



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Responding to austerity

Metropolitan Police Service

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How well does the force provide value for money?

Overall judgment

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has met the requirements of the spending review and has the foundations in place to enable it to meet further future financial pressures.

Good

Summary

The MPS's change programme 'Met Change' has helped the force understand its demands and define its services better.

The force has been through significant structural change during the past two years and has managed to sustain and improve performance in many areas. It has identified increased demands on the organisation as well as a number of potential future risks. These include: the emergence of cyber-enabled crime, the changing demographics of the residential population in London and the impact of high profile historical enquiries.

The force's ability to meet these challenges and provide sustainable services has multiple dependencies. These are continued success of the change programme and the associated plans to improve its technology, the professionalism of its workforce, and rationalising its property estate.

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

Good

The force is on track to meet the requirements of the spending review and is putting in place the changes necessary to enable it to respond to future financial pressures.

In particular, it is considering what is necessary now, in order to prepare itself to meet its expected budget over the next four years.

The successful implementation of the 'Met Change' programme and the estate and information technology strategies are crucial for achieving future financial stability.

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?

Good

The force's ambitious change programme began to alter the way neighbourhood policing is provided in 2013. It is continuing with this programme, changing the way it provides policing locally and across London.

The MPS is experiencing particular challenges in achieving cultural change.

The proportion of police officers on the frontline is growing. The way the force makes use of the expertise and knowledge of volunteers is increasingly important.

The force is achieving the required savings by reducing its pay and non-pay costs; the estates strategy is supporting the change programme and investment in new technology is aimed at reducing costs further, while improving force efficiencies.

To what extent is the force efficient?

Good

HMIC is assured that the MPS is using a range of methods to understand the demand placed on its services and the consequences of that demand e.g., the numbers of staff required for crime investigation.

The MPS has an efficient way of aligning staff to emerging threats and retaining them in critical posts.

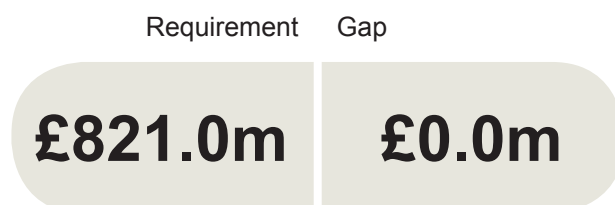
The force has maintained its push to reduce crime and improve victim satisfaction. It is recognised that securing satisfaction from victims of crime in the capital is challenging.

The MPS is introducing ever more innovative means of interacting with the public, ranging from greater use of social media to replacing traditional police station front counters with more flexible drop-in centres.

The force in numbers

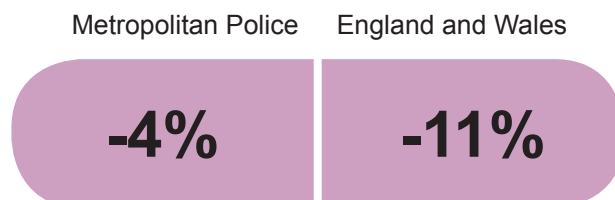
Financial position

The force's savings requirement

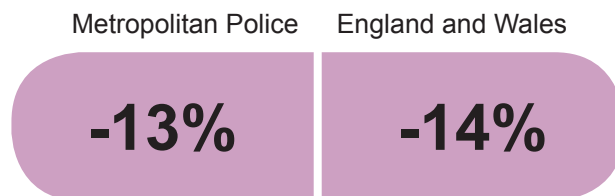


Providing policing

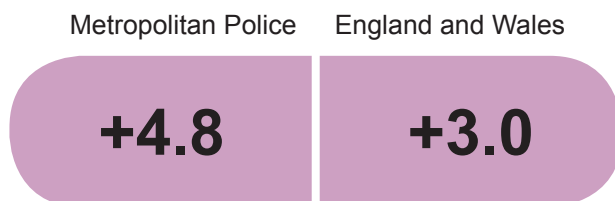
Planned change in police officer numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



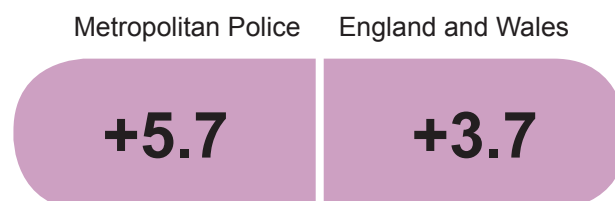
Planned change in total workforce numbers 2010/11 – 2014/15



Planned proportion of police officers on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)



Planned proportion of total workforce on the front line 2014/15 vs 2010/11 (percentage points)





Efficiency

Police officer cost per head of population
2013/14

Metropolitan Police

England and Wales

£195.6**£117.7**

Workforce cost per head of population
2013/14

Metropolitan Police

England and Wales

£270.6**£168.1**

Change in recorded crime
2010/11 – 2013/14

Metropolitan Police

England and Wales

-13%**-14%**

Victim satisfaction 2013/14*

Metropolitan Police

England and Wales

79.9%**85.2%**

*Confidence intervals: $\pm 0.6\%$ for the Metropolitan Police Service; $\pm 0.2\%$ for England and Wales.

Introduction

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20 percent in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces are planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since summer 2011. This report identifies what we found in this, our fourth year.

Our inspection focused on how well the force is achieving value for money. To answer this question we looked at three areas:

- To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position in the short and long term?
- To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?
- To what extent is the force efficient?

During our inspection we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they receive from the police as a result of the cuts, and conducted in-force inspections. We also interviewed, where possible, the chief constable, police and crime commissioner¹ and the chief officer leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force, and held focus groups with staff and other officers.

This provides the findings for the Metropolitan Police Service.

1 For the MPS, the commissioner and the deputy mayor for policing and crime.

To what extent is the force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?

HMIC looked at the savings plans that forces have developed in order to meet the financial challenge of the spending review, and for the year after 2015/16. It is also important that forces look to the future beyond 2016 in their planning, so we also explored how they are starting to prepare for further financial challenges.

Financial challenge

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has identified that it needs to save £821.0m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

As a proportion of its overall budget, this savings requirement of 22 percent is higher than the value for England and Wales. HMIC considers that the MPS faces a particularly difficult challenge.

The force has an annual gross budget of £3.6 billion – more than 25 percent of the total police budget for England and Wales. It is the largest employer in London and the South East of England. It attracts a high central funding contribution but lower local funding than many other forces. This means that central funding cuts have a more significant impact compared to other forces.

The scale of the challenge

The MPS faces a particular challenge because of the scale of the financial savings that must be made. However, there are opportunities to reduce its costs in line with other forces as:

- it spends more per head of population than all other forces in England and Wales;
- it has the highest number of police officers per head of population; and
- the cost of police officers and police staff per head is higher than all other forces in England and Wales.

Savings plans for 2014/15 and 2015/16

The force has a good track record of achieving planned savings. For 2013/14 the force has under spent by around £43.5m. The force successfully made 47 percent (£389.5m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period, despite a period of unprecedented demands in preparing for and policing the London Olympics and Paralympics, and the Queen's Jubilee celebrations.

The force has plans in place to achieve all of the savings needed in 2014/15 (£191.0m) and 2015/16 (£211.8m), with planned use of reserves of £57.1m in 2014/15 and £41.0m

in 2015/16. The police budget is allocated from a medium-term financial plan which has been developed by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC)¹ in conjunction with the force. This includes all of the savings needed in 2014/15 and 2015/16. The MPS is developing other options, should there be slippage in the achievement of savings.

Outlook for 2016 and beyond

While future reductions to central funding beyond 2016 have not been confirmed at this time, should the current approach continue, forces are likely to experience reductions of between three and five percent to their central funding year on year.

The force is putting in place the changes necessary to enable it to respond to future financial pressures. In particular it is considering what is necessary now, in order to prepare it to meet its expected budget over the next four years. It has started to develop financial plans and forecasts based on a range of sensible assumptions about grant reductions, inflation and pay rises; looking beyond the spending review period and extending to 2019/20. The forecast indicates that the savings requirement will increase to approximately £700m by 2019/20. There are some uncertainties within these planning assumptions which may make the savings gap even more challenging. One key area of concern for the force is deeper cuts in particular aspects of its grant funding, for example, the national and international capital city funding and the counter-terrorism grant. Collectively these grants provide 18.9 percent of the force's current operating costs (£665m) and reductions beyond the 6 percent forecast will significantly increase the savings requirements.

Although the force is looking ahead through financial forecasting, it has yet to develop detailed plans on how it will meet these future saving requirements. At present, 57 percent of the force's operating costs are spent on police officer pay, which is a fixed cost to meet the mayoral commitment to retain 31,957 officers. The number of police officers needed to police London beyond 2016 will almost certainly need to be reviewed to meet future savings challenges.

While the financial outlook is looking progressively worse beyond 2015/16, the force's developing digital policing programme is planned to increase productivity and save police officer time. The wider IT strategy, called 'total technology', is one of the main themes within the 'Met Change' plan and if successful, will provide the foundations for future savings through further reductions in police staff in areas with ineffective information systems.

1 Set by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime whose office is known as MOPAC.

Summary



Good

- The force is on track to meet the requirement set out in the spending review. It is putting in place the changes necessary to enable it to respond to future financial pressures.
- In particular, it is considering what is necessary to do now, in order to prepare itself to meet its expected budget over the next four years.
- The successful implementation of the 'Met Change' programme and the strategic planning put in place for the estate and information technology are crucial for future financial stability.

To what extent has the force an affordable way of providing policing?

HMIC looks at how the force is structured to provide policing. We ask if this is affordable as the force responds to its financial challenge. We look at what the force is doing to reduce its costs, how it is protecting officers and staff engaged in fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and how it is making the required changes through its change programme.

How the force provides policing

The MPS is the largest police organisation in England and Wales and has a leading role in national and international policing. It is made up of 32 borough-based operational command units (BOCUs) sharing coterminous boundaries with the London boroughs. It provides policing services for over 8.2 million residents, along with the daily influx of commuters and tourists.

The force is changing how it provides policing through a change programme called 'Met Change'. One of the main elements of change has been the way that the force provides neighbourhood policing, through the development of the new local policing model which was launched in July 2013. This saw an additional 2,600 police officers move from other areas across the organisation into neighbourhood policing roles, and planned allocation of 800 police officers to response roles when the force achieves its target police officer numbers (31,957) in 2015. However, during the spending review period the number of PCSOs is planned to reduced by 2,508.

The local policing teams or safer neighbourhood teams have a role in cutting crime, supporting victims and tackling offending. They are expected to engage with local communities, solve problems of concern with other agencies and their presence is designed to prevent crime. Each ward has a dedicated, named police officer and PCSO. This front line is bolstered with special constables and volunteers; further resources can be brought into the locality as circumstances dictate. These teams are flexible and help to respond to emergencies and other policing requirements across London and also investigate some crimes. In London, if a victim of crime wishes to see a police officer, then an officer will attend.

Volunteers are used extensively across the organisation in areas such as front counters, victim support, CCTV monitoring and other more specialist roles. Each borough has a volunteer manager who is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are used in a purposeful way and integrated into the regular workforce.

Collaboration

HMIC monitors forces' progress on collaboration because it offers the opportunity to provide efficient and effective policing and help achieve savings.

While the MPS works extensively with partners at a local level and across London, as do many large forces, it has not entered into significant collaborative arrangements with other forces or organisations for joint provision of policing services. This is because many of the key drivers for collaboration, for example, making economies of scale, are less relevant to a force the size of the MPS. It is acknowledged however, that many national and international functions, for example, the protection of the royal family, are discharged in conjunction with other forces. HMIC did note some examples of other collaborative activity, for example joint training with local authorities.

In 2014/15 the force expects to spend 6 percent of its net revenue expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11 percent figure for England and Wales. Collaboration is expected to contribute 5 percent of the force's savings requirement, which is lower than the 10 percent figure for England and Wales.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces to look at longer-term transformation which can help maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

The 'Met Change' programme aims to implement the 'One Met Model', which will make neighbourhood policing the foundation of what the MPS does. Local policing is then overlaid with a 'response', 'investigation', and 'specialist policing' service, which is flexible and dynamic and works across London. This will be supported by a streamlined and co-ordinated support function and a new strategic headquarters function. Much of the design work is complete or underway, with the challenge now being about making it happen in practice.

The change programme is designed to meet the MPS's savings targets while cutting crime, improving service and enhancing performance. Its activities include:

- removing officers from non-operational roles and changing the mix of ranks to put more constables on the front line;
- streamlining operational support services;
- providing a quicker response to emergency calls;
- faster processing of prisoners in custody allowing officers to get back out on the streets;
- making the MPS and its services more available to the public; and
- more effective tasking.

The force identified that the main elements of its change programme during the current spending review are structural change in:

- business support;
- operational support;
- protective services;
- local policing; and
- estate rationalisation.

The force identifies that the main elements of its change programme as it responds to future financial pressures will include:

- improved IT;
- supplying officers with mobile data;
- introducing priority-based budgeting;
- outsourcing services or working more with the private sector; and
- improving value through procurement and contract re-negotiation.

How is the force supporting its workforce to manage change and effective service provision?

The new way of providing policing requires significant cultural change within the workforce. HMIC expressed concern about whether this cultural change is able to keep pace with the structural change. The commissioner and the management board have demonstrated significant personal commitment to support cultural change through the introduction of the 'total professionalism' strategy. This is designed to empower leaders, raise standards of ethics and professional behaviour, and to embrace cultural diversity. It is however accepted that this will take time to embed across the organisation.

Throughout the 'Met Change' programme the force has consulted with unions, associations and heads of departments. Updates are provided to staff by the programme leads and the commissioner has held a series of breakfast meetings for staff other communication sessions called 'Met Conversations'. At a local level, each command has nominated a change manager to improve its communications and ensure that key messages have been communicated and understood by staff. The MPS also hold monthly senior leadership events (250); events approximately every four months to the extended leadership team of 700 people; and annual events for sergeants, inspectors and police staff equivalent (8,000 people). This enables the commissioner and management board to speak in person to around 10,000 leaders in the MPS.

The force recognises the impact that structural change has had on its staff and in response is developing a workforce well-being strategy. This is informed through the continued investment in the annual staff survey. The management board has approved the introduction of a leadership framework for the MPS. A small number of BOCUs are being identified to pilot this framework. This is being undertaken in conjunction with work to introduce a new performance framework piloting different approaches to managing performance at a local level.

The force has recently introduced a business change team to ensure readiness for change and to support units through change. A continuous improvement team has been introduced within shared support services. This team examines processes, trains staff in new ways of working and supports the implementation of new processes. The force recognises that progress in this area has been slow because of the need to implement the structural changes first. However it aims to build future efficiencies through listening to staff suggestions and eradicating wasted effort.

How is the force achieving the savings?

Because around 80 percent of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs, it is not surprising that forces across England and Wales, plan to achieve most of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and police staff employed.

However, we do expect forces to also bear down on their other costs (non-pay) such as the equipment they buy, the accommodation and vehicles they use and the contracts they enter for services such as cleaning. The force plans to make 38 percent of its savings from non-pay, which is higher than other forces.

The force has an ambitious estates strategy which aims to use its buildings in a smarter and more agile way. The plan will see the closure and sale of almost a third of the properties owned and managed by the force. Within 2013/14, 91 buildings were vacated and sold, with a few awaiting disposal. At the centre of the plan is the closure of New Scotland Yard, and the relocation of the 3,500 people who currently occupy the site.

The 'Met Change' programme includes plans to invest in new technology and systems with the aim of cutting costs. The force is also becoming more commercially aware of opportunities to increase the value from its procurement of goods and services.

As with other forces most of the savings come from reducing the size of the workforce.

The MPS made an early start on this in 2010 when it slowed its recruitment of new police officers and reduced the number of police staff. The force plans to make 62 percent of its spending review savings requirement from its pay budget. This is a lower proportion than that of other forces.

The following table shows the force's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.

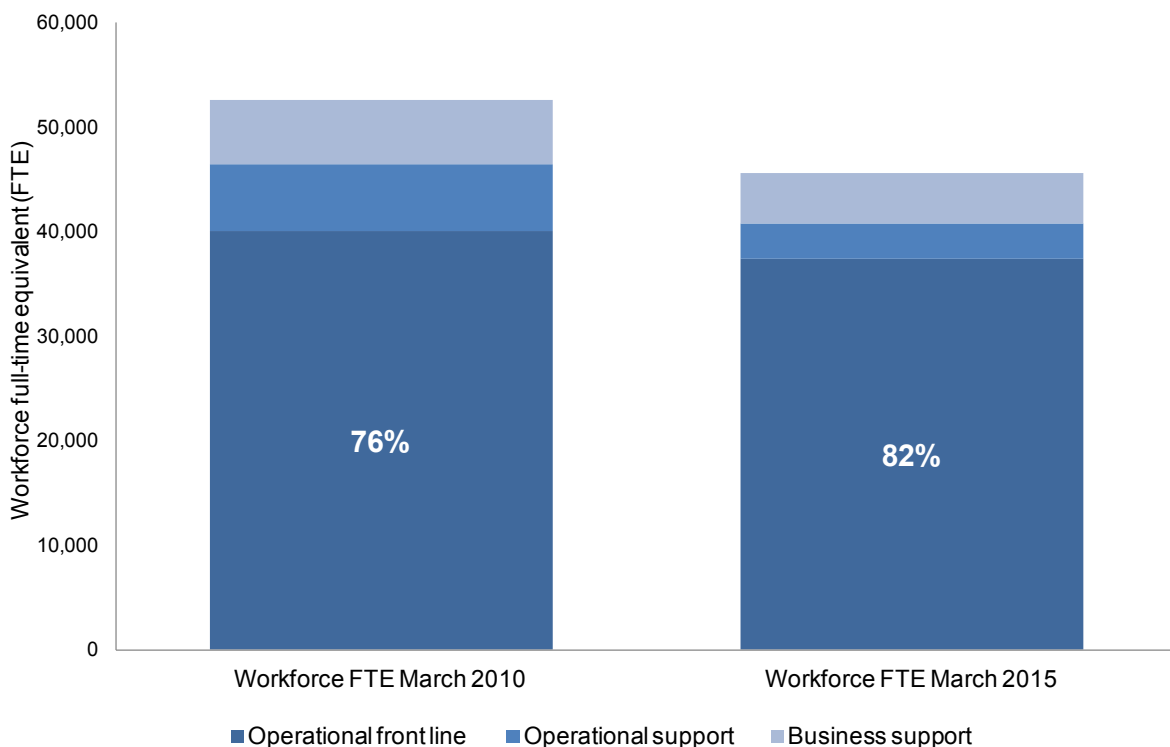
Please note, these figures are rounded.

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Force change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police officers	33,367	31,957	-1,410	-4%	-11%
Police staff	14,504	11,500	-3,004	-21%	-17%
PCSOs	4,645	2,137	-2,508	-54%	-22%
Total	52,515	45,594	-6,921	-13%	-14%
Specials	3,177	5,500	2,323	73%	44%

It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce numbers, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the proportion of people in frontline crime-fighting roles.

HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law.

The following chart shows the planned change in the workforce frontline profile in the MPS.



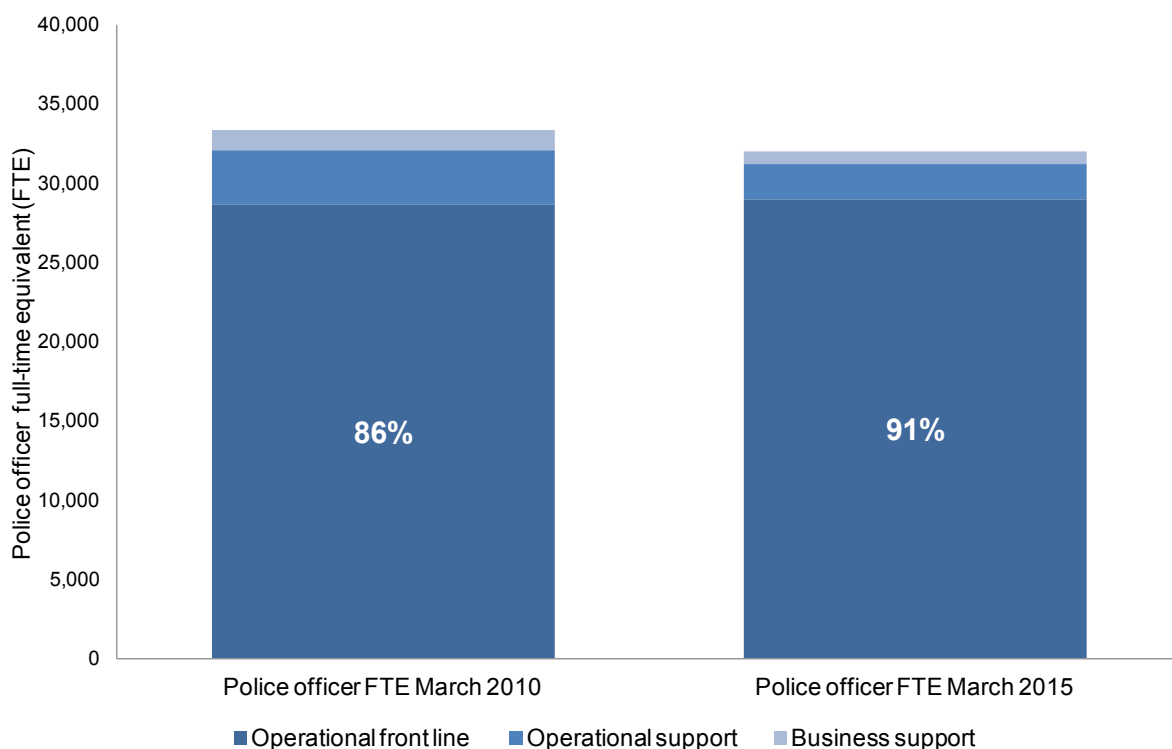
Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of workforce on the front line from 74 percent in March 2010 to 78 percent in March 2015.

The number of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on the front line is projected to reduce by 2,657 between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 40,048 to 37,391).

Over the same period, the proportion of the MPS’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is projected to increase from 76 percent to 82 percent. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74 percent to 78 percent.

The number of the MPS’s police officers in frontline roles is planned to increase by 328 from 28,657 in March 2010 to 28,985 by March 2015, as the following chart shows. The proportion of those remaining on the front line is projected to increase from 86 percent to 91 percent. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89 percent to 92 percent and shows the MPS is successfully protecting frontline crime-fighting roles as it makes these cuts.

The following chart shows the planned change in police officers' frontline profile.



Note: England and Wales reports an increase in the proportion of police officers on the front line from 89 percent in March 2010 to 92 percent in March 2015.

Summary

Good

- The force's ambitious change programme began to change the way neighbourhood policing is provided in 2013.
- It is continuing its structural programme of change, transforming the way it provides policing both locally and across London.
- The force is experiencing particular challenges in achieving cultural change.
- The proportion of police officers on the frontline is growing.
- The way the force makes use of the expertise and knowledge of volunteers is increasingly important.
- The force is achieving the required savings through reducing its pay and non-pay costs; the estates strategy is supporting the change programme and investment in new technology is aimed at reducing costs further, while improving efficiency.

To what extent is the force efficient?

HMIC looks at how the force understands the demands that it faces and how it allocates both financial resources and staff to meet these demands. We look at how these decisions are leading to effective results for the public; in particular, that police are visible and that they attend promptly when called, that they are fighting crime and keeping communities safe, and that victims are satisfied with the service they receive.

How well does the force understand and manage demand?

The force's significant change programme has taken into account its demand, risk, threat and harm. The new way of working has been designed to stop silo working practices and bring the organisation together under the One Met model. This model is being implemented in two phases with a 'challenge process' taking place after the first phase and a further review planned after implementation.

As a part of the change process the MPS has considered where it has its greatest demand and threat and has either created additional capacity to allow for an extended service, or limited its vacancy factor in those areas. Resources have been put in place to provide preventative and problem-solving policing in the form of the local policing teams. It has also considered how to provide effectively its specialist support services across London, by creating a pan-London strand within the 'Met Change' programme which places those resources closer to where they are needed.

How efficiently does the force allocate its resources?

The force has not yet undertaken any evaluation or analysis of the effectiveness of its new way of working. It has been carrying a significant number of vacancies and has yet to be able to put in place the resource plan that was set for the original design. As the new model begins to take effect, teams still have to support the response function and other policing requirements across London. A monthly meeting takes place between deputy assistant commissioners to consider where the greatest risk exists and to ensure that resources are then diverted into that area.

The force is recruiting to meet the mayoral commitment for 31,957 police officers. To ensure that the force has the correct level of supervisors available there is a need to promote or recruit a further 700 sergeants. In support of this process and to ensure mayoral commitments are reached, police officer recruitment has been opened to external candidates.

As a result of the high level of vacancies, resources are being closely monitored through a resource allocation meeting referred to as the 'star chamber' which is responsible for managing all staff postings, including the appointment of agency staff, and a redeployment

of staff displaced through the 'Met Change' programme. The current hiatus caused by the uncertainty of the changes means that there are vacancies throughout business support functions and operational units which are being held for possible redeployment opportunities, and some staff have been posted into new roles but will need time to be trained and to develop an understanding of their new position. The 'star chamber' forum allocates resources on a risk basis and design principles have been set out by the management board to protect critical roles.

Work continues on reducing bureaucracy in the MPS. The current IT provision is, in the main, outdated and does not support efficient ways of working. Information systems across the force are limited by their lack of capacity and integration. The force's new strategy, 'total technology', aims to eliminate obsolete technology and replace it with sustainable and efficient technology for the future. The force is also introducing a more centralised business service which will be responsible for administrative functions across the force.

The 'total technology' programme includes a digital policing project that will equip all frontline officers with mobile technology, mostly through the use of tablet devices and body-worn video cameras.

With over 750 existing systems to manage and over 400 new projects in progress, the work has been divided into seven major programmes requiring a capital investment of £200m over the next three years. It is anticipated that this will achieve year-on-year savings of £68m from 2015/16. It is too early to assess the success of the new IT provision, but HMIC recognises that this a crucial part of changing the way the force works.

How does the force respond and keep its communities safe?

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce their workforce numbers, but also to ensure the choices they make do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to their communities. HMIC looked for evidence that keeping the communities safe is at the heart of the force's decision.

The force has centralised its command and control function. This enables a greater understanding of demand and creates greater consistency in the response to the public. The force has a deployment policy that if a victim of crime wishes to see a police officer, an officer will attend, regardless of the crime type or the potential to solve the crime. It has also introduced a crime recording and investigation bureau to ensure that crime recording standards improve, and that timely decisions are made about allocating crimes for further investigation. The local policing model design was based on a principle that 50 percent of crimes would be allocated to officers for further investigation after they has been reported. However, the force is currently investigating around 60 percent of reported crimes, which is putting additional strain on local resources. The force is working to understand what is

driving the higher than expected numbers and how this can be best managed

The mayor of London, through the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), has set a challenge for the MPS to reduce crime (in seven key neighbourhood crimes) by 20 percent; improve public confidence by 20 percent; and reduce costs by 20 percent.

Crime levels are monitored on a daily basis and formally reviewed, monthly at borough level and quarterly at force level, through a forum called 'crime-fighters'. The cost of policing and levels of crime are reducing but public confidence levels are not on target to meet initiative. The force is aware of the impact of public concern over high profile historical enquiries such as Hillsborough, the Jimmy Savile enquiry and the deployment and behaviour of undercover police officers.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether the MPS was taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. Forces are not required to set response times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls, so information between forces is not comparable.

We found that over the four years since 2010, the MPS had maintained the same target response times of 15 minutes for calls classed as 'emergency' (also known as Grade 1). Over the same period, calls classed as a 'priority' (also known as Grade 2) had a target response time of within 60 minutes.

The following table compares the force's performance in 2010/11 to 2013/14.

Calls for service	2010/11	2013/14
Percentage of emergency calls on target	82	93
Percentage of priority calls on target	89	91

Over the spending review, attendance within target for both emergency and for priority calls has improved.

Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. The commissioner, like chief constables, needs to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter-terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public value seeing visible police officers on patrol on the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local force. HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police in the MPS area.

In 2014, the MPS allocated 50 percent of its police officers to visible roles. This is 6.0 percentage points higher than the number allocated in 2010, but lower than the 50 percent figure for England and Wales.

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs, who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, MPS allocated 53 percent to visible roles. This is 2.2 percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010, but lower than the 60 percent figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹ of the public across England and Wales to assess whether the public had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of the people surveyed in the MPS area, 20 percent said that they had seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago; this compares to 12 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

Furthermore, 78 percent of respondents in the MPS area said they felt safe from crime where they lived, compared to 84 percent of respondents in England and Wales. Finally, 18 percent of respondents in the MPS area said they felt safer from crime than they did two years ago, compared to 9 percent of respondents in England and Wales.

¹ Sample sizes for each force were chosen to produce a confidence interval of no more than ± 6 percent and for England and Wales, no more than ± 1 percent. Forces' differences to the England and Wales value may not be statistically significant.

Crime

In 2010, the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime. Between 2010/11 and 2013/14 (this includes the first three years of the spending review), the MPS reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 13 percent, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales. Over this period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) decreased by 12 percent, compared with a reduction of 14 percent in England and Wales.

Looking just at the last 12 months, recorded crime (excluding fraud) reduced by 6 percent, which is a greater reduction than the 1 percent for England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we get an indication of how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in the MPS area (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2014	Rate per 1,000 population	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
Crimes (excluding fraud)	84.2	61.1
Victim-based crime	73.4	54.3
Sexual offences	1.3	1.1
Burglary	10.3	7.8
Violence against the person	15.5	11.1
ASB incidents	41.3	37.2

It is important that crimes are investigated effectively and the perpetrator brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to identify who has committed a crime, it can be described as a detection. The MPS's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2014 was 23 percent. This is lower than the England and Wales's sanction detection rate of 26 percent.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the Metropolitan Police force area. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator.

Victim satisfaction surveys

An important measure of the impact of changes to service provision for the public is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance.

In the 12 months to March 2014, 79.9 percent (± 0.6 percent) of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by the MPS. This is lower than the England and Wales figure of 85.2 percent (± 0.2 percent).

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services.

The force's estates strategy aims to use buildings in a smarter and more flexible way. Key to the rationalisation of the force's estate is transforming the way that the public access policing services.

Although the number of police stations and front counter have been reduced, 116 contact points have been established. These contact points are where the public can drop in three times a week for face-to-face discussions with a police officer. Some 94 of the contact points are located in MPS buildings while the remainder are on other sites such as hospitals, libraries and shopping centres. These locations have been identified by considering the distance between locations and accessibility to the public. Footfall analysis showed that most enquiry counters within police stations had few visitors and transacted only a limited amount of business.

The impact of station closures is being measured through a range of user surveys which reveal that waiting times, confidence and performance are stable. However the force wants to gather more qualitative information to understand better the user's experience. The efficiency savings from closing police stations have been used for the redeployment of over 300 police officers back on the front line.

Like other forces, the MPS is making use of the internet and social media such as YouTube, Twitter and Facebook to communicate with the public, and is developing different mechanisms for the public to contact the police. To reduce demand on police enquiry desks further, the force is actively promoting online reporting and access to services such as lost property, payment of fines and online appointment bookings.

Summary



Good

- HMIC is assured that the MPS is using a range of methods to understand the demand placed on its services and the consequences of that demand, for example the numbers of staff required for prosecution file preparation and for crime investigation.
- Through the use of a 'star chamber', the MPS has an efficient way to align human resources to emerging threats and retain staff in critical posts.
- The force has maintained its drive on crime reduction and victim satisfaction throughout the spending review period.
- Within this effort, it is recognised that securing the satisfaction of victims of crime in the capital is challenging.
- The MPS is introducing ever more innovative means of interacting with the public ranging from greater use of social media to replacing traditional police station front counters with more flexible drop-in centres.

Our judgments

HMIC uses four categories for making judgments, two are positive and two are negative. The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how well the force achieves value for money, it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the force is achieving value for money is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the force requires improvement in the way it achieves value for money, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the force's provision of value for money is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.