose of furthering the efficiency, effectiveness or integrity of the police as the Home Secretary specifies
control room	facility in each police force in which call operators answer telephone calls from the public, determine the circumstances of the call and decide the initial response
Crime Survey for England and Wales	quarterly independent survey of crime commissioned by the Office for National Statistics, involving the collection of information about people's experience of crime from several thousand households in England and Wales; formerly known as the British Crime Survey

cyber-crime	offences committed by means of communications technology; these fall into one of two categories: new offences such as offences against computer systems and data, dealt with in the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (for example breaking into computer systems to steal data); and old offences committed using new technology, where networked computers and other devices are used to facilitate the commission of an offence (for example, the transfer of illegal images)
demand	amount and type of service that the public and other organisations require of the police
domestic abuse	incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners, or family members regardless of gender or sexuality; the abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional means
emerging crime	crime that is being identified more regularly, and are rising in prominence and public awareness; the crimes often involve exploiting modern technology and include cyber-crime, child sexual exploitation and identity-related theft
female genital mutilation	defined by the Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003 as where a person "excises, infibulates or otherwise mutilates the whole or any part of a girl's labia majora, labia minora or clitoris" except where that is an registered or trainee medical practitioner or midwife performing "a surgical operation on a girl which is necessary for her physical or mental health, or surgical operation on a girl who

is in any stage of labour, or has just given birth, for purposes connected with the labour or birth"

forced marriage	marriage conducted without the valid consent of one or both parties
FTE	full-time equivalent
full-time equivalent	unit that indicates the workload of a worker in a way which enables comparisons to be made between the workloads of workers engaged in the same and different functions; for example, a full-time equivalent (or FTE) of 1.0 means that the person is equivalent to a full-time worker, whereas an FTE of 0.5 indicates that the worker is part-time (working half the time of a full-time worker in this case)
geo-locational tracking	system that tracks the location of vehicles and/or people
governance	method by which the structures and processes of a force relate to its efficiency and effectiveness, including how well the outcomes of the force's goals are met and overseen
GRE	gross revenue expenditure
gross revenue expenditure	total expenditure for the force
human resources	department responsible for the people in an organisation; its principal functions include: recruitment and hiring of new workers; their training and continuous professional development; and their benefits and performance
ICT system	computer programme or software designed to carry out a specific task
local policing	approach taken by a team of officers, PCSOs, and staff working in neighbourhoods to keep local

	communities safe; the teams often comprise neighbourhood policing teams and response teams, and sometimes investigation teams
national decision model	decision-making model developed by the College of Policing which recognises the need for all police decisions to be consistent with the principles and standards of behaviour in the Code of Ethics; to be used by officers when responding to spontaneous incidents or planned operations
National Police Chiefs' Council	organisation which brings together 43 operationally independent and locally accountable chief constables and their chief officer teams to co-ordinate national operational policing; works closely with the College of Policing, which is responsible for developing professional standards, to develop national approaches on issues such as finance, technology and human resources; replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers on 1 April 2015
national policing lead	senior police officer with responsibility in England and Wales for maintaining and developing standards and guidance for all police forces in respect of a particular area of policing
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
operating model	way in which a police force is organised and the processes it has adopted in order to achieve its objectives
organised crime	serious crime that is planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis; often motivated by financial gain and characterised by violence or the threat of violence

partner organisations/agencies	public sector entities, such as those concerned with health, education, social services and the management of offenders, which from time to time work with the police to attain their common or complementary objectives
partnership	co-operative arrangement between two or more organisations, from any sector, who share responsibility and undertake to use their respective powers and resources to try to achieve a specified common objective
pay savings	amounts of money saved from police officer and staff salaries when roles are abolished or when levels of pay are reduced
performance management	activities which are intended to ensure that goals are being met consistently in an effective and efficient manner; it can focus on the performance of an organisation, a department, employee, or the processes to build a service
police and crime plan	plan prepared by the police and crime commissioner which sets out the police and crime objectives, the policing which the police force is to provide, the financial and other resources which the police and crime commissioner will provide to the chief constable, the means by which the chief constable will report to the police and crime commissioner on the provision of policing, the means by which the chief constable's performance will be measured, the crime and disorder reduction grants which the police and crime commissioner is to make, and the conditions to which such grants are to be made; the police and crime commissioner's police and crime objectives are the objectives for the policing of the area, the reduction of

	crime and disorder in the area, and the discharge by the police force of its national or international functions
police officer	individual with warranted powers of arrest, search and detention who, under the direction of the chief constable, is deployed to uphold the law, protect life and property, maintain and restore the Queen's peace, and pursue and bring offenders to justice
Police ICT Company	public body established to create greater innovation in police information and communications technology, and to provide forces with the best new technologies at the best price
police staff	person employed by a police force and who is not a police officer
priority-based budgeting	technique that allocates an organisation's resources in line with its priorities and enables the organisation to identify opportunities to reduce costs
proactive demand	police work that must be identified by officers and/or staff; crime that would otherwise not come to their attention or is less likely to be reported to the police such as domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation; crime in communities who are more reluctant to trust or work with the police, and work that is passed to the police by other agencies and services
procurement	acquisition of goods or services from an external supplier
reactive demand	police work that requires the police to react, rather than plan, such as 999 calls
reserves	money set aside for specific future costs (e.g. estates) or generally held to meet unforeseen or emergency expenditure

resourcing	arrangements to ensure correct level of officers and staff, funding and any other requirements to provide a particular service
safeguarding	process of protecting vulnerable people from abuse or neglect
special constable	part-time volunteer unpaid police officer appointed under section 27, Police Act 1996 who works with and supports their local police force and, when trained, has the same powers as a regular officer
spending review	process by which HM Treasury sets expenditure of government departments

Annex A – About the data

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data collected to support this efficiency inspection.

Data in the report

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including data published by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 geographic police forces in England and Wales. Where HMIC has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree with forces the design of the data collection, and to verify the data during fieldwork that we have conducted.

The PEEL Efficiency inspection 2016 did not include the British Transport Police so any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data and may therefore differ from Home Office publications.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates. This was the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

Efficiency in numbers

Forecast change in expenditure

These data show the aggregated total estimated gross revenue expenditure (GRE) for all forces in 2016/17 and 2019/20, calculated using total GRE pay and total GRE non-pay budgets provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016), excluding expenditure on the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner.

Forecast savings

These data show aggregated planned savings (including use of reserves to bridge an in-year funding gap) in future years, calculated using the planned savings for pay and non-pay budgets provided to HMIC at the time of the data collection (April 2016). Some forces only provided figures for savings that they had formally signed off at that point, while others provided estimates for the whole period.

Workforce figures (based on full-time equivalents) for 2015/16

These data were obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502 for workforce figures as at 31 March 2016. The data are available from the Home Office's published Police workforce England and Wales statistics (available from www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales), or the Home Office police workforce open data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables). Figures may have been updated since the publication. Workforce includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort), but does not include section 39 staff.

Workforce figures (based on full-time equivalents) for 2019/20

These figures for March 2020 are budget-based projections provided to HMIC by individual forces at the time of data collection (April 2016). Projections are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy. In some instances, therefore, an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force/constabulary is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Workforce and officer costs per head of population

These are obtained from calculations in HMIC Value for Money Profiles 2015, which use the ONS mid-2014 population estimates. The England and Wales averages will differ slightly from the Value for Money Profiles 2015 because we have included City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service.

Calls for assistance

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441.

Recorded crime

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crime-open-data-tables).

Total police-recorded crime includes all crime (excluding fraud offences) recorded by police forces in England and Wales. Home Office publications on the overall volumes and rates of recorded crime include British Transport Police, which is outside the scope of this HMIC inspection. Therefore, England and Wales averages in this report will differ slightly from those published by the Home Office.

Victim satisfaction

Forces are required by the Home Office to conduct satisfaction surveys with specific victim groups. Force victim satisfaction surveys are structured around a number of core questions exploring satisfaction responses across four stages of interactions: initial contact, actions, follow up, treatment plus the whole experience. The data used in this report use the results to the question on the whole experience, which specifically asks: "taking the whole experience into account, are you satisfied, dissatisfied, or neither with the service provided by the police in this case."

England and Wales values are a simple average of 43 force values.

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Index of police funding, workforce and crime from 1995/96 to 2015/16

Historical finance data were obtained from the Home Office, with 2015/16 estimates updated from the 2015 HIMC data collection.

Workforce data were obtained from the Home Office annual data return 502 as at 31st March 2016.

Crime data were obtained from:
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinen glandandwalesappendixtables, Table A1: Trends in CSEW incidents of crime from year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2016.

Figure 4: Savings split between pay and non-pay savings 2016/17 (planned)

These data show aggregated planned savings (including use of reserves to bridge an in-year funding gap) in future years, calculated using the planned savings for pay and non-pay budgets provided to HMIC at the time of the data collection (April 2016). Some forces only provided figures for savings that they had formally signed off at that point, while others provided estimates for the whole period. Therefore a force with only a small savings requirement is not necessarily faced with only a small savings challenge for the future.

Figure 5: Emergency 999 calls recorded by force 12 months to 31 March 2016, per 1,000 population

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441.

Figure 6: Change in emergency 999 calls recorded by force from 2010/11 to 2015/16

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441 covering the years 2010/11 and 2015/16.

Figure 7: Actual and planned workforce change (%) from 2009/10 to 2019/20

Figure 8: Actual and planned changes in workforce full-time equivalent (FTE) from 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2020

Figure 9: Planned change in total police workforce from 2015/16 and 2019/20 by force

The data in figures 7, 8 and 9 use full-time equivalents (FTEs). Figure 8 is rounded to the nearest 100 FTE and therefore may differ slightly from the exact figures quoted within the report. Police staff includes section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort).

Data as at 31 March 2010 and 31 March 2016 are obtained from Home Office annual data return (as set out in the Efficiency in numbers section) which is an 'actual' FTE. Projections for March 2020 are budget based and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy. In some instances, therefore, an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate that a force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Due to the complex and evolving picture of workforce collaboration between forces, not all changes in workforce figures are real in terms of the workforce available. Therefore sharp increases or decreases over time need to be considered with caution as they may simply represent accounting changes related to how staff are allocated within forces, not real changes in staffing levels.

At the time of the inspection, the future financial climate was uncertain. Several forces did not have confirmed/signed-off plans for workforce projections. It is important to note that figures provided are in many instances unconfirmed estimates provided to assist HMIC in our inspection programme and should not be seen as a concrete plan for the future workforce landscape of policing.

Figure 10: Net addition to/withdrawal from reserves in England and Wales over the period 2015/16 to 2019/20

Figure 10 was calculated from data on income and expenditure provided to HMIC at the time of the data collection (April 2016). Total surplus funding is the aggregated totals of force estimates of surplus and budget gaps. Estimated surplus is identified when forces' income (from all sources including use of reserves to bridge budget gaps) is greater than their forecasted expenditure. Estimated budget gaps are identified when forces' income (from all sources including use of reserves to bridge budget gaps) is lower than their forecasted expenditure.

Figure 11: Unallocated police reserves as a proportion of gross revenue expenditure 2016/17 (planned) and the Audit Commission suggested benchmark for prudency

Figure 11 was calculated from data provided on financial reserves provided to HMIC at the time of the data collection (April 2016). Forces were asked to provide their reserves data in the following categories:

- unallocated general reserves – a sum to cushion the impact of unexpected events or smooth uneven cash flows;

- allocated (ear-marked) reserves – these are reserves set aside for specific capital purposes;

- capital receipts reserves – these are proceeds from the sale of assets which can only be used for specific capital purposes; and

- general capital to support future planned capital expenditure.

According to a survey of financial directors conducted by the Audit Commission,[10] it is commonly considered that three percent to five percent of NRE is a prudent level of unallocated general reserves for risk-based planning purposes.

Please note that all categories of reserves for forces are held by the police and crime commissioner, apart from City of London Police and the Metropolitan Police Service, where reserves are held by the City of London Corporation and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) respectively.

---

[10] *Striking a balance: Improving councils' decision making on reserves*, Audit Commission, December 2012. Available from: webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk