

State of Policing – The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2021

**Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of
Constabulary**

Presented to Parliament pursuant to section 54 of the
Police Act 1996

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Foreword

This is my report to the Secretary of State under section 54(4) of the Police Act 1996. It contains my assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales.

My tenure as Chief Inspector of Constabulary ends on 31 March 2022; this is my ninth and final report. It is based on the inspections we carried out between April 2021 and November 2021.

It has been a privilege to report on the efficiency and effectiveness of policing and law enforcement since 2012 and to discharge my other national duties. I am grateful to my colleagues both in and outside the inspectorate for their support.

This report's structure and purpose

Part 1 contains my assessment of the state of policing in England and Wales. In making my assessment, I have drawn on the inspections we carried out over this period, the findings and reports of other organisations, and other information and analysis available to me. I have included reflections on my nine-year tenure. I have also included commentary on how the efficiency and effectiveness of the inspectorate have been enhanced and how its jurisdiction and independence have been protected.

Part 2 is an overview of our inspection findings between 1 April 2021 and 30 November 2021 and includes a summary of our police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections.

Part 3 contains a full list of our inspections and other work during the period in question.

The results of our individual inspections enable an assessment of the performance of individual forces, and a more general assessment of performance in specific aspects of policing.

I hope that people, including the public, who hold policing to account will draw on the overall conclusions in this report just as much as they draw on the specific conclusions we have reached for each force. I also hope that my wider reflections and observations will prove helpful both to my successor and to those policymakers responsible for securing, maintaining and protecting the inspectorate's independence.

The pandemic and our inspection programme

Since January 2020, when the United Kingdom's first coronavirus cases were identified, the pandemic has been a significant and highly unusual factor in policing. It has also had a profound effect on our inspection programme.

As lockdown restrictions were eased in 2021, we resumed our inspections in a phased and cautious

programme, including on-site activities. Today, the inspectorate makes much more extensive use of video-conferencing facilities, the infrastructure and technology for which have become more readily available and reliable in recent years. In 2021, our inspections have balanced both face-to-face and remote working. They will continue to do so in the future. This is partly so that we can continue to discharge our responsibilities during pandemic-related restrictions on movement and human contact, and partly to realise efficiencies associated with remote working. Our evaluation has shown that many of our inspection methods work just as well remotely as they do on site. But it is important to emphasise that not all elements of inspections can be satisfactorily carried out remotely. Where appropriate, we will continue to visit police stations and police headquarters buildings, interview personnel there, and observe their working practices and the environments in which they operate.

HMI Roy Wilsher

HMI Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM joined us in October 2021. Roy has assumed responsibilities as HMI for the Eastern region, as senior responsible officer for the fire and rescue inspection programme and inspections concerning domestic abuse. He has been most warmly welcomed. Roy brings with him very substantial and valuable experience from the fire and rescue sector, where he was the first chair of the National Fire Chiefs Council.

HMIs past and present

In my period of office as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, which began in 2012, there have been ten holders of the office of Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary.

All have made significant contributions to the advancement of public safety and to the efficiency and effectiveness of the police. I record here my warmest thanks to them for their selfless and tireless dedication to the public interest and the ways in which we have improved the inspectorate to become one almost unrecognisable from the organisation I took over almost ten years ago. They are: Drusilla Sharpling CBE, Roger Baker QPM, Stephen Otter QPM, Zoë Billingham, Mike Cunningham CBE QPM, Matt Parr CB, Phil Gormley QPM, Wendy Williams CBE, Andy Cooke QPM DL and Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM.

Contributions to my assessment

As in previous years, I wrote to chief constables, police and crime commissioners and their equivalents and other interested parties to ask for their views on policing during the year. I am most grateful for the many thoughtful and erudite responses I received.

As usual, we have worked with the other criminal justice inspectorates: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons; Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation; and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate.

We have also benefited enormously from our joint work with the Care Quality Commission, Ofsted, Estyn, Care Inspectorate Wales and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales.

My staff

I should also like to place on record my strong appreciation and warmest thanks to my staff for their loyalty, commitment and hard work over the past nine years. They have performed exceptionally well, and the record of this office is one I am proud to defend, to promote and to say is ours, not mine. Examples of my staff making extraordinary efforts, contributions and sacrifices in the course of their work are too numerous to mention. There are, however, two individuals to whom my greatest appreciation is due.

The first is a Home Office civil servant, Rebecca – known to her colleagues as Becs – Smith. As my private secretary, Becs has been at my side since the day I assumed this office. Her professionalism, dedication and unswerving loyalty are of the highest order and in the finest traditions of the civil service.

The second is chief superintendent Kellie McMillan, who has served as my staff officer while on secondment from the Police Service of Northern Ireland. Kellie's cool head, quiet efficiency and unfailingly sound judgment have surpassed the highest expectations I may have had of any of my staff. I have no doubt that, when she returns to her home force, she will make a substantial

and beneficial difference to the policing of Northern Ireland.

Sir Thomas P Winsor

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Part 1: Overview

Overview

The past ten years have seen many changes in policing, both in its institutions and forces' performance.

In relation to its organisation, in a significant number of respects the changes have probably been more radical than any for a hundred years, when the Police Federation of England and Wales was established following the police strikes of 1919 and the Desborough Committee report led to the reform of police pay in 1920.

Democratic accountability of the police changed with the establishment of local policing bodies (police and crime commissioners and their mayoral equivalents) replacing police authorities. The College of Policing was established as the professional body for the police, replacing the National Policing Improvement Agency and the Central Police Training and Developmental Authority. The National Crime Agency (NCA) replaced the short-lived Serious Organised Crime Agency. The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) replaced the Independent Police Complaints Commission. The Association of Chief Police Officers was replaced by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC). The Home Office took a position of substantial (not, of course, complete) detachment from policing, but

recently has adopted a more interventionist stance. Police pay and conditions of service have undergone more reform than at any time since Desborough. A system of direct entry to higher ranks in policing has been introduced; it is more extensive than the Trenchard system of 1934. The Police Federation of England and Wales has reformed itself. And Her Majesty's Inspectorate has changed a great deal, including with the appointment of the first chief inspector of constabulary who has not served as a police officer, and a majority of the other inspectors of constabulary coming from non-policing backgrounds. The National Policing Board has been established.

In those ten years, there have been many improvements in the things the police do and how they are done. There have been critical advances in several fields of policing, including: domestic abuse; child protection and sensitivity to the needs of the most vulnerable; crime recording; the quality of some investigations; relations with the public; and diversity in policing. Most forces are better at assessing and planning for future demand, and in understanding the capacities and capabilities of their workforces.

However, only perfection is incapable of improvement, and the police are far from perfect; there are things which need to get better. In some regrettable respects, in several forces things have got worse. There remain a number of recurring problematical themes, of which I have written in previous years' *State of Policing* reports.

Some relate to unacceptably wide inconsistencies in performance between police forces. Detection rates in some crime types are very low and have deteriorated. In many respects, the police service, other public services (not only in the criminal justice system) and the Government haven't adequately addressed some of these serious and persistent problems. Therefore, conditions in society generally, and police efficiency and effectiveness, haven't in every respect improved to the extent the public would reasonably expect. Some of these problems are attributable to increases and changes in demand, reductions in police numbers (now being reversed) and financial constraints. Some are attributable to failures in forces to become sufficiently efficient.

It is also disappointing that two years after it was committed to, the Government still has taken no apparent steps to establish the promised Royal Commission on Criminal Justice.¹ I fear that this will not now happen in the present Parliament, but it should. Later in this report, I explain why.

There is one aspect of policing which is in need of no reform. That is the courage and commitment of police officers when faced with danger, sometimes extreme peril to themselves and those they are sworn to protect. These qualities are prevalent and commendable.

¹ See: [Hansard HL Deb 9 November 2020, vol 807, col 798](#).

For extensive evidence of the selflessness and bravery of police officers, one need look no further than the [National Police Bravery Awards](#), hosted by the Police Federation. [In 2021](#), the citations that accompanied each of the nominations provided irrefutable evidence of the dangers and risks that police officers unhesitatingly confront. They included:

- tackling violent offenders armed with various weapons, including firearms, knives and, in one case, a Samurai sword which had just been used to kill a man;
- entering cold, fast-flowing rivers to rescue people;
- saving people doused in petrol, at least one of whom was alight;
- on busy roads, pulling drunk and drugged people from the paths of oncoming traffic;
- rescuing people from submerged vehicles and burning buildings;
- confronting a marauding terrorist;
- an off-duty, lone female officer confronting a group of drunk and aggressive men on a train; and
- two officers who risked their lives when trying to stop a dangerous animal from attacking its owners; a father and son were killed but the officers' actions were credited with saving the lives of the mother and daughter.

In some instances, officers dealing with these cases sustained serious injuries including knife and gunshot wounds.

It must also and always be recognised that police officers and staff must endure and cope with severe stresses that come not only from the pressure of the job and the workload, but also from the most appalling things officers must face in their working lives. I do not only mean the angry and dangerous man, armed with a weapon; or the reckless or even murderous driver of a vehicle; or the person in mental health crisis, endangering his or her own life or the lives of people nearby. I also mean serious road traffic collisions; sudden deaths and suicides, sometimes of young people; people who have died in fires or by violence of all kinds. The person who died alone, whose body was not found for a long time; the death of a baby; the most unspeakable crimes against children; the list goes on and on. The welfare of officers and staff in police forces is of very great importance. These things have profound and lifelong effects on the police officers and staff who have to deal with them. It is inevitable that they will take those experiences home, and they will live with them for ever. And these experiences affect their families as they must cope too.

Police officers – be they regular, paid officers or volunteer, special constables – deserve our profound gratitude for their courage and commitment.

Primary purpose: justice and prevention

Justice is the people's business. Its quality – both in its processes and results – is a measure of our civilisation, and a material distinguishing characteristic of our system in comparison with those of many other countries, where justice remains elusive or doesn't exist at all.

Article 40 of Magna Carta 1215 provides: "To no one will we sell, to no one will we refuse or delay, right or justice." Our system is – and for many years has been – one of public justice. Everyone – no matter what he or she is alleged to have done – is entitled to justice, to face his or her accusers, to know which published laws he or she is said to have broken, and to require prosecutors in public view to produce the evidence of his or her guilt. He or she is entitled to have that evidence tested and evaluated in an impartial tribunal according to objectively fair and certain, published criteria and procedures. Only in the narrowest and most exceptional cases can there ever be qualifications on those rights, and those qualifications themselves must be hedged with strong safeguards to ensure fairness.

Because the liberty of the individual and the safety of the community are at stake, it is in criminal justice where the highest standards, the greatest exertions to ensure justice, are necessary. And it should be remembered that prosecutions are brought in the name

of the Crown – the community – not the victim.² That is because justice in a particular case is of importance to the whole community, not only to those most closely involved with or affected by that offence.

Those imperatives exist not only to ensure justice in the particular case; they hold good because the quality of public criminal justice establishes standards which affect the whole community – victims, witnesses, those accused of offences and everyone else – and is a public declaration and demonstration of what society will and will not tolerate. The quality of public justice is a matter of the greatest concern to everyone, because conspicuous failures can establish precedents which corrode the fabric of justice and may eventually lead to its destruction. Thomas Paine summarised it this way: “He that would make his own liberty secure must guard even his enemy from oppression; for if he violates this duty he establishes a precedent that will reach to

² In our inspection reports and other published documents, we often refer to ‘victims’ of crime. In very many cases, the people in question are victims and offences have been committed against them, and the position is clear. However, and depending on context, it must be understood that when we use this term in relation to circumstances where it has not been established that an offence has been committed, or who is the person against whom an offence was committed, we are referring to the person who (a) says he or she is the person against whom that offence was or may be committed; or (b) is said or considered by another person to be the person against whom that offence was or may be committed.

In using the term ‘victim’, there is no suggestion that the fundamental criminal justice principle of the presumption of innocence of a suspect or accused person is being disregarded.

himself.”³ Everyone has a right to a fair trial, whatever the abhorrent nature of the crime of which he or she stands accused. Justice is absolute, and the right of every person. Since justice is fairness, the right to be treated fairly by the community, including in the enforcement of the criminal law by its chosen instruments – police officers and other law enforcement officials – is essential. The British model of policing by consent requires not only fair treatment, but conspicuously fair treatment, including courtesy and respect for the citizen.

Justice is an essential part in the maintenance of peace, order and security, itself one of the oldest functions of civil society. The prevention of crime and the successful, timely and efficient apprehension and conviction of criminals, their humane treatment and effective rehabilitation, therefore rank among the highest obligations of the state. The lack of efficient and effective policing – visible and otherwise – would imperil public safety and diminish the reach and quality of public justice. The police are therefore one of the most essential of our public services.

The founder of the modern police service, Sir Robert Peel, established nine principles for the police in London. These principles – set out in [Annex C](#) to this report – hold good and apply today in all police forces in the United Kingdom. They have also been adopted in a number of other countries. At their heart is the ancient

³ *Dissertation on First Principles of Government*, Thomas Paine, 1795.

principle that it is the obligation of every citizen to maintain order in his or her community, to prevent and suppress crime and to pursue and bring to public justice those who break the criminal law. Unlike the police of many other countries, our police service is not the coercive instrument of the executive government, there to carry out the will of that government. In such cases, most citizens live in fear of the police, who are very much a paramilitary force operating to control rather than serve the public, set apart from and placed above the public, and operating according to directions from politicians and government officials. The British model of policing is fundamentally different. Its roots and authority are different; they are in and of the community from which its officers come and of which they always remain part. The allegiance of every constable is to the community, represented by the Crown, and to the law, established by Parliament and the courts and enforced by an independent judiciary. Peel's principles acknowledge this:

“The power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect [...] To secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing cooperation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws [...] [The police must] maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that

the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence [...] [It should be recognised] always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.”

The primary purpose of the police is the prevention of crime. Virtually all of the costs of the criminal justice system are incurred downstream of the commission of an offence. In policing and criminal justice, prevention is far better than cure. It is therefore extremely important that the first obligation of the police, in preventing crime, is given the attention and resources required.

It should also be acknowledged that crime prevention is not the sole obligation of the police; it is the obligation of every citizen. The police sit at the nexus of intractable social problems and high public expectations.

The prevention and suppression of crime and disorder is a duty also incumbent upon the public and the other agencies and emanations of communities and the state. Parents and families, as well as schools and other educational institutions, must instil in children a strong appreciation of right and wrong, and the reality, instincts and inclinations, motivations and means to behave as responsible, law-abiding citizens, and not to be drawn into disorder, crime or the circumstances which create and intensify the conditions in which crime is the easiest

and most attractive option. Prevention is also an obligation of health professionals, particularly in the field of mental health where undiagnosed or untreated illness can, as we know, lead to the commission of serious violent crime.

A number of studies have shown that, in very many cases, offending behaviour and mental ill health go hand in hand. In each of my preceding eight annual assessments, I have mentioned the increased demand on policing created by inadequacies in the provision of mental health services. Despite these repeated warnings, in a 2021 joint inspection with the other criminal justice and healthcare inspectorates, we found a shortage of good-quality mental health service provision and unacceptable delays in accessing it. These delays have worsened during the pandemic. That report also said that approximately a third of people who find themselves in police custody have mental ill health, as do 48 percent of men and 70 percent of women in prison.⁴

These statistics speak for themselves. Although the police's primary purpose is the prevention of crime, in cases where mental ill health is an appreciable factor, it would be unrealistic to expect the police to make significant progress as long as the public provision of

⁴ [*A joint thematic inspection of the criminal justice journey for individuals with mental health needs and disorders*](#), Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, Care Quality Commission and Healthcare Wales Arolygiaeth Gofal Iechyd Cymru, 17 November 2021.

treatment for mental ill health continues to be chronically insufficient.

Drug and alcohol addiction are also closely linked to mental ill health.

As I explained in more detail in [*State of Policing 2017*](#), the roots of all these problems often lie in adverse childhood experiences; some children who grow up in abusive environments struggle to cope in adulthood. Only significant and far-reaching changes in the approach of policymakers will achieve the improvements needed to better protect children. What is more, such changes will be substantially the only effective means to reduce the prevalence of domestic, physical and sexual abuse, reduce violence, and reduce organised crime and drug and alcohol addiction which begin or take hold in childhood. If these changes were ever to be made, they would have a profoundly beneficial effect on what the police are expected to do. As Frederick Douglass, a prominent 19th century American statesman, famously said: “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men”.

The other parts of the criminal justice system, namely the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), the judiciary, the prison service and probation, have material parts to play in ensuring that offenders are prosecuted, receive appropriate sentences which meet the combined purposes of punishment, public protection and

rehabilitation, and that the probabilities of reoffending are kept to the irreducible minimum.

The criminal justice system is of course concerned with the consequences of the failure to prevent crime. The causes of crime are many. They include: social dysfunctionality; families in crisis; the failings of parents and communities; the disintegration of deference and respect for authority; alcohol; drugs; a misplaced and unjustified desire or determination to exert power over others; envy; greed; materialism; the corrosive effects of readily available hardcore pornography; and the suppression of instincts of revulsion to violence through the conditioning effect of exposure to distasteful and extreme video games and films. Unsurprisingly, there is no definitive list that police forces could use when considering how best to construct crime prevention plans. As I have said, it should also be borne in mind that many people who offend today were victims of abuse or neglect when they were much younger. A significant proportion of inmates in British prisons have low levels of literacy and numeracy, and receive little or no education in prison.

And some people are just selfish, greedy or wicked.

A great deal of the most valuable work in crime prevention is done by organisations such as the [Early Intervention Foundation](#). This organisation helps local entities use the best available evidence to intervene with troubled and chaotic families and individuals. It tries to give them stability and purpose in their lives to

divert them from the temptations of crime or the downward spiral to offending.

Police and crime commissioners have considerable power and influence in this respect, including the power to provide funding for worthwhile activities to occupy young people and so divert them from crime and the temptations of crime.

Sir Kenneth Newman, when Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, rightly insisted that: “Crime is a problem for society as a whole; it is too important to be left to the police alone.”⁵ There are many agencies of the state which have responsibility in this respect, and they are joined by organisations in the private and voluntary sectors, including those responsible for the provision of support and assistance to victims of crime.

Crime statistics – whether they show increases or falls – matter little to the victims of crime, many of whom suffer terribly. A single murder usually has multiple victims, because the family, friends and others close to the person who has been killed suffer for all of their lives. The loss of someone in these circumstances can – and very frequently does – have corrosive, life-changing effects which can last for very many years and spread to harm relationships and people’s capacity to form relationships. Theirs too are life sentences, and can reach down generations. The same is just as true of other violent crimes, in particular crimes of a sexual

⁵ *Annual Report of the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis*, Sir Kenneth Newman QPM, 1986.

nature and crimes against children and other vulnerable people. The sufferings of victims blight and often shorten lives. And property crime, particularly burglary, robbery and fraud, also has long-lasting and profound adverse effects on victims and others; fears as to the sanctity of a home, or the safety of going out, can be severe and last a very long time, well after the offender, if caught and imprisoned, has been released, often to do it again.

While the police may be effective and efficient in bringing some offenders to justice, some very material concerns remain over the low numbers of investigative outcomes for many crime types. It is therefore important that the police get upstream of offences, and intensify their efforts to prevent crime, in partnership with the other agencies and emanations of the state and the public.

Given the significant interdependency of the different agencies and institutions concerned with the prevention of crime, it is undeniable that appreciable limitations on the resources available to them have consequential adverse effects on the efficiency and effectiveness of the police. However, it must always be remembered that, once a crime has been committed, it is the police who bear the responsibility of investigating the crime, apprehending the offender and taking the case to the appropriate point in the criminal justice system. It is unjustifiable for any police force to decline to attend at

and properly investigate crimes of a serious nature, such as burglary or domestic abuse.

Moreover, the trust and responsibility which the community has given to the police go much further than an expectation that the police will react to reports of crime. Many crimes are unreported, sometimes because victims are vulnerable or otherwise afraid. Examples include domestic abuse, sexual offences⁶ and offences against children. They also include crimes taking place within communities whose cultures may sometimes regard their traditions and ancient practices, including concepts of honour, as superior to the criminal law. In all these cases, barriers of one kind or another exist. It is the responsibility of the police proactively to look for these crimes, and to devise and implement measures to increase the confidence of victims in reporting crimes and giving evidence, and to persuade those who erect and maintain those barriers that they will be pursued and prosecuted.

Those who knowingly and deliberately create or tolerate the conditions in which crimes are committed and victims are isolated from protection and justice should be given the most potent grounds to fear the criminal law, operated and applied vigorously by the law enforcement institutions of the state. Reactive policing is only a part of the function of the police; chief constables, police and crime commissioners and others

⁶ Fewer than one in six victims of rape or assault by penetration report the crime to the police. See: [Crime in England and Wales](#), Office for National Statistics.

should never dismiss or disregard the imperative of keeping everyone safe, especially the silent, the fearful and the weak.

It is essential that the criminal justice system never forgets that, when an offence has been committed, a victim has almost always been created. It is important that the police, and the other agencies of the criminal justice system and entities associated with it, discharge their obligations of compassionate and sensitive engagement in communication with the victims of crime, to rebuild their trust and faith in their safety and security, and the common obligations of their fellow citizens to use their strength to help those with a deficit in it, particularly at times of vulnerability and crisis.

Law enforcement, not law creation

The law – criminal and civil – is made by Parliament in primary legislation, by ministers in delegated legislation authorised by Acts of Parliament, and by the courts in the development of the common law. In no part of our constitution is there a right of a chief constable – or any police officer – to declare or create a new criminal offence in his or her police area.

Moreover, in this country, which operates under the rule of law, there is no such thing as a thought crime. Hatred of a particular person or persons with certain characteristics is not, of itself, a crime. Hatred is an attitude of mind. There is undoubtedly a case for a hatred of a member of a particular group to be an

aggravating factor in the commission of an offence – for example stalking, harassment or violence – and upon conviction for that to be duly reflected in a sentencing decision. In some cases, it already is. But hating someone or something is not criminal.

It is not appropriate for senior police officers, serving or retired, to assert a right of the police to declare anything criminal, least of all what people may think. They have no legal power to create criminal offences in their police areas or anywhere else. It is important that no-one is misled: the police enforce the law, they do not make it.

The state of the criminal justice system

All my *State of Policing* reports have included references to the criminal justice system, of which the police form an important part. In [*State of Policing 2018*](#), I described the system as dysfunctional and defective in some respects. I noted that, largely because of perilous, unsafe conditions in prisons and insufficient provision for rehabilitation, many people become trapped in a cycle of offending, conviction, punishment, release and reoffending.

I made those observations some six months before the first COVID-19 cases emerged in the United Kingdom.

The pandemic materially and adversely affected the operation of the criminal justice system. In a joint inspection report in January 2021, my fellow criminal justice chief inspectors and I praised the determined

efforts and commitment of all those who work in the system and the swift and effective decisions they made.

We also expressed grave concerns that the cumulative impact of the sheer number of changes – large and small – prompted by COVID-19 would prove deleterious to victims, witnesses and defendants alike.⁷

Delays in the system

In particular, we sounded warnings about the extent of backlogs in the Crown Court. And in the months that followed, the position deteriorated. At the end of June 2021, the number of cases awaiting Crown Court trial was the highest it had been for almost a decade.⁸

This high volume of cases, with finite court capacity to hear them, creates unacceptable delays in the system. It was recently announced that magistrates are to be given increased sentencing powers to reduce pressure on Crown Courts.⁹ It remains to be seen whether that will improve the quality of justice.

In January 2022, it was reported that criminal prosecution delays hit a record average of 708 days.¹⁰

⁷ [Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System](#), Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 19 January 2021, p5.

⁸ Source: [Criminal court statistics quarterly: April to June 2021](#), Ministry of Justice, 30 September 2021.

⁹ [Magistrates' Courts given more power to tackle backlog](#), Ministry of Justice, HM Courts & Tribunals Service, and the Rt Hon Dominic Raab, 18 January 2022.

¹⁰ [Criminal prosecution delays hit record 708 days](#), BBC News, 20 January 2022.

Delays take a heavy toll on everyone involved in a case. In these respects at least, justice is failed.

The investigation and prosecution of rape allegations

The statistics also include rape, an offence with a consistently low conviction rate. Defendants accused of rape or serious sexual offences are typically more likely to plead not guilty compared with those accused of other offences.¹¹ It is difficult to comprehend the intensely stressful effects of protracted delays in the system on rape complainants and those accused of rape while their cases await trial.

In July 2021, we and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate published the first of two joint inspection reports on the police and the CPS's response to allegations of rape. While we found examples of effective individuals and teams in every force and CPS area, the criminal justice system's response to such allegations too often lacked focus, clarity and commitment. We also found that it failed to put victims at the heart of building strong cases. This is despite the national focus by the Government, policing and the CPS on improving outcomes in such cases. There needs to be an urgent, profound and fundamental shift in how rape cases are investigated and prosecuted.

¹¹ [*Reducing the backlog in criminal courts*](#), National Audit Office, HC 732, 22 October 2021, p7.

Criminal defence

The criminal justice system is imperilled in another way. A July 2021 House of Commons Justice Committee report described the legal aid system as in urgent need of reform.¹²

Echoing earlier concerns raised by the Law Society,¹³ the report warns that some professions central to the application of timely justice are hollowing out because of legal aid cuts. Law firms are having difficulty in recruiting and retaining lawyers, with many leaving to join the CPS. Fewer barristers are able to build their careers through publicly funded work, and the opportunities for sufficient cross-subsidisation from private work are diminishing.

Without a sustainable publicly funded criminal defence profession, suspects and defendants will not have access to high-quality legal support that justice demands.

Moreover, it is manifestly unjust for acquitted defendants to face financial ruin because the state has impugned their innocence and put them through the stress and high expense of an investigation and trial.

¹² [*The Future of Legal Aid: Third Report of Session 2021–22*](#), House of Commons Justice Committee, HC 70, 27 July 2021.

¹³ [Immediate action needed to save the justice system](#), The Law Society, 16 June 2020.

Local accountability

Democratic accountability of the police did not begin in 2012, when police and crime commissioners replaced police authorities. The police have never been unaccountable. They are accountable primarily to the law, and must discharge their common law and statutory obligations to enforce the law without preference, fear or favour. The volume of civil litigation against the police is testament to the extent to which the courts are regularly required to delimit the liability of the police to the public, and to explain their constitutional position. It is a healthy part of a mature democracy.

Parliament has established additional lines of accountability. Locally, that is primarily in the hands of the police and crime commissioner or, in some areas, the mayor. Overall responsibility for police policy and much else is in the hands of the Home Secretary.

In discharging the many obligations on him or her, the chief constable must have regard to the police and crime plan of the police and crime commissioner, and take reasonable steps to assist the police and crime commissioner in the exercise of the commissioner's functions. In the police and crime plan, the police and crime commissioner establishes local priorities. He or she also sets the budget and appoints and, after due process, may dismiss the chief constable. Dismissal is broadly on the grounds of lack of trust and confidence or significantly poor efficiency and effectiveness.

These powers of the police and crime commissioner do not constitute the chief constable as the agent or servant of the police and crime commissioner; their relationship is not one of superior and supplicant. Their constitutional positions are complementary; they are reasonably clearly established in statute and the decisions of the courts. Even so, too many chief constables appear to have a lack of confidence in the position and the resilience of the boundary between democratic accountability established in legislation, and the extent of their operational independence. This is so, even though operational independence is insisted upon in legislation and in the oath of the police and crime commissioner. I explained this more fully in [State of Policing 2020](#).

Before the 2021 elections of police and crime commissioners, in some parts of the country there was an atmosphere of mistrust and fear, especially among chief constables whose fixed term contracts did not take them to full pension entitlement. Some police and crime commissioners were considered to be abusing their powers, whether consciously or otherwise. Some appeared, even then, to believe that their police and crime plans were orders for the chief, and were thought to apply improper pressure to see that they were carried out. Uncertain of their true constitutional positions, or believing that it would be too hard to defend and protect against a determined and impatient politician, the deference and obedience demanded of chiefs sometimes were yielded. Resistance was

thought to be potentially at too high cost to the chief. I emphasise that this was in a minority of cases, but any such minority is too large.

Whereas the constitutional positions of police and politicians should be clear and respected, these difficulties in the past sometimes rendered the commissioner-chief relationship brittle and liable to fracture. Sometimes it did. That is not in the public interest.

Although most of the weakest police and crime commissioners and those who were thought to have disregarded the limitations on their powers are no longer in office, the potential for constitutional dissonance remains. If there are recurrences of these problems, sooner or later there will be a significant case of judicial review concerning the true limits of the powers of the police and crime commissioner and the constitutional position of the chief constable.

When these problems come about, regrettably the energies and attentions of the chief officer team can be materially distracted to the detriment of the efficiency and effectiveness of the force. This is the opposite of what the law requires and the public needs.

The Home Office should use its powers and influence to provide much greater guidance to police and crime commissioners and chiefs about the constitutional positions of each, and ideally should do so before investing police and crime commissioners with

more powers. I am sure that both police and crime commissioners and chiefs would welcome this.

There is also a strong case for difficulties of this kind to be mediated at an early stage, so far as possible to defuse tensions and restore what Parliament intended to be a harmonious and respectful relationship of trust and confidence between police and politician.

While always capable of improvement, the current local accountability model has considerable strengths and advantages. Police and crime commissioners have had many commendable successes when their relationships with chiefs have been good, and in these cases the public interest has been well served. These benefits need to be protected and intensified, not risked.

Culture and behaviour

The vast majority of the men and women who work as police officers and staff consistently adhere to the highest levels of propriety that the job requires and the public rightly expect. However, not all officers do. Each year, a small number of individuals are dismissed having been found to have committed gross misconduct. Such misconduct may involve matters such as dishonesty, incivility, undue levels of aggression, or abuse of position for a sexual purpose.

Recent reports – including from the IOPC¹⁴ – have contained highly alarming evidence of toxic behaviour and attitudes among some police officers. It is undeniable that almost all police officers and staff are furious about these things, and would be the first to say that such people should be immediately disgraced and expelled from the police service. Public confidence in the police is more than precious, it is essential. The police – our fellow citizens, members of and drawn from communities – depend on public trust and co-operation. When that trust is damaged by cases of flagrant violations, it is essential that public reassurance in the integrity and professionalism of the police is restored and reaffirmed as quickly as possible. The public can and must trust the police.

In this respect, no case stands out more than the 2021 case of the latterly dismissed police constable who murdered Sarah Everard. Abusing his authority as a police officer, he abducted, raped and murdered her. The horrifying facts that slowly emerged following Sarah Everard's disappearance, and then the perpetrator's arrest, charge, conviction and sentencing, raised very important questions about the police's recruitment and vetting arrangements, and some elements of police culture – in particular those concerning the treatment of women.

¹⁴ [IOPC recommendations to tackle Met culture after investigation uncovers bullying and harassment in the ranks](#), Independent Office for Police Conduct, 1 February 2022.

These events have prompted several assessments, including:

- the Home Office-sponsored independent inquiry by the Rt Hon Dame Elish Angiolini DBE QC into the matters arising from the abduction, rape and murder of Sarah Everard;
- a Metropolitan Police-sponsored review of the force's culture and standards of behaviour, led by Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB;
- several investigations of allegations of misconduct by the IOPC; and
- a thematic inspection by HMICFRS of police vetting and counter-corruption arrangements.

At the time of completing this year's *State of Policing* report, these several forms of scrutiny are at different stages.

Some of the facts of this case very clearly present major concerns. The perpetrator first joined Kent Police as a special constable in 2005. He then became a full-time constable in the Civil Nuclear Constabulary before transferring to the Metropolitan Police Service. There – as an officer in the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Group – he had ready access to the Parliamentary estate.

Given his movement into the police service and between individual forces, and the most heinous nature of his crimes, it is difficult to imagine that the inquiries' conclusions will include anything other than a need

for significant change. Improvements are likely to be required to the police service's arrangements for the recruitment, vetting and continual monitoring of its workforce.

It must be remembered that police officers are vested with unique powers to detain people, search them, take away their property and deprive them of their liberty. The service has a great responsibility to do all it reasonably can to ensure its officers are fit to hold these powers. This is especially because police officers are often required to apply a high degree of professional discretion when deciding whether, when, where and why their powers will be used.

Despite many enduring problems, a strong, pragmatic, can-do attitude among the rank and file has very consistently been a theme over the past ten years. The public should be reassured by this commendable aspect of police culture. This culture extends to the families of police officers, many of whom make major sacrifices to support partners, husbands, wives, sons and daughters who serve as police officers and staff.

Policing today has developed significantly from the occupation that Sir Robert Peel envisaged at the beginning of the 19th century. The sophistication, intelligence and resources of some who are engaged in crime, the malignancy of their motives and methods, and the technology available to all citizens, mean that the profession of policing will continue to require people of the highest integrity, intelligence and skill. The needs

of the police service for such qualities are intensified by the weight of the modern criminal law, and the demands and expectations of the public and other agencies of the state.

The qualities required to be a good police officer are many. They include: personal bravery; intelligence; physical fitness; maturity; sound judgment; the ability to assess a situation and to deal with people; self-control; integrity; honesty; compassion; courtesy; perseverance; and patience. Policing is not a job; it is a vocation, and a noble one.

The greatest asset of the police service is its people – police officers and police staff. Those assets should be nurtured and developed with skill and sensitivity in order to release their greatest potential. In too many respects, officers and staff suffer frustration and must work around inefficiency and unnecessary bureaucracy, antiquated and malfunctioning systems and practices which belong to a past age, blunting their ability to serve the public which the very great majority are eager and determined to do.

Police officers and police staff have a very great deal of which to be proud. Too often their successes go unnoticed, or are not fully and properly understood or appreciated. It must also be recognised that much of policing is invisible, and yet provides safety and security to millions of citizens. The fields of tackling serious and organised crime, child sexual abuse and exploitation, and repeat anti-social behaviour – often working with

other agencies – are but three of the areas where the public has little appreciation or knowledge of just what the police and other law enforcement professionals do, and how well they do it.

The police service is almost certainly unique in investing in its lowest-ranking people the greatest amount of its executive power. In 1960, the Royal Commission on the Police stated that the individual responsibility of the police officer is more onerous than any delegated or assumed by any comparable profession or occupation. That remains the case. Some material aspects of policing are unique; police officers have the power to take away the liberty of the citizen, to use force and to subject him or her to search and detention. Police officers, in civil society, represent both the majesty and the threat of the state. They have a monopoly on the coercive power of the state. Unlike the military, police officers are in close daily contact with both the people they are sworn to protect, and the people who would violate the rights of other citizens.

It is therefore essential that the infrastructure around the constable is designed and attuned to his and her needs, so that they may discharge with the greatest efficiency and effectiveness the onerous duties which society has placed upon their shoulders.

In the United Kingdom, we have a precious system of policing by consent. In England and Wales, there are approximately 138,000 full-time police officers, 9,000

police community support officers, and a further 76,000 police staff,¹⁵ responsible for the safety and preservation of order in a population in England and Wales of approximately 60 million.¹⁶ It is not a militaristic model, where the police are the coercive arm of the executive government. It is fundamentally different. It is a civilian police service; police officers are civilians in uniform, possessing and discharging powers given to them freely by the consent of the communities which they serve. Police officers are not employees; they are Crown servants, accountable to the law and not to the political leadership of the country. A police officer has a discretion in relation to the use of his or her powers, and no police officer can be lawfully ordered to make an arrest.

In establishing the principles of policing in 1829, Home Secretary Sir Robert Peel drew upon the historic tradition and obligation of every member of the community to suppress crime and detect and apprehend offenders. Those obligations come from the centuries long before we had police officers, where every citizen had to answer the call of hue and cry, and citizens took it in turn to keep watch at night for the safety of their communities.

The criminal justice system should operate as a single system, with properly designed and efficiently

¹⁵ [Police workforce, England and Wales: 30 September 2021](#), Home Office, 26 January 2022.

¹⁶ [Population estimates for the UK, England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland: mid-2020](#), Office for National Statistics, 25 June 2021.

operating interfaces. In too many respects, this is still not the case. And the quality of interaction and co-operation between the wider public and protective services, including social services, health and education, needs to be improved. Each service must fully and properly discharge its responsibilities, rather than abdicate them at the expense of the one public service which will never say no. In this and so many other respects, police and crime commissioners have a very significant part to play.

If the police are to maintain and intensify the essential levels of public support which I have described, they need the assistance of all parts of society. Every effort must be made to ensure that the people who join the police service come from the widest possible pool of talent in society. This includes from the communities which are under-represented in policing and so many other fields of public and private activity. It is necessary also that the police observe the single and overriding principle that entry into and advancement within the police service should be entirely according to merit.

The degree of public acceptance of the use of police powers, and the extent to which communities will support the police in the ways I have described, is, to a material extent, a function of the trust and confidence of communities, and whether the police officer in that community resembles and has a natural affinity with the people of that community. And therefore, consistent with the principle of merit I have described, the police

should significantly intensify the steps they are taking to inform and encourage members of the parts of communities who are not proportionately represented in the police about the attractions of a police career.

Understanding demand

In 2015, we embarked upon a programme with police forces to introduce, develop and refine the production of force management statements (FMSs). We require each force to produce a statement each year.¹⁷

FMSs are modelled on network management statements used in other safety-critical monopoly essential public services.

Each FMS is a four-year projection of the demand, asset stewardship, efficiency and financial resources of the police force. It is a self-assessment provided to the inspectorate under the signature of the chief constable. The statement must cover all projected demand: crime and non-crime, latent and patent. It must contain the chief constable's evaluation of the condition, capacity, capability, performance, serviceability, efficiency and security of supply of the force's workforce and other assets. And it must include projections of the financial resources which the force expects to have to use those assets to meet that demand.

¹⁷ In 2020, because of the pressures faced by forces during the pandemic, we suspended the requirement for forces to provide FMSs and instead asked them to send us their FMSs by the end of May 2021.

In [State of Policing 2015](#), and in those of subsequent years, I have included detailed explanations of the FMS concept. I have also included explanations of our progress, working with chief constables and police and crime commissioners, to implement the programme. It hasn't been easy; in the early years some chief constables and police and crime commissioners were resistant, struggling to understand the value of producing such a statement.

Since then, the police service has made considerable advances. Compared with the position in 2015, forces and the inspectorate now have a greatly improved understanding of the service's levels of resourcing and levels of demand for services, and the relationship between the two. It is now possible for policymakers, policing institutions and the public to have much greater understanding of aggregate demand on the police and how well forces are preparing for the future.

FMSs have helped to expose a critical gap between the money the public provide to the police and what the public expect to get for it.

The nature of demand is changing over time

Over the past ten years, demand on the police has changed and continues to change – very significantly. Violence, abuse and acquisitive crime, such as burglary and theft, have always been prevalent. In addition, economic crime today is far more widespread, and has four principal distinguishing features: complexity, encryption, volume and speed. As discussed later,

online crime is now by far the most prevalent type of crime, and by means of the internet fraud has exploded; in volume, it eclipses everything. Mental ill health is also an additional aggravating factor.

Over the past five years, the volume of non-emergency (101) calls to forces in England and Wales has fallen by 27 percent, partly as a result of a shift to online reporting and partly because of the pandemic. However, the volume of emergency (999) calls has remained fairly constant over the same period, with the police receiving approximately 9.3 million emergency calls each year. Between 2014–15 and 2019–20, the annual volume of police-recorded crime went up by almost 50 percent (from approximately four million crimes each year to approximately six million), before falling slightly in 2020–21 (largely as a result of the pandemic).¹⁸ In 2014/15, approximately half of all recorded crimes resulted in a suspect not being identified.¹⁹ Now, the proportion is approximately a third.²⁰

There are a variety of reasons for this. There are many more demands on the police, such as tackling organised crime, and increasingly complex investigations that may involve particularly vulnerable,

¹⁸ Sources: HMICFRS's force level 999/101 call data and Home Office data on crime outcomes in England and Wales year to June 2021.

¹⁹ [Crime outcomes in England and Wales 2014 to 2015](#), Home Office, 16 July 2015, p8.

²⁰ [Crime outcomes in England and Wales 2020 to 2021](#), Home Office, 22 July 2021.

traumatised people or the use of sophisticated technology, and offences that span local, regional, national or international borders. The rise in reports of crimes to the police, in many respects, is likely to be indicative of a higher confidence of the public that the police will take action. In addition, in many cases, the police's record in diligently and accurately recording crime has improved markedly. A substantial part of the increase in crime is accounted for by fraud and other online offences. I deal with this in more detail later in this report.

The gap between resourcing levels and public expectations

The police service cannot meet all the demand it faces. Indeed, the entirety of the sources and nature of all policing demands aren't yet comprehensively understood.

Given that the police cannot meet all future demand – properly understood – the essential question is: what does the public want the police to do less of?

The police service can't meet 100 percent of public expectations for, say, 70 percent of their efficient cost. The police can only be reasonably expected to reach their highest practicable level of efficiency with the money they are given. Even when – more probably if – they achieve their highest practicable level of efficiency, something must give. If resources are not to be increased, there must be a reduction in the demand that

the police will be required or expected to meet, or in the quality of the service provided.

Through their elected representatives, the public need to decide how much safety they are prepared to pay for, and how much risk they are prepared to tolerate.

Essentially, the police's political and operational leaders have to make difficult decisions. These often involve considerable trade-offs between those aspects of demand that are to be prioritised and those that aren't.

Child protection

In a national thematic report of July 2015, we reported that the overall quality of police practice in protecting and safeguarding vulnerable children needed to improve.²¹ In more than a third of the 576 cases we examined, the police's actions were inadequate.

We found weaknesses and inconsistencies at all stages of the child's experience throughout the child protection system – from initial contact with the police through to investigation of the alleged offences. In many cases, the police responded well to this 2015 report.

In a further national thematic report of February 2020, we reported seeing an unambiguous commitment from police leaders, officers and staff to the protection of children. We also found improvements (and in some instances, significant improvements) in the service received by children at risk. We found that signs of

²¹ [*In harm's way: The role of the police in keeping children safe*](#), HMIC, July 2015, p10.

vulnerability were more effectively recognised, and the assessment of risk was generally better.

Broadly speaking, the way in which the police work with other organisations has matured, and the quality of multi-agency planning and decision-making has got better. This has resulted in improvements in the outcomes for some, though not all, of the most vulnerable children.²²

Certain forces deserve to be singled out for praise. In December 2018, in a post-inspection review of Lancashire Constabulary, we found improvements had been made since our inspection 18 months earlier. We stated: “There has been a real prioritisation of child protection, meaning that the force is now well placed to tackle all forms of child abuse.”²³

In 2019, in our post-inspection review of Merseyside Police, we also found that the force had made significant improvements. We praised the force for making changes and acting on our 2018 recommendations in a manner which aims for long-term, sustainable changes rather than temporary quick fixes.²⁴

²² [National Child Protection Inspections: 2019 thematic report](#), 27 February 2020, HMICFRS, p1.

²³ See: [Inspectorate praises Lancashire Constabulary’s significantly improved approach to child protection](#), HMICFRS, 11 April 2019.

²⁴ See: [Merseyside Police has taken “significant steps” to improve its child protection capabilities, says report](#), HMICFRS, 30 August 2019.

But, as is so often the case with our inspection findings, performance between police forces varies considerably, as does the rate at which forces seem able – or willing – to secure much-needed improvements in their performance.

In our 2016 child protection inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service – by far the largest police force in England and Wales – we reported fundamental and widespread deficiencies in the way the force understood and dealt with the needs of and risks to children.²⁵ That report was the most damning report the inspectorate has ever published on any subject and on any police force.

That inspection report prompted the Home Secretary to commission us to publish quarterly reports in 2017 on the Metropolitan Police Service's progress against our recommendations. Because of the findings of those quarterly inspections, we remained concerned. We therefore carried out further inspections in 2018 and 2021.

In our September 2021 report, we described how the pace of change since 2016 had at times been slow. The Metropolitan Police Service has made progress in some areas, but it has more to do to achieve consistently better outcomes for children.

²⁵ See: [Children put at risk by Met's shortcomings](#), HMICFRS, 25 November 2016.

Child protection is another aspect of policing in which all police forces must work closely with other public services. Shortcomings in any of these services can expose children to the most appalling neglect and abuse, sometimes with fatal consequences.

An epidemic of violence against women and girls

An aspect of policing in which the extent of demand has become clearer is the level of violence against women and girls. In 2021, we published two reports on this, and reports on rape and domestic abuse.²⁶ Violence against women and girls is an epidemic.

Over the past decade, an average of 80 women a year were killed by a partner or ex-partner. In the year ending March 2020, it was estimated that 1.6 million women (and 757,000 men) in England and Wales suffered domestic abuse.²⁷ In one recent survey, two out of three 16- to 34-year-old girls or women reported that they had been sexually harassed in the past year.²⁸

²⁶ Two reports: [*Interim report: Inspection into how effectively the police engage with women and girls*](#), HMICFRS, 7 July 2021; and [*Police response to violence against women and girls: Final inspection report*](#), HMICFRS, 17 September 2021.

²⁷ [*Police response to violence against women and girls: Final inspection report*](#), HMICFRS, 17 September 2021, p1.

²⁸ [*Perceptions of personal safety and experiences of harassment, Great Britain: 2 to 27 June 2021*](#), Office for National Statistics, 24 August 2021.

Our reports helped to guide the design and implementation of the Government's new [strategy for tackling violence against women and girls](#), its [end-to-end review of rape](#), and its forthcoming domestic abuse strategy. In all of these, the police have a vital role to play. Their responsibilities include: prevention; treating with care and sensitivity those who report crimes against them; thoroughly investigating allegations; making good use of the legal instruments²⁹ available to them to protect vulnerable victims; relentlessly pursuing those who commit offences; and working with other organisations to make sure these victims get the wider support they need.

As a result of our recommendations, the NPCC has appointed a dedicated chief officer to take national responsibility for leading the police's work in this respect.³⁰ By March 2022, all forces are expected to draw up action plans, partly based on the recommendations of our report.

²⁹ For example: domestic violence protection orders; domestic violence protection notices; stalking protection orders.

³⁰ [Police chief appointed to tackle violence against women and girls](#), NPCC, 15 September 2021.

Crime data integrity: a polarised picture

In 2014, we published a thematic inspection report which established that the national average of under-recording of crimes was almost one in five.³¹ In these cases, with very few exceptions, this meant reports of crime were not investigated at all.

Perpetrators went free to offend again, victims, witnesses and the community were denied justice, and chief constables' understanding of demand, and therefore their decisions on the deployment of their resources, were fundamentally distorted. This was a disgrace.

As a result, we established a rolling programme of the inspection of crime recording, which lasted several more years.

In [State of Policing 2019](#), I said that crime recording had improved considerably, with the combined recording accuracy for all reported crime in England and Wales standing at 90.3 percent. However, this still meant that almost one in ten complaints went unrecorded. And this headline figure conceals some major differences between the performance of certain police forces.

The underlying picture is now one of polarisation. Some forces have treated our findings and recommendations with the seriousness they deserve; they have maintained good standards or made

³¹ [Crime-recording: making the victim count](#), HMIC, 18 November 2014, p18.

significant improvements (some following an adverse inspection report). The forces in question include Leicestershire Police,³² Thames Valley Police³³ and West Midlands Police.³⁴ Some other forces – such as Gloucestershire Constabulary³⁵ – still haven't treated the matter seriously enough and continue to practise unsatisfactory crime recording.

In 2020, Greater Manchester Police, a force about which we have recently raised other matters of serious concern,³⁶ showed a pitifully low crime recording accuracy rate of only 77.7 percent, which was appreciably below that force's 2014 level. In other words, the force went backwards. We estimated that in 2020 over 80,100 crimes reported to Greater Manchester Police went unrecorded.³⁷ More recently, the force has shown a very considerable improvement in its crime recording accuracy.

Given this polarised picture, it is difficult to conceive that sufficiently consistent, sustainable improvements will be

³² [Leicestershire Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2018](#), HMICFRS, 15 January 2019.

³³ [Thames Valley Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2019](#), HMICFRS, 25 July 2019.

³⁴ [West Midlands Police: Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2018](#), HMICFRS, 15 January 2019.

³⁵ [PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy: An inspection of Gloucestershire Constabulary](#). HMICFRS, 27 October 2021.

³⁶ [PEEL: Greater Manchester Police cause of concern – Responding to vulnerable people](#), HMICFRS, 30 September 2021.

³⁷ [An inspection of the service provided to victims of crime by Greater Manchester Police](#), HMICFRS, 10 December 2020, p4.

made without the inspectorate's continued and close attention to this aspect of policing in future.

Fraud should be taken more seriously

Adults are more likely to be victims of fraud than of any other crime. The detrimental effect of fraud is as great today as it has ever been – if not greater – yet fraud indefensibly continues to be treated as a low priority. This is far from commensurate with the agony of the victims and their families. Victims of fraud can face levels of human suffering as catastrophic as those experienced by victims of many other crimes.

In a national thematic inspection report in April 2019, we observed that one force filed, with no further action, 96 percent of the cases it received from the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau. Some of these cases had a good degree of evidence, including identified suspects.³⁸ Our report included 16 recommendations for improvements.

In our follow-up report in August 2021, we found that not enough had changed. Too many victims still receive a poor service and are denied justice. The investigation and prevention of fraud, by police forces, remain under-resourced and are not given enough priority. These thieves almost always get away with it.³⁹

³⁸ [Fraud: Time to choose](#), HMICFRS, 2 April 2019, p5.

³⁹ [Spotlight report: A review of Fraud: Time to Choose](#), HMICFRS, 5 August 2021, p1.

If the extraordinary proliferation of fraud, largely enabled by the internet, is to be brought into check in any meaningful way, those who commit fraud must realise that policymakers have decided that this corrosive and extraordinarily expensive offending will now be tackled with resources commensurate with its seriousness and prevalence. Fraud costs the UK many billions of pounds every year.⁴⁰

For too long, police forces have placed an unjustifiable reliance on Action Fraud, the national fraud reporting centre, to solve the problem. But Action Fraud exists mainly to record fraud allegations, not investigate them. Many police forces aren't taking their responsibilities to prevent and investigate fraud anywhere near seriously enough.

And so the suffering of many people goes on, and will continue and rise as the perpetrators continue to believe that politicians care so little.

Tackling serious and organised crime

Over the past ten years there have been major changes to the national policing landscape concerning serious and organised crime.

⁴⁰ [Fraud: The threat from fraud](#), National Economic Crime Centre (NECC). The NECC's supporting agencies are the National Crime Agency, the Serious Fraud Office, the Financial Conduct Authority, the City of London Police, HM Revenue & Customs, the Crown Prosecution Service and the Home Office.

In 2013, the NCA was established, replacing the Serious Organised Crime Agency. So far, we have inspected the NCA nine times, with each inspection focusing on a different aspect of the NCA's operations. We have also examined closely the network of police regional organised crime units (ROCU), which have evolved considerably alongside the NCA.

Regional organised crime units: inconsistencies in resourcing, leadership and operation

In 2015, we found that ROCUs were structured in a variety of different ways, ranging from highly ambitious and effective cross-force collaborative units to smaller scale and less effective arrangements for deploying individual police force capabilities on a regional basis.⁴¹ This variation in ROCU structures created a risk that, in some places, local and regional capabilities were collectively insufficient to counter serious and organised criminal threats effectively and to ensure that forces were meeting their obligations to work together under the [Strategic Policing Requirement](#).

In February 2021, we reported that the ROCU network had made substantial progress in some respects, particularly in cyber-crime and undercover policing (which have attracted specific funding).⁴² But we also

⁴¹ [Regional Organised Crime Units: A review of capability and effectiveness](#), HMIC, 1 December 2015, p5.

⁴² [An inspection of the effectiveness of the Regional Organised Crime Units](#), HMICFRS, 11 February 2021, p1.

reported inconsistencies throughout England and Wales in the resourcing, leadership and operation of ROCUs.

In both our 2015 and 2021 ROCU inspections, we found that the absence of long-term funding arrangements hampered ROCUs' stability and development.

ROCUs have a major role to play in tackling serious and organised crime. We have recently modified our PEEL inspection programme to allow for further inspections of ROCUs. During our inspections, we will discuss with ROCU leaders whether the three-year funding settlement I referred to earlier is having its intended effect.

The National Crime Agency: much to be proud of but it needs more investment

Since its inception, the NCA has also played a major role in tackling serious and organised crime. By collecting information from a wide range of sources, including the police, other law enforcement bodies and other organisations, the NCA has built a detailed understanding of the threat from serious and organised crime. The NCA estimates that over 69,000 people are engaged in serious and organised crime in the United Kingdom and that between 550,000 and 850,000 people in the UK pose a risk to children.⁴³

⁴³ [National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2021](#), National Crime Agency, 25 May 2021, p8.

To tackle threats of this magnitude, the importance of substantial contributions by police forces, ROCUs and the NCA mustn't be underestimated.

When we first inspected the NCA in 2015, we reported that the agency had made a strong start to the creation of a new national law enforcement agency. But we also said that significant problems were ahead. These included investing enough in the technological and analytical capabilities that are needed.⁴⁴ Our inspection report contained five recommendations and 19 areas for improvement.

In 2016, we reported that the NCA's progress on the areas we identified for improvement in our 2015 report was resulting in a gradual improvement in the organisation's efficiency and effectiveness.⁴⁵

In the years that followed, we examined specific functions and units of the NCA. These included:

- [the International Crime Bureau](#);
- [the specialist operations centre, crime operational support and serious crime analysis section](#);
- [the national tasking, co-ordination and governance of the response to serious and organised crime](#);

⁴⁴ [*An inspection of the National Crime Agency*](#), HMIC, 12 March 2015, p14.

⁴⁵ [*An inspection of the National Crime Agency's progress against outstanding recommendations made by HMIC and areas for improvement*](#), HMIC, 21 July 2016, p9.

- search warrant and production order application processes (prompted by a series of high-profile failures);
- the agency's statutory criminal intelligence function;
- the agency's relationship with ROCUs;
- its statutory crime reduction function (investigating offences relating to organised crime); and
- other units and functions which, because of their sensitivity, didn't lead to published reports.

Considering these findings from these inspections in aggregate, it is clear that the NCA has much to be proud of. This includes the high quality of its senior leadership, the commitment and dedication of its workforce, its support for the police and its use of some sophisticated techniques and capabilities to obtain intelligence and evidence against organised criminals. The skills and sophistication of some of its technical experts are of a very high order.

But, in some important respects, the NCA hasn't yet adequately addressed all the areas for improvement we specified in 2015.

For example, as recently as July 2021, we reported that the quality of the equipment available to surveillance officers had not kept pace with that available to ROCUs or police forces.⁴⁶ In several other respects, the standard of tools available to the NCA is well below

⁴⁶ [An inspection of the National Crime Agency's crime reduction \(investigating offences relating to organised crime\) function](#), HMICFRS, 13 July 2021, p17.

what it should be. And yet, the NCA is dealing with some of the most unprincipled, nefarious and evil people in the UK and abroad.

The NCA has come a long way in a relatively short time. But policymakers should be under no illusion that, if it is ever to achieve its full potential, substantial investment is still required. This too is a political question of the public tolerance of threats, risks and harms.

The availability of large amounts of data about the activities of organised criminals and paedophiles, and the sophisticated instruments and methods which can be used to disrupt their activities and find and arrest the people involved, is immense. The NCA now has – and is continuing to improve – the skills and tools which could save many lives from being shattered or destroyed by crime; and they know how to find and arrest significantly more of the most dangerous people. The principal constraint is money; that is, the public's willingness to pay for the efficient and effective assault on the worst of what people do. I question whether, fully informed, the public would say that it is acceptable for their communities to tolerate the undisturbed presence among them of predatory paedophiles, the importers and distributors of firearms and drugs, money launderers and fraudsters, and the presence and activities of those who traffic and abuse the defenceless and vulnerable. Not only do these people wreak almost

unimaginable human suffering; when they have finished with their current victims, they will come after others.

Despite the NCA's assessment⁴⁷ of the scale of the problem, it appears likely that the public do not really understand the extent and severity of criminality and the threats they face. Nor do they appreciate how much more, if law enforcement were adequately resourced, it could do to deal with it and so protect them and their communities from the extraordinary harm which will, unchecked, inevitably come to them or those close to them.

Progress made in technology

Over the past ten years, a prominent aspect of change in policing has been the continued progress made in technology. We live more and more of our lives online. We rely on mobile telephones, tablets, laptops and other digital devices for everyday activities.

In many respects, our lives are of course enriched by this progress in technology. But it has been accompanied by the advancement of sophisticated tools used by those who would do us harm. Computer hackers and fraudsters represent a serious threat to civil society and public safety. Social media trolls, online stalkers, predatory paedophiles and those who distribute intimate material for so-called revenge porn can blight the lives of their victims; some people

⁴⁷ [National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime 2021](#), National Crime Agency, 25 May 2021.

are driven to end their lives. And organised crime groups and terrorists exploit technology to extremes of efficiency and iniquity.

In some respects, the police have struggled – and continue to struggle – to keep up with the demands which the digital world places on them.

As I said in [State of Policing 2017](#): “The raw power of the worldwide web can be an agency of fear as well as freedom. Technology enhances much of our daily lives. It also intensifies severe threats to the most vulnerable people in society, including children.” Online offenders can very easily reach distant and vulnerable victims.

Most children are now more at risk in their own bedrooms than they are on the streets.

This type of offending is not just about child sexual abuse and fraud, but radicalisation, harassment, stalking and many other forms of online crime.

Backlogs and delays in examining digital devices

In 2015, we found alarming backlogs and delays in the extraction and analysis of evidence from digital devices.⁴⁸ An increasing number of investigations require digital evidence. These devices often belong to victims, who are already traumatised; loss of access to their devices, while the police have them in a queue awaiting examination, intensifies victims’ distress.

⁴⁸ [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 – A national overview](#), HMIC, 18 February 2016, p4.

In 2016, we found that forces had taken steps to shorten the time taken to examine digital devices, but just over 16,000 devices were still awaiting examination.⁴⁹ By mid-2017, this number had been reduced by 17 percent, but it still represented almost 13,400 devices.⁵⁰

In 2020, we reported that all forces had a prioritisation system in place when it came to examining devices and returning them to victims. But most victims of crime will have to wait while their device is in a queue. In the best performing forces, this queue may be a few months long. In the poorest performing force, it could take 18 months. We found that seven forces needed to improve their ability to retrieve digital information to reduce delays in these investigations. In a further three forces, the backlogs were so bad that we issued these forces with causes of concern.⁵¹ More encouragingly, the police recently introduced new measures for device examination, including a commitment to deny victims their devices for the irreducible minimum of time.⁵²

⁴⁹ [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2016 – A national overview](#), HMIC, 2 March 2017, p15.

⁵⁰ [PEEL: Police effectiveness 2017 – A national overview](#), HMICFRS, 22 March 2018, p59.

⁵¹ If our inspections identify a serious or critical shortcoming in a force's practice, policy or performance, it will be reported as a cause of concern. A cause of concern will always be accompanied by one or more recommendations. When we identify causes of concern during our inspections, we normally provide details in the subsequent force report. See: [PEEL spotlight report: Diverging under pressure](#), HMICFRS, 7 February 2020, p13.

⁵² [Police update notice for permission to search for relevant information on digital devices](#), NPCC, 16 September 2021.

Artificial intelligence

As digital devices have become more powerful and complex, their data storage capacity has increased exponentially. An average mobile telephone may contain many thousands of text-based files and images and hours of video.

In 2017, I commented on the considerable problems this creates for the police and the CPS, who must examine such material and – where required – disclose it to the defence in criminal proceedings. The disclosure rules are a vital part of the operation of a safe, secure and effective criminal justice system. There have been many notable examples of collapsed trials due to failures to disclose material that would weaken the prosecution case or strengthen the defence. In 2017, I said it was essential that the police establish and bring into operation the most efficient and effective systems for rapidly interrogating and analysing digital devices, so these vast quantities of data can be properly and quickly assessed.⁵³ The same is true now.

The solution lies in the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning to automate the examination of digital devices. It isn't realistic to expect officers or police staff always to do it manually. As long as the police persist in using 20th-century methods to try to cope with 21st-century technology and ways of life, they will continue to fall further and further behind.

⁵³ [*State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2017*](#), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, 12 June 2018, p24.

Police leaders and politicians need urgently to make bold decisions to invest in this technology, if the police are to have any chance of efficient and timely obtaining of essential evidence in the 21st century. Failure to do so is indefensible.

Such technology, if efficiently used, also has the potential to achieve very significant improvements not only in the detection of reported crime, but in finding hidden crimes (such as unidentified frauds and online child sex offenders), and designing out opportunities for criminality by understanding when, how and why people commit crime, especially the worst. As I said in [State of Policing 2017](#), it is essential that the police and law enforcement catch up with and, where possible, overtake offenders in these respects. At present, to far too great an extent, these failures inevitably cause material levels of avoidable human suffering. This must be reversed as soon as possible.

In specifying and procuring such highly advanced technology, the commercial sophistication and acuity of some police leaders is in need of considerable enhancement. The private sector is not generally a force to be feared. Rather, most advisers and providers are not so short-sighted and unwise as to cheat customers they may perceive to be naïve. What is needed is a material intensification of a partnership with the private sector that is soundly and enduringly based on trust and common interest. That common objective is the provision of the most effective weapons the police

can acquire and use against those who do us all nothing but harm.

Investments in technology

In other respects, the police's adoption of new and less sophisticated technology has been more encouraging.

In a 2012 inspection of six police forces, we found that none had provided its officers with the mobile computing technology that would enable them to electronically file a witness statement from anywhere other than a police station.⁵⁴ This severely hampered their efficiency.

In the years that followed, forces invested heavily in mobile computing technology. Generally, officers can now do far more outside police station walls than they could a few years ago. This has led to appreciable improvements in police efficiency.

Similarly, facilities such as body-worn video have become almost ubiquitous in policing. Often, footage from these devices contains important evidence. It helps to protect officers and those with whom they come into contact. For example, in our inspection of the policing of the Clapham Common vigil held for Sarah Everard in March 2021 (for more information on our inspection, see Part 2 of [State of Policing 2020](#)), the examination and analysis of body-worn video presented a true picture of the disorder, and the commendable

⁵⁴ [Taking time for crime: A study of how police officers prevent crime in the field](#), HMIC, 27 September 2012, p13.

restraint shown by police officers. This entirely contradicted the false assertions of police violence on that occasion.

In the future, the introduction, maintenance, networking, renewal and upgrading of technology in policing will require very significant investment. In the interest of efficiency, much of it should be made on a national rather than local basis.

However, there are difficult lessons to be learned in relation to two major national police-related technology programmes: the National Law Enforcement Data Programme and the Emergency Services Network (ESN). In [*State of Policing 2020*](#), I said that significant delays and cost overruns, and failures in specification and procurement, have put the efficiency and effectiveness of the police, and others, at material risk. This remains the case.

National Law Enforcement Data Programme

The National Law Enforcement Data Programme is intended to replace the Police National Computer (PNC) and the Police National Database (PND), both of which are approaching the ends of their lives. The PNC has been in use since the 1970s and is extraordinarily outdated.

In its December 2021 report, the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee said that a replacement for the PNC wasn't expected to be available until at least 2025–26 – more than five years later than the original

implementation date of 2020, while total costs have increased by 68 percent to £1.1 billion. The Home Office now plans to upgrade or replace the PND by a separate programme, but it is unclear when this will happen and at what cost.⁵⁵

The Emergency Services Network

The ESN is intended to replace the Airwave mobile radio communication service, which has been used by the police and other emergency services in Great Britain since the early 2000s.

The original target dates for switching off Airwave and switching on the ESN are well overdue. In the meantime, the police service continues to contend with outdated technology that limits its effectiveness.

When major projects such as these lag so far behind, they have a materially adverse effect on public safety. In these cases, it is hard to understand how these programmes have failed so badly.

⁵⁵ [*The National Law Enforcement Data Programme Twenty-Ninth Report of Session 2021–22*](#), House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts, HC 638, 8 December 2021, p3.

Police funding

For the 2021/22 fiscal year, the Government allocated the police up to £15.8 billion. This included £400 million to continue the recruitment of 20,000 extra officers through the police uplift programme, which I discuss later.⁵⁶

The level of government funding for policing is set at spending reviews (during which the Government determines how it will fund public services over several years), while the detail is established annually. The majority of public funding for police forces in England and Wales is provided by the Home Office and is authorised by Parliament on an annual basis.⁵⁷

Allocations to individual forces are based on a funding formula that, during my tenure, has been a persistent problem. Police and crime commissioners in England and Wales, and their mayoral equivalents,⁵⁸ receive funding from several sources. The lion's share is from the Home Office, and the secondary source is raised locally in the policing precept. Relatively small amounts come from the policing of sporting fixtures and other sources.

⁵⁶ [Police to receive more than £15 billion to fight crime and recruit more officers](#), Home Office, 17 December 2020.

⁵⁷ [Police funding for England and Wales 2015 to 2022](#), Home Office, 15 July 2021.

⁵⁸ For forces such as for Greater Manchester Police, the Metropolitan Police Service, West Yorkshire Police, and the City of London Police.

An overhaul of the formula is long overdue. In 2015 and 2018, the National Audit Office examined the financial sustainability of police forces. On both occasions, it raised substantial concerns, with the latter report describing the funding arrangements as “ineffective and detached from the changing nature of policing”.⁵⁹

A substantial part of the problem is a wide variation from force to force in the ratio of central government funding to local government funding. Throughout England and Wales, the police precept element of council tax accounts for approximately 34 percent of the police’s funding. But the differences in percentage between forces can be stark. This difference is evident when making a comparison between Cleveland Police and Surrey Police. Cleveland Police is responsible for policing a relatively deprived area with a weak council tax base; approximately 28 percent of its funding comes from council tax. At the other end of the spectrum, Surrey Police is responsible for policing a relatively affluent area with a strong council tax base; approximately 55 percent of its funding comes from council tax.

Cleveland Police is therefore much more reliant than Surrey Police on central government funding. This means that, in the event of centrally applied budget reductions (particularly any that may be applied on an

⁵⁹ [Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales](#), National Audit Office, HC 78, 4 June 2015; and [Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018](#), National Audit Office, HC 1501, 11 September 2018.

equal percentage basis to each police force), Cleveland Police would face a proportionally greater budget reduction. This would hurt the people of Cleveland far more than the people of Surrey, particularly when taking into account the chronic societal and criminal problems in Cleveland.

Cleveland Police will, however, benefit from a proportionally greater budget increase. This is a result of general increases in central government funding for 2022/23, which is explained in the Home Office's [*Provisional Police Grant Report \(England and Wales\) 2022/23*](#).

Importantly, the Ministerial statement that accompanied this report confirmed total central government grant funding for police forces for the next three years, with increases of £550 million in 2022/23, at least £650 million in 2023/24 and £800 million in 2024/25.⁶⁰

This statement was very welcome in two respects. First, it gives police leaders greater certainty over funding, which offers them more freedom to commit to longer-term reform and investment. Secondly, the considerable year-on-year increases should assure the completion and sustainability of the 20,000 officer uplift programme.

Nevertheless, the underlying concerns with the funding formula still need to be solved.

⁶⁰ See: [Ministerial statement UIN HCWS503](#), Kit Malthouse, Minister of State for Crime and Policing, 16 December 2021.

Special grants

In their policing and budget plans, forces should include reasonable contingencies for unexpected events. Even so, there may be exceptional events that could threaten a force's financial stability. In these cases, police and crime commissioners can apply to the Home Office for special grant funding. However, the special grant arrangements have become a sticking plaster solution to help certain forces cope with the deficiencies and unfairness of the funding system.

The low funding base for some smaller forces in particular means that they consistently struggle to provide as effective a service as better-funded forces. There is only so much they can do with the resources at their disposal. While awaiting the outcome of a national review of the police funding formula, they rely on special grant funding to support what should be mainstream business. This can never be a permanent solution.

The extra 20,000 officers

In October 2019, the Home Office announced an uplift programme with more funding for the police. This involved plans, in addition to those recruited to replace leavers, to increase police officer numbers by 20,000 over the following three years. In purely numerical terms, the effect of the uplift programme will broadly be to reverse a reduction in police numbers since 2010.

As I said in [State of Policing 2019](#), the police service will be able to meet more of the demands it faces. In every sense, these benefits are very welcome.

But it isn't easy for the police to implement the uplift programme; recruitment on this scale is a major undertaking. In this respect, the police's efforts and achievements deserve credit.

Between October 2019 and September 2021, the police received 166,615 applications. By the end of September 2021, forces had recruited an additional 11,053 officers and appreciably improved diversity. Of these, more than four in ten new recruits were female and more than one in ten (who stated their ethnicity) identified as belonging to a Black, Asian, or another minority ethnic group.⁶¹

While these increases in numbers and diversity should be applauded, it isn't certain that the police will meet the programme's objective of completing the 20,000 uplift by March 2023. And the service's ability to retain its new recruits, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, remains to be seen. As welcome as it is, the uplift programme won't immediately solve one of policing's most persistent problems: a chronic shortage of experienced detectives.⁶² Many more detectives are needed to deal with the most serious crimes, such as

⁶¹ [Police officer uplift, England and Wales, quarterly update to 30 September 2021](#), Home Office, 27 October 2021.

⁶² See: [PEEL spotlight report: A system under pressure](#), HMICFRS, 2 May 2019, p13.

child abuse, sexual offences, robberies, stabbings and, of course, homicide. They are also needed to deal with professional standards and corruption. This problem will take a very long time to be solved. In the interim, with the replacement of experienced officers with recruits, the police will have a significantly higher proportion of new and inexperienced officers.

The sheer magnitude and speed of the police uplift programme inevitably carries risks. There is a heightened danger that people unsuited to policing may get through and be recruited. On occasion, police recruitment vetting processes identify applicants' connections with organised crime groups that try to infiltrate the police. In too many cases, the system fails. This can have catastrophic consequences.

There is also a risk of recruiting officers who hold views that are generally incompatible with the office of constable, such as extremist and racist attitudes. When unsuitable applicants lie on their application forms, conceal their social media activity, or play down their criminal connections, the quality of vetting needs to be consistently high. Moreover, when probationary constables misbehave, the police should be assiduous in tackling that conduct and removing those who are, or are likely to be, unsuitable. Senior officers need to take this problem very seriously indeed and ensure that forces' professional standards departments are properly resourced with some of the best detectives.

College of Policing standards

The College of Policing is almost ten years old, and has made considerable progress towards the achievement of its statutory and other objectives. Chief constables must remember that there are not 43 best ways of doing the same thing, and that the standards established by the College deserve universal acceptance and adoption. The College's standards are and will remain material factors in the final determinations which the inspectors of constabulary make about the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces.

Single-system operation

The network code is an all-service collaboration agreement which, when adopted, will have the effect of dissolving the barriers which have prevented policing and law enforcement from operating as a true single system, in the public interest. The fragile architecture of the 43-force model, devised in 1962 and implemented in 1974, is very far from fit for purpose in the 2020s.

By pooling their respective sovereignties in this way, policing and law enforcement will create not only the conditions for consistent, stable, efficient and effective policing decisions, but also their reality.

As I explained in [State of Policing 2020](#), the removal of complexity and the establishment of reliability and certainty of decision-making in the things which need to be harmonised or standardised is overdue. The network code – more fully explained in my earlier *State of Policing* reports and so not repeated here – is the means by which policing and law enforcement will retain the necessary protections and means of influencing and controlling regional and national decisions, while attaining the stability and predictability they have never had.

There are two alternatives. The first is to carry on with the present fragile structure which is prone to partial and unpredictable collapse; that is not sustainable. The second is the Home Secretary's use of reserve powers under section 53A of the Police Act 1996. I believe policing and law enforcement should prefer their own mechanism with appropriate checks and balances, to political and external administrative impositions.

The inspectorate – its jurisdiction, independence and standards

Jurisdiction

The jurisdiction of the inspectorate is considerable. Its remit is to inspect and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and other law enforcement bodies. With the exception of the investigation of complaints or misconduct allegations against individual officers or groups of officers, it covers everything the police do. That principal remit has not changed in any appreciable way since the first inspectors of constabulary were established in 1856.

The inspectorate is not a regulator. Regulators have hard power: the power of intervention, direction and enforcement. Apart from our powers to obtain information for the purposes of inspection, we have no regulatory powers. Our power is soft power, which should not be confused with weak power. Soft power is the power of reasoned persuasion, the power to create the conditions in which those in our jurisdiction will be persuaded – not compelled – to change in ways we may recommend. We do this through the power of our voice, a voice of compelling reason and authority. It is for others, principally chief constables but also police and crime commissioners, mayors and the Home Office, to decide whether our judgments and recommendations should be carried into effect. If not, they must tell the public why.

However much policymakers may be impatient with police, the inspectorate should never become the regulator of the police. Regulators have the power to impose their will, to substitute their own decisions for the decisions of those under their jurisdictions. If we were the regulators of the police, we would become the chief constables of England and Wales, and the operational independence of individual chief constables would end. It is because policing is unique the obligation to protect and the power to search and take away the property and the liberty of the citizen – that it must remain in the operationally independent hands of the chief. These powers must no more be in the hands of an inspectorate than in the hands of a politician. Such is the model of other countries, whose police are feared by the community and who act as instruments of malign political regimes. We have never been there, and we should never go.

Independence

In many respects, the inspectorate is materially different from the inspectorate of 2012. The quality of its processes, its rigid adherence to objective evidence-based inspections, the thoroughness of its analysis, the fairness and consistency of its judgments, the clarity of its reports and public statements: all have improved significantly. The quality of the inspectorate's staff is probably the highest it has ever been. These things are necessary for the

enhanced and continued authority, and therefore the effectiveness, of the inspectorate.

That authority and effectiveness depends on conspicuous objectivity and independence.

The inspectors of constabulary have no political criteria in their statutory mandates. Having regard to political considerations beyond those established by Parliament – few and indirect – would render our judgments unlawful and severely damage our authority. The moment an independent public authority is seen to bend to undue political pressure, its independence is lost. Whatever its legal independence, confidence in its behavioural independence will have been undermined, and with that its authority. The authority of the inspectors of constabulary should never be compromised.

The most effective defence of the independence of any authority is the confidence of the public, and those within its jurisdiction, in the importance and quality of what it does. In the case of the inspectorate, that requires conspicuously high-quality analysis and judgments, and conclusions and recommendations which command respect. We will always maintain an unbroken bright line beginning with evidence, through analysis, judgments, and moderation where necessary, to conclusions, recommendations and published reasons. Throughout the past ten years, we have committed ourselves to open processes which police forces, policing institutions, policymakers and others

can easily observe and understand. We have promised and ensured consistency of decision-making, in discharge of our obligations to treat everyone fairly. And in our published strategy,⁶³ we are committed to explaining not only the intended effects of our decisions but also the reasons for them. It is in this way that we promote improvements in policing to make everyone safer.

Standards of inspectorate operations

Over the past ten years, we have devoted considerable resources and attention to developing the inspectorate's capability and effectiveness. This has resulted in many significant improvements in the processes we use for the continuous monitoring of forces' performance, and the conspicuous evidence of advances where they have occurred.

Our processes, designed to ensure the best inspection evidence is obtained and thoroughly analysed and evaluated, are described in detail in [*Inspection of the Performance of Home Office Police Forces*](#).

That document also explains how we ensure consistency and therefore fairness in our judgments.

We routinely monitor progress against the recommendations we make. Our monitoring portal is a live database that includes information on the causes of concern and recommendations we have issued to police forces since January 2013. It shows the progress

⁶³ [*HMICFRS Strategy 2021–25*](#), HMICFRS, 15 June 2021.

forces have made against them, reflecting their good work, but also shows the areas they need to address. It is available to chief constables and police and crime commissioners.

For the general public, we publish⁶⁴ information on forces' progress against the recommendations we made to them in our Integrated PEEL Assessments. This information shows that many forces have implemented our recommendations.

If a force isn't effectively managing, mitigating or eradicating a published cause of concern, we may give it extra attention. In such cases, we help forces to develop an improvement plan. In urgent cases, we publish inspection reports as accelerated causes of concern, so that the public know where serious problems have arisen and can hold their police and crime commissioner or mayor to account as they discharge their statutory obligations to secure the efficiency and effectiveness of the force.

We have made extensive evaluation and research processes part of our inspections. We use the evidence they generate to improve our inspection methods. For example, in 2019 we commissioned a comprehensive, independent evaluation of our national

⁶⁴ [Progress against recommendations](#), HMICFRS.

child protection inspections.⁶⁵ We identified what worked well and used the report's recommendations to inform our inspection methodology.

We conducted research with forces, other users of our inspection findings and our own staff to inform the design of our most recent round of PEEL inspections. We learned that many users found that our PEEL reports weren't as accessible as we would like. We designed shorter, more succinct reports. These new reports have an increased focus on what improvements forces need to make, and they establish the respects in which forces are effective and efficient.

We are evaluating how we conduct our PEEL inspections and are making improvements as a result. We will use the evaluation process to establish which of our activities are most effective at promoting improvements in policing.

In short, we have refined and will continue to improve what we do, to ensure we provide the police service and the public with the best we can do.

The future of the inspectorate

I conclude these remarks – in this annual report, the last of my tenure – with consideration of the future of the inspectorate.

⁶⁵ [*Evaluation of the National Child Protection Inspection programme on policing*](#), HMICFRS, 27 February 2020.

I am sometimes asked what is the principal necessary quality of an independent public authority, facing entities within its jurisdiction with greater resources and a great deal at stake, and in a political and administrative environment where short-term imperatives and political considerations may sometimes rise to dominate affairs. The short answer is courage.

I have written of the essential need for conspicuous objectivity and the consistent production of high-quality work. Also necessary is vigilance in relation to the steps which may be attempted by others to constrain and direct the public authority in ways or directions which it should not adopt or take. In recent years, independent economic regulators have become subject to increasing degrees of ministerial guidance and control. This has been done by Parliament, but at the instance of the executive, and perhaps without much attention from those who ought to care. Ministerial and official encroachments can have the same gradual and silent effects on independent jurisdictions.

The inspectorate's independence is as precious to the public and the police service as it is to the inspectors of constabulary. Politicians and officials should also recognise its value, and in doing so protect it.

Part 2: Our inspections

Our PEEL inspections

Significant changes to PEEL

Over the past year, the police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) programme, which assesses the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales, has gone through the most significant changes since it began in 2014. We now focus more on continuous assessment.

The changes include:

- making better use of all the available information we have on a force, including force management statements (FMS) and findings from our thematic inspections;
- a greater focus on results and what matters to the public, including what a force is doing to reduce crime;
- making our force inspection findings available sooner;
- a new accelerated cause of concern process,⁶⁶ so forces can act rapidly in relation to the necessary improvements;

⁶⁶ We publish our accelerated causes of concern promptly; they are inspection reports under section 54, Police Act 1996 and published under section 55. As such, they require to be responded to by the relevant local policing body under section 55(5A) and, where appropriate, section 55(5B).

- a new PEEL assessment framework;
- introducing the victim service assessment to give a view of the force's performance from the perspective of the victim;
- making our rolling crime data integrity inspections part of the PEEL assessment; and
- assessing forces against five, instead of four, graded judgments: outstanding, good, adequate, requires improvement and inadequate.

While these changes improve our approach to PEEL inspections, they don't mean that it is possible to make direct comparisons between the grades given this year with those given in previous inspections.

A reduction in grade, particularly from *good* to *adequate*, doesn't necessarily mean that there has been a reduction in performance, unless we specifically say so in a force report. Broadly speaking, the new *adequate* grade is equivalent to the bottom quartile of the previous *good* grade. It has been introduced because too many forces appeared to be satisfied with being just inside the *good* grade, whereas in reality good enough isn't good enough.

Our 2021 inspections

In autumn 2020, we started our inspections again following the easing of the lockdown restrictions. Our inspection activity initially focused on two follow-up inspections of Greater Manchester Police and Cleveland Police, which we reported on in [State of Policing 2020](#).

We have now fully resumed our PEEL inspections. Between 1 April and 30 November 2021, we completed and published our reports on five forces. We have more inspections underway and plan to inspect every Home Office force by the end of 2022.

Further changes

We aim to continuously improve our inspections and we will continue to evaluate our new approach. So far, we have learned that the intensified continuous assessment approach is viewed by forces and inspection staff as a positive change. It gives them a better understanding of force performance and how to pursue continuous improvement. We have also made some further amendments to the inspection programme.

These include:

- Making our inspection approach better reflect how policing is organised to tackle the threat of serious and organised crime (SOC). The inspection and reporting of SOC will become regional, but forces will still get SOC graded judgments in their force PEEL

reports. We will also introduce graded judgments for regional organised crime units (ROCUs).

- Inspecting areas that need a more specialist focus as thematic inspections. This includes the [*Strategic Policing Requirement*](#)⁶⁷ and armed policing, which we do not grade in PEEL. It also includes how we inspect counter-corruption, professional standards and vetting, which we will report on nationally; we will continue to grade forces in these respects and include them in force PEEL reports.
- Giving a stronger narrative assessment of victim service by removing the graded judgment from the victim service assessment. Victim service is inextricably linked to other areas of force performance, such as how they respond to cases reported by the public, carry out their investigations, and address vulnerability. The new approach will make sure that victim experience is being considered in all these areas; it will become a prominent aspect of our reporting.

The first eight forces in our PEEL programme have been inspected using the methodology we used before. These forces are Merseyside Police, Dyfed-Powys

⁶⁷ The strategic policing requirement is a document issued by the Home Secretary under section 37A, Police Act 1996, which sets out the Home Secretary's view of what are national threats (actual or prospective) which are threats to national security, public safety, public order or public confidence that are of such gravity as to be of national importance, or threats which can be countered effectively or efficiently only by national policing capabilities. Chief officers must have regard to the SPR in exercising their functions.

Police, Suffolk Constabulary, Durham Constabulary, Gloucestershire Constabulary, West Midlands Police, West Yorkshire Police, and Northamptonshire Police. The remaining 35 forces will be inspected using the new methodology described above.

Our findings

These are our main findings from the five PEEL inspection reports into:

- Durham Constabulary;
- Gloucestershire Constabulary;
- Northamptonshire Police;
- West Midlands Police; and
- West Yorkshire Police.

By the end of 2022, the themes identified so far may change as we carry out our inspections and report on the other 38 forces. We recognise that this is still a difficult period for policing as the pandemic recedes. In our inspections and reports, we have been mindful of the extra difficulties and demand experienced by forces.

Our PEEL assessments focus on how forces perform in several different areas. The tables on the following pages give the judgments in those areas for the five forces inspected during the reporting period.

Durham Constabulary

Question	Grade
Providing a service to the victims of crime	Adequate
Recording data about crime	Not inspected
Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect	Good
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Good
Responding to the public	Good
Investigating crime	Good
Protecting vulnerable people	Good
Managing offenders and suspects	Good
Disrupting serious organised crime	Outstanding
Building, supporting and protecting the workforce	Good
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	Outstanding

Gloucestershire Constabulary

Question	Grade
Providing a service to the victims of crime	Inadequate
Recording data about crime	Inadequate
Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect	Good
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Good
Responding to the public	Inadequate
Investigating crime	Inadequate
Protecting vulnerable people	Inadequate
Managing offenders and suspects	Adequate
Disrupting serious organised crime	Good
Building, supporting and protecting the workforce	Good
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	Inadequate

Northamptonshire Police

Question	Grade
Providing a service to the victims of crime	Adequate
Recording data about crime	Not inspected
Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect	Requires improvement
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Adequate
Responding to the public	Requires improvement
Investigating crime	Adequate
Protecting vulnerable people	Requires improvement
Managing offenders and suspects	Requires improvement
Disrupting serious organised crime	Adequate
Building, supporting and protecting the workforce	Requires improvement
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	Requires improvement

West Midlands Police

Question	Grade
Providing a service to the victims of crime	Requires improvement
Recording data about crime	Good
Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect	Good
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Good
Responding to the public	Adequate
Investigating crime	Requires improvement
Protecting vulnerable people	Requires improvement
Managing offenders and suspects	Adequate
Disrupting serious organised crime	Good
Building, supporting and protecting the workforce	Adequate
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	Good

West Yorkshire Police

Question	Grade
Providing a service to the victims of crime	Adequate
Recording data about crime	Not inspected
Engaging with and treating the public with fairness and respect	Outstanding
Preventing crime and anti-social behaviour	Outstanding
Responding to the public	Good
Investigating crime	Adequate
Protecting vulnerable people	Good
Managing offenders and suspects	Good
Disrupting serious organised crime	Outstanding
Building, supporting and protecting the workforce	Good
Strategic planning, organisational management and value for money	Outstanding

Forces are reducing crime effectively, but more could be done

As part of our reducing crime assessment, we have identified seven themes that underpin a force's ability to reduce crime effectively. Together, these themes allow us to assess the extent to which a force is doing all it can reasonably be expected to do to reduce crime.

We were pleased that most of the forces inspected had a clear focus on the right areas to effectively reduce crime.

Many forces were addressing, among other things, how they carry out investigations, keep the public safe and protect people from serious harm. But this wasn't always the case.

We found cases of crimes not being investigated effectively and to the standards reasonably expected by the public. We also found that forces didn't always adequately recognise vulnerability or that someone was a repeat victim at the first point of contact. In these cases, victims weren't always offered the support they needed which, in turn, could have led them to withdraw from investigations.

Some forces need to improve capacity in the control room and make sure resources are deployed correctly

Police forces need to be able efficiently and effectively to identify, record and respond to incidents and reports of crimes.

The national target for answering a 999 call is 90 percent within 10 seconds. This target wasn't met by all the forces we inspected. We also found evidence that 101 calls weren't always answered with the requisite level of service and within locally set targets. This meant that the public didn't always get the prompt response from the police that they reasonably expected.

West Yorkshire Police impressed us with its approach, however. The force exceeded the national target for answering 999 calls within 10 seconds and met the target for answering 101 calls. The force also often had a daily abandonment rate of 0 percent for emergency calls; this meant that when members of the public in West Yorkshire telephoned the police in an emergency, they normally got the quick response they needed.

Worryingly, we found that in several forces call handlers inconsistently apply an effective threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement (THRIVE) risk assessment. This assessment was often accompanied by an absence of a victim needs

assessment and a limited understanding of repeat victimisation.

In one force, we found that incidents of domestic abuse, behavioural crimes and anti-social behaviour weren't always being recorded correctly. This meant that opportunities to safeguard repeat victims and reduce future demand might have been missed.

We found evidence of significant difficulties being faced by some control rooms that limited their effectiveness. These included out-of-date information and communications technology (ICT) systems, unclear policies, and insufficient support and guidance from experts. This meant that services couldn't always provide the best service to victims.

There were also examples where the agreed appointment or response time had been changed without the caller being notified. While this tends to happen at the busiest of times, failing to notify callers of changes can lead to them feeling frustrated and dissatisfied.

Forces need to make sure they have the capability and capacity to undertake investigations effectively

We found that, in some forces, investigations into crimes were proportionate, thorough and prompt. This was particularly the case in Durham Constabulary. The force recognised that an investigation starts with an initial report, and had provided staff in the control room with basic investigative training as a result. This meant that control room staff were able to consider investigative opportunities at the earliest stage. The force had governance mechanisms in place to monitor investigation standards and results, as well as victim satisfaction levels.

But we have concerns that some forces don't have enough capacity or the right capabilities to respond to and investigate crimes effectively. For example, we found examples where decisions over who investigated the crime were based on availability rather than the police officer's training and skills. There were also delays in allocating cases to investigators, and some investigation plans were either missing, not followed up or not updated.

There needs to be better supervision to scrutinise decision-making so that investigations are being followed up appropriately. Forces should also make sure they have effective plans to handle digital media in place to allow them to retrieve evidence from mobile

telephones, computers, and other electronic devices quickly enough to avoid delaying investigations.

There still needs to be a focus on understanding vulnerability and getting better results for victims

Not all forces we inspected were considering and identifying vulnerability correctly, especially at first contact with the victim. This meant that some victims didn't get a sufficiently appropriate response during the initial stages of the investigation or the support they needed. Some forces need to improve the way they collect diversity information to make sure they are offering the right support to victims throughout investigations.

Forces should also make sure they follow national guidance and rules for deciding the outcome code of each report of crime. We are still worried that a high proportion of investigations are being discontinued because the victim withdraws support for the prosecution (outcome 16) or because there isn't enough evidence to support a prosecution (outcome 15).

Dataset 1: Proportion of crimes resulting in outcome 15 and outcome 16 in the year ending March 2015 – March 2021 in England and Wales

The proportion of crimes resulting in outcome 16 has increased steadily, from 7 percent in the year ending March 2015 to 22 percent in the year ending March 2021. Over the same period, the proportion of crimes resulting in outcome 15 has increased from 8 percent to 13 percent.

Source: [Home Office Crime and Policing Statistics](#)

Forces need to make sure there is an auditable record (such as a statement or pocket notebook entry) of why a victim withdraws their support. In one force, we found that for outcome 16, an auditable record endorsed by the victim stating the reasons they withdrew support was only available in 6 of 20 cases. A more effective approach to auditing and supervising these decisions will mean outcome codes reflect victims' wishes and will help forces to make improvements.

In one force, we found evidence that some cases where the police believed it wasn't in the public interest to proceed should have been referred to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). This meant that some offenders who should have received a formal sanction may have escaped justice.

Forces also needed to do more to make sure victims' rights under the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime in England and Wales](#) were observed. Some needed to

get better at how they understand and prevent re-victimisation.

But there were also some positive findings. This included work to increase the breadth, understanding and awareness of vulnerability throughout the workforce. We also found examples of effective collaboration with other organisations, such as health and local authorities. This led to improvements being made in how data and information on vulnerability were exchanged, as well as better timing of safeguarding action to protect the most vulnerable people in society.

Some improvements have been made to offender management, but more needs to be done

We identified improvements in many forces when it came to how they manage offenders and apprehend suspects. Forces generally had clear policies and processes in place for dealing with suspects, which were well understood and applied by frontline staff and supervisors. In most forces, many officers and members of staff had a good understanding of pre-charge bail and the regime concerning the release of suspects under investigation and not on bail. Many had scrutiny arrangements in place to make sure the rules were being applied effectively and appropriately.

We also found good examples of well-established and effective integrated offender management programmes. These programmes are designed to target the most dangerous or prolific offenders, regardless of whether they are subject to supervision, and to prevent them from reoffending.

For example, West Yorkshire Police introduced an intelligence-driven integrated offender management tool. This is a web-based offender tracking instrument that is used to monitor reoffending rates. It also assesses the cost of offending by people who are managed using integrated offender management arrangements.

The tool allows the force to establish, for example, that over a 12-month period in Wakefield the cost associated with serious acquisitive crime was almost £7 million. Being able to calculate crime costs in this way is a positive development, as it allows a force to assess whether its integrated offender management programme is effective at reducing offending.

But, in general, we have concerns about how forces managed the risk posed by the most dangerous offenders. Forces need to improve how they manage registered sex offenders. Among other things, forces should:

- make sure their neighbourhood policing teams have up-to-date information which helps them give useful intelligence to those who manage registered sex offenders;

- complete risk assessments thoroughly;
- set clear actions that reduce risk to the public; and
- have the right digital capability and capacity to effectively manage offenders and proactively identify further offending.

We saw innovative practice at Durham Constabulary when it came to how they managed high-risk sex offenders. Its Operation Parallelogram is an initiative in which specialist staff from the digital imaging investigation team and management of sexual offenders and violent offenders unit visit registered sex offenders. They are able to detect any devices connected to the internet. They are then able to check them to make sure that offenders aren't committing further offences or breaching the conditions of an order by accessing, passing on or downloading illegal content. This information helped the force better manage the risk posed by offenders.

Forces continue to make serious and organised crime a priority

Most of the forces we have inspected so far had the right capability and capacity to disrupt SOC effectively. Forces were generally good at using intelligence to identify, understand and prioritise SOC, resulting in effective decision-making and disruption. There were some very good examples of problem-solving and working with other organisations to prevent SOC and the anti-social behaviour associated with it.

The approach to reducing the threat from SOC was good in several forces. Both West Yorkshire Police and Durham Constabulary were outstanding in this respect. They were effective at working with other organisations and had robust systems in place for gathering intelligence.

Forces understand the value of neighbourhood policing well

We were pleased to find that neighbourhood policing remained a priority for forces. Forces generally understood the demand faced by neighbourhood policing teams and were managing their resources accordingly. This included working with communities to build resilience and unity. West Yorkshire Police, for example, had invested significantly in developing its neighbourhood policing model since we last inspected. Resources weren't routinely moved away into other areas of policing and the force put significant value on early intervention. In particular, they focused on supporting children and young people to stop them from offending in the first place.

We are seeing more independent scrutiny of stop and search powers

In 2017, we recommended that all forces should monitor and analyse comprehensive stop and search data. We wanted forces to be able to show that their use of stop and search powers was consistently fair. If there were any disparities between the use of stop and search on people of different ethnic groups, we wanted forces to explain to the public what the disparity was, any reasons for it and, where necessary, how they had acted to reduce it. We have continued to consider progress against these recommendations as part of our PEEL inspections.

The forces we have inspected so far had made good progress on bringing in both internal and external panels of people to scrutinise, understand and monitor stop and search data. We were impressed by the work carried out by West Yorkshire Police to analyse its stop and search activity. Its analysis had shown that, in most cases, there were reasonable grounds for its use.

But some forces could still do more to understand why some searches take place and how they are aligned with policing priorities. In some cases, forces couldn't tell us whether drug searches were for possession or intent to supply.

Not all forces have robust financial planning processes

While some forces had financial plans that were both ambitious and sustainable, we identified significant gaps in others. This meant, in some respects, they couldn't reassure us that the current level of policing could be maintained within anticipated budgets.

Too often, this was coupled with a limited understanding of where the skills and capability gaps were in the workforce and how the force would continue to meet demand.

Worryingly, even forces that had good financial planning in place were experiencing financial difficulties. If these aren't properly addressed, they are likely to result in future shortfalls.

Forces continue to adopt new ways of working

We were pleased to see examples of new ways of working in many forces. This included changing staff contracts to allow for more flexibility to work from home, expanding forensic capabilities, developing ICT to allow for better quality assurance of investigations, and putting in place new systems in control rooms to better identify risks and reduce demand.

Forces continue to focus on ethical and inclusive practice in their workforces

Our inspections showed that there was a sense of belonging and inclusion reported by police officers and staff, and an emphasis on creating a fair, positive and ethical working environment for everyone. Many senior leaders made use of a range of channels to meet and communicate with staff, and used approaches such as reverse mentoring for new recruits.

The general wellbeing of the workforce was a priority for most forces, with a good range of support offered. There was evidence of recent investment in wellbeing, including in more occupational health resources. However, we found examples of workloads and working hours increasing, and many staff struggling to keep up with demand. Forces must continue to build on their wellbeing provision and take preventative measures, especially for people in high-risk and high-demand roles, including those in the control room.

Some progress has been made to improve workforce diversity. Forces are at different stages of implementing the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) strategy, but most were trying to improve the diversity of their workforces and understand their recruitment needs.

Many forces were successfully recruiting more Black, Asian and other minority ethnic police officers. Some were also taking steps to scrutinise whether there was any disproportionality in recruitment, including using ICT systems and dashboards, to identify trends.

Dataset 2: Proportion of police officers who identified as Black, Asian or other minority ethnic group, as at 31 March 2010 to 31 March 2021 in England and Wales

The proportion is slowly increasing over time, from 6 percent on 31 March 2010 to 7.6 percent on 31 March 2021.

Source: Home Office

We also found examples of leadership programmes that offered mentoring, coaching and lessons in leadership that were designed to develop and retain officers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Even with progress being made through the police uplift recruitment programme, forces still aren't recruiting enough people that represent the communities they serve. We encourage forces to continue to make diversity a focus. They should also focus their EDI strategies on retaining staff from under-represented groups.

Forces have improved their approach to vetting and counter corruption, but more needs to be done

We found that forces were generally good at managing vetting. Although some forces have worked hard to tackle the problem of unvetted staff, others need to make more progress in this respect. We also found that not all forces' vetting activities fully complied with Authorised Professional Practice (APP), and so further work is needed. Notably, Durham Constabulary has improved in this area; it has robust systems in place to monitor vetting and fully complies with APP.

In 2016, we raised concerns about the capacity and tools used in counter-corruption units. Since then, the forces we inspected have improved in relation to their capacity to mitigate and investigate corruption, including by developing effective relationships with organisations that support vulnerable people. But in some forces we found evidence that relationships with organisations had lapsed and needed to be renewed.

We found good examples of practice in counter-corruption units to address our previous concerns. For example, West Midlands Police proactively looked for links between internal cases of sexual harassment and members of the workforce who might abuse their positions for a sexual purpose.

PEEL spotlight reports

As part of our PEEL inspections, we publish spotlight reports to provide an overview of any national or emerging themes. In preparing our spotlight reports, we draw on the evidence we gather from all inspections that have been recently completed. This means we can give a clearer picture of how police forces are performing in these areas. We plan to publish our next PEEL spotlight report in spring 2022.

Review of policing domestic abuse in the pandemic

The first national lockdown intensified the vulnerability of people who were living with domestic abuse. With most of us instructed to stay at home, many victims felt unable to escape their abusers, even though the lockdown regulations permitted flight from violence and abuse.

In 2014, we published our first report on domestic abuse, entitled [*Everyone's business: Improving the police response to domestic abuse*](#). On 23 June 2021, we published our fifth, entitled [*Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic*](#).

We assessed how the exceptional circumstances posed by the pandemic affected the police's response to domestic abuse cases and their prevention work.

Our findings

The lockdown restrictions put many victims of domestic abuse at greater risk because of their close confinement with their abusers and their factual or perceived inability to escape. We were pleased to find that, in many respects, the police responded well to the new and difficult circumstances brought about by the pandemic. Forces adapted their practices, focused on prevention, and disseminated ideas for new ways of working.

It is commendable that many forces adequately recognised the risks posed to vulnerable people who felt trapped in their homes. Many forces recognised that they needed to work differently, be proactive, and make contact with vulnerable people to offer them support rather than wait for them to get in touch first.

However, some long-standing problems remained and were perhaps aggravated by the pandemic.

The police are proactive at keeping people safe

Some forces contacted victims who were viewed to be at highest risk of harm or who had been in regular contact with the police before the lockdown. Many officers offered adequate levels of reassurance and provided safety information to those at risk.

Many forces disguised their reasons for calling. This was in case the perpetrator answered, or in case it wasn't safe for the victim to speak. This showed that many forces made efforts to understand victims' situations. It also showed the importance of being discreet when offering support to avoid any risk of further harm.

Some forces attended domestic abuse incidents with specialist domestic violence advisers. Some had specialists working in their call centres who gave advice and reassurance when victims called.

Many forces made adequate use of the power to arrest. Between April and June 2020, during the first lockdown, there was a 15 percent increase in arrests for domestic abuse incidents compared with the same period in the previous year.

Dataset 3: Number of arrests for domestic abuse in England and Wales

The number of arrests increased from 57,600 in quarter 1 of 2019/20 to 66,380 in quarter 1 of 2020/21.

Source: HMICFRS data collection

Police and other criminal justice organisations make good use of technology

Many forces have invested in ICT systems that make it possible for victims to talk to officers securely online. In these cases, this means that all evidence of the meeting is automatically wiped from the victim's telephone to help protect her or him if the device is later checked by the abuser.

In some forces, we saw a greater availability of the option of reporting domestic abuse online. Some forces used social media as a way for victims to get in touch with them. Some contacted victims by telephone, rather than visit them in person, when the assessment of risk of harm showed that this was the most appropriate thing to do.

The hearing of applications for domestic violence protection orders moved online. This meant that, despite court closures, these orders could still be timeously granted. People could also request information about their partners online under the Clare's Law disclosure scheme. Before, information could be requested only at a police station or in the victim's home.

While we welcome the fact that, in general, victims had more opportunities to make and maintain contact with the police, we were concerned that contact made online wasn't scrutinised in the same way as traditional reporting methods.

Delays and backlogs in the criminal justice system are a significant concern

In December 2020, Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service reported a backlog of 53,000 cases (all crime types).⁶⁸ In March 2021, Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPPI) reported that some trial dates were being set into 2023. The state of the courts varied throughout the country, meaning that not all victims had the same access to justice.

In its report [*CPS response to COVID-19: dealing with backlogs*](#), HMCPPI said that victims were left in a state of limbo while waiting for their new hearing dates to be set when previous ones had been adjourned. Sometimes, their hearing dates were adjourned repeatedly.

Witness care units, which are run by the police, make considerable efforts to work through lists of postponed cases to update victims, provide reassurance and give them access to support. But in a very large majority of cases the police couldn't tell victims when their hearing dates would be.

Some forces told us that the slow progress of cases through courts was making many victims want to withdraw.

⁶⁸ [*Impact of the pandemic on the Criminal Justice System: A joint view of the Criminal Justice Inspectors on the Criminal Justice System's response to COVID-19*](#), HM Crown Prosecution Inspectorate, HMICFRS, HM Inspectorate of Prisons and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation, 19 January 2021, p23.

Successful criminal justice outcomes for domestic abuse remain worryingly low

On average, three out of four reports of domestic abuse are closed without the suspect being charged as a result of a lack of evidence to continue with an investigation or the withdrawal of the victim's willingness to support a prosecution.

We of course know that some victims may not want their cases to go to court; they just want the abuse to stop. Nevertheless, it is alarming to see how few cases reach the stage of charge.

Many forces had difficulty explaining why charge rates were so low. And many couldn't always provide evidence showing that they had properly communicated with victims or considered evidence-led prosecutions when victims didn't want to provide evidence.

Our recommendations

We made three recommendations:

- Police forces should immediately review their online contact and telephone-based initial response to domestic abuse and introduce an effective supervision and monitoring framework.
- Police forces should immediately review their capacity to provide continual support and safeguarding to victims of domestic abuse whose cases are awaiting trial.

- Police forces should take immediate action to understand why so many cases are closed without a suspect being charged, alongside their use of evidence-led prosecutions.

Next steps

We will continue to monitor progress of the implementation of the recommendations we made in our PEEL inspection framework and in our continual inspection work on violence against women and girls (VAWG).

Force management statements

A force management statement (FMS) is a self-assessment that each chief constable (and mayoral equivalent) prepares and gives to us each year.

It is the chief constable's statement and explanation of:

- the demand (crime and non-crime, latent and patent) the force expects to face in the following four years;
- the condition, capacity, capability, performance, serviceability and security of supply of the force's workforce and other assets, and the extent to which those assets will be able to meet expected future demand;
- how the force will develop and improve its workforce, policies, practices and other assets to cope with future demand;

- how the force will improve its efficiency to make sure the gap between future demand and future capability is as small as it can reasonably be made to be;
- the effect the force expects those changes to have and the effect of any residual risk of service failure; and
- the money the force expects to have to do all this.

We use the information in FMSs to inform our inspections of forces and our thematic inspections, and as part of how we monitor forces' performances.

Why FMSs are important

Forces need to manage and deploy their assets well so they can police communities effectively and efficiently.

A force's FMS provides it with essential information which enables it to make better decisions about how it will meet future demand. But this is only if a force comprehensively assesses the demand it expects to face in the future, and makes a sound assessment of the present and future condition of its workforce and other assets. This knowledge means that funds, resources and effort can be properly allocated. It also means the force can deal effectively and efficiently with the demands that pose the greatest risk.

The information in each FMS forms an important part of what we know about that force. FMSs are a source of evidence in our inspections and part of our continuous monitoring process. They provide us with information

that we use, with other data and evidence, to determine the risks faced by forces and identify what works and areas of innovative practice.

Each FMS helps establish which areas of a force's activities present the greatest risks to the effectiveness and resilience of the service it provides. In turn, this informs the focus and depth of our inspections.

In 2020, we adapted our PEEL programme to make it more closely aligned with FMSs.

FMSs have proven to be very successful. Some chief constables and police and crime commissioners were initially reluctant to embrace FMSs. Many forces have told us they would complete the FMS process even if we didn't require it for our inspections. Forces have realised how much more there is to understand about the demand they are likely to face, and how little they knew about the skills of their people before.

How we use FMSs

With the third round of FMSs (FMS3), we are using the information in FMSs in more ways.

We don't just use the FMS to inform our inspections. We also use the information contained in it to direct our efforts and resources. If a force's FMS doesn't show that it has a clear understanding of the demand it expects to face, its workforce and resources, or how it intends to change, then we target our inspection resource at these areas.

In the forces we've inspected so far this year in our PEEL inspection programme, those that have made an FMS part of their planning cycle produce better FMSs.

We have also found that FMSs are now sufficiently sophisticated that we can use the information in them to inform our other work. We also use the information in FMSs to inform the National Policing Board, the Crime and Policing Performance Board and national police programmes, such as the recruitment of 20,000 police officers and the police response to the pandemic.

National themes from FMSs

The latest FMSs told us about significant changes in police forces. We found the following:

Police uplift

The recruitment of an extra 20,000 police officers is changing how forces operate. Many forces are increasing their learning and development teams and are changing their estates to make sure there is space for more officers.

But the criminal justice system needs to be changed to accommodate the increase in crimes that these new police officers are expected to deal with through proactive policing. Almost every section of each force's FMS reflects on how the uplift programme will affect the work it is reasonably expected to do.

All forces told us that they expected to recruit the number of officers they had received uplift funding for.

Many forces told us their police and crime commissioners had agreed to allocate them extra funding to recruit more officers beyond the numbers contemplated by the Home Office's uplift programme.

The biggest omission from FMS3 was an explanation of what the uplift programme would mean for the public. In too many respects, forces failed adequately to explain how they would change the service they provide, what would be better because of the extra police officers, and how we would know if the uplift programme had been a success.

Despite the recruitment of 20,000 police officers, most forces still need to make savings; the funding from the uplift programme is ring-fenced, meaning that forces will have to make cuts elsewhere to save money. We were particularly concerned that some forces told us they may need to replace specialist roles carried out by police staff with police officers. This is very worrying and puts forces' effectiveness and efficiency at risk.

We did see, however, that over the last decade many forces had made great strides in modernising their workforces. All forces had made sure that back-office posts that didn't require warranted powers were filled by more cost-effective, and in many cases more specialised, police staff instead.

Not enough detectives

Every FMS3 referred to the national shortage of detectives and their own limited investigative capacities. Many forces have plans to increase detective numbers, but several told us they are behind schedule.

One force told us about a shortfall of 150 detectives and investigators. The force had hoped to fill the gap by 2022, but this won't be possible. In most FMSs, forces told us they were struggling to tackle the shortfall in detective and investigator posts. They gave the following reasons:

- the policing education qualifications framework means it takes longer for officers to become operationally competent, which in turn means it takes longer to fill gaps;
- force finances make it difficult to replace investigator staff, so many forces fill posts with the new officers from the police uplift programme;
- many detectives are retiring; and
- a loss of experienced detectives to ROCUs.

Forces told us how in many cases they have had to have investigations carried out by inexperienced officers or those working towards their detective qualifications. But they didn't tell us enough about the effect the shortfall in detectives or an inexperienced workforce has had on criminal justice outcomes for victims of crime. Nor did some adequately explain how these problems had affected overall performance.

Offender management

Forces told us about increasing demand from offender management. They are especially worried about the increasing risk and demand from managing sexual and violent offenders through the multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) process. This process involves probation, police, prison and other agencies working together locally to manage offenders who pose a high risk of harm to others.

One force reported a tripling since April 2019 of the number of high-risk sex offenders. Several forces expect an approximate 10 percent increase in the numbers of offenders every year. Many forces told us their offender managers were dealing with more offenders than anticipated.

Technology helps police forces manage demand, but it also creates demand. Technology can identify whether an offender has breached relevant conditions; this creates an added demand on offender management teams. It is vitally important that forces make better use of information and technology to keep the public safe and reduce reoffending, and they need to be mindful of the need to manage efficiently the extra workload that this generates.

It isn't clear how forces will be able to deal with the increasing demand of offender management.

Some forces told us they may need to reduce their activity in this respect, for example by limiting the types of offenders participating in offender management

programmes. Others expect to ask their offender managers to manage more offenders than the recommended safe management level. Generally, there wasn't enough assessment of the effect these changes would have on the force and on the public safety.

Current and future demand

Since the first FMSs, there have been clear improvements in how forces consider and explain the demand they face. We found that forces generally understood the wide range of factors that affect their demand, although the quality of assessment varies by force and policing function.

We were pleased to see some forces differentiating between demand, such as the number of calls they receive, and the workload that results from it. This included the increased length of calls, which is the result of a more enhanced and thorough vulnerability assessment.

A few forces take this further. Some forces determine how some workloads generate additional demand. For example, demand relating to cases of domestic abuse or mental ill health generate different workloads for the police. For some crimes, the police will deal with it immediately and no further action is needed. But for others, the police may have to intervene again at a later stage or offer long-term support. We believe including this sort of nuanced assessment may help forces further understand how they need to change to meet future demands.

Workforce and other assets

Forces need to assess the condition, capacity, capability, serviceability, performance and security of supply of other assets, as well as workforce wellbeing. If a force understands these things, and has soundly assessed expected future demand, the changes it needs to make will be far easier to understand and assess, and deployment decisions will be better.

Most forces have a good understanding of the capacity and wellbeing of their workforces. They know how many people or resources they have and how available they are. Many forces understand the wellbeing concerns in respect of their staff and officers, and there is a focus on supporting and improving the physical and mental health of their people. But they aren't always as confident in other assessments of their people and assets, in particular their capability and performance.

When forces told us about their performance, often they gave us metrics and measurements of performance, but didn't adequately assess whether this was good or bad. In these respects, sometimes forces simply referred to our inspections.

Changing to meet expected demand

In our FMS guidance, we ask each force to explain the changes it will make to meet expected future demand. We also ask forces to assess any recent changes they have made. In most FMS3s, forces focused on one of these elements, but rarely both.

Forces didn't always report the costs or the benefits of changes they had made. We understand not every change is a full-scale project, and FMSs aren't the place to record detailed analyses. We understand evaluations should be commensurate with the scale of change. But it is reasonable to think that sophisticated, modern, multi-million-pound organisations such as police forces should evaluate whether the changes they make result in the required benefits effectively and efficiently.

Demand forces don't expect to meet

In its FMS, each force is required to estimate what demand will be unmet and the consequence of not meeting that demand. Very few FMSs answered this question adequately.

This question is often the most difficult for forces to answer. The nature of policing, and a characteristic of many who work in the police service, is to find a way to achieve all that is asked. But this can hide a system straining to cope. Forces told us about increasing demand with increasing complexity. They often told us about a shortage of resources or a lack of the right skills. Too often, the changes forces described didn't seem to address this shortfall. This meant that the FMS didn't properly confront the potential for unmet demand or what that would mean for the force or the public.

Developing FMSs

As FMSs become increasingly integrated into force annual planning cycles and their quality and value continue to improve, the extent to which they assist our inspections is enhanced. As part of our feedback on FMS3 we have spoken with many officers and chief officers about how their FMSs can improve.

In the guidance for the fourth generation of FMSs, we have asked each force to give more information on planning and performance management, including:

- an assessment of how the force expects demand to change because of the pandemic;
- an evidenced assessment of projected performance, including how effective the force expects to be at reducing crime and meeting other national strategic priorities;
- how the force will evaluate the effectiveness of planned changes and any expected interdependencies;
- the expected effect of any changes in how things are done, and the risks and costs associated with those changes; and
- an assessment of the consequences of any unmet demand on risks to the community and the quality of service they can be reasonably expected to provide.

When a force meets all the requirements effectively, its FMS will give strong evidence that it is well run and has a good understanding of current and future demand.

Our child protection inspections

National child protection inspections

Protecting children is one of the most important things the police do. Every instance of abuse or neglect is one too many. The scars last for life; some young lives are lost. The police have a significant role to play in working with other safeguarding organisations to make sure that, as far as possible, no child is left vulnerable to abuse.

We are now in our eighth year of national child protection inspections, which began in April 2014. Since then, we have published reports on 34 police forces. We have also revisited 29 forces to assess the progress they have made against our recommendations.

How we carry out our child protection inspections

In 2021, we adapted our inspections as a result of the pandemic. We followed national guidelines and worked with forces to make sure our inspections were safe and effective. We worked remotely, using video calls for discussions with police officers and staff, their managers, and leaders. We also reviewed incidents and investigations online.

We don't make graded judgments in these inspections. Our reports give forces detailed analyses of their strengths and what they should do to build on them. Our reports also make recommendations to forces on the respects in which they can improve.

These inspections examine the experiences of children who come into contact with the police when there are concerns about their safety or wellbeing. They consider whether forces have acted in the best interests of children who need to be safeguarded, whether their needs and wishes have been taken sufficiently into account, and whether the most appropriate results have been achieved. Our inspections also assess how the police deal with children who come into custody.

Inspection findings

We found that child protection and wider vulnerability continued to be a priority for the police. But forces needed to do more to make sure senior officers' commitment to improving the service they provide actually made things better for children who needed protection.

Most forces recorded quantitative data on the number of child protection incidents and cases they had. But they often had limited information about how effective their actions were and whether a satisfactory result was achieved. For many forces, it was difficult to know whether officers and staff were consistently making the best decisions for vulnerable children. Senior leaders need to be able to test the nature and

quality of their decision-making processes and whether they bring about positive changes for children. In many cases, forces' processes for evaluating the effectiveness of their actions weren't robust enough.

Generally speaking, frontline officers responded effectively to incidents of concern involving children. And, in general, specialist child protection officers and staff were committed and dedicated to their work in keeping children safe. This is despite problems forces face in respect of the capacity and capability of these specialist teams; many teams told us that they were under significant pressure to deal with everyday demands.

In many respects, the police continued to work hard to safeguard the health and wellbeing of the workforce. The service invested a significant amount of time and focus in this respect; for example, in many forces, regular psychological screening was provided for those working in child protection.

In most of the forces we visited, many members of frontline staff had received vulnerability training, some of which covered adverse childhood experiences (these are stressful or traumatic experiences that can materially affect children and young people throughout their lives). A small number of forces had also evaluated how this training has improved their approach to protecting vulnerable people.

We have previously reported on the variations in the standards of investigations where children are exploited

online. Often, there are delays before forces take action to safeguard children. This remains an area of concern. In spring 2022, we will be carrying out a national inspection of the standard of online child sexual abuse and exploitation investigations; we will assess how the police deal with such cases.

Post-inspection reviews

Follow-up activity is an integral part of our inspection programme. It allows us to assess the progress made by a force in response to our findings and recommendations, as well as how that work is improving the safety and protection of children.

In every follow-up inspection, we continue to find that, in general, forces are acting on our recommendations and that they are improving as a result. This is providing better results for children.

When investigations are well supervised, involve effective joint working and use effective safeguarding plans, a positive result can be achieved for the child.

Joint targeted area inspections in England

These joint inspections are carried out under section 20 of the Children Act 2004. They are an inspection of multi-agency arrangements – which are held between the police, the local authority, the local clinical commissioning group and other organisations – that help, protect and care for children and young people in a local authority area in England.

These inspections assess the experiences of children and examine the work carried out by senior leaders in policing and other organisations. We also assess how their monitoring of child protection leads to improvements for children and their families.

When determining the scope of an inspection, we prioritise problems where a joint evaluation by the inspectorates will best support improvement in a local area.

This programme of work is carried out with Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission.

This year, we have reviewed and developed a new joint inspection programme. As a result, we now assess:

- the responses to child abuse, neglect, and exploitation at the point of identification;
- the quality and effect of assessment, planning and decision-making in response to notifications and referrals; and
- the leadership, management, and effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements in relation to this work.

In November 2021, we piloted this new approach in Hampshire, and we have further pilots planned in 2022. We are continuing to work with the other criminal justice inspectorates on the evaluation and continuous development of this new approach.

Joint inspection of child protection arrangements in Wales

In Wales, child protection and safeguarding responsibilities are devolved to the Welsh Government. The Wales Safeguarding Procedures establish what is reasonably expected of all organisations involved in child protection in Wales, including the police.

We worked with the Care Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, Estyn (the education and training inspectorate for Wales) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Together, we continued to develop a joint inspection programme to assess how effectively organisations that protect children work together.

In June 2021, a second pilot inspection took place, which evaluated how local services in Neath Port Talbot, South Wales, handled child exploitation.

Our findings included the following:

- Child protection agencies generally had good structures and processes in place to work together when a child was at risk of exploitation.
- Police officers often worked well with children and their families and sought their views and concerns when dealing with them.
- Child protection agencies often identified risks to children and reported problems with safeguarding promptly.

- The police had a system in place to monitor referrals over the weekend, which meant that they could respond to urgent incidents.
- The force's response to children at risk of exploitation when reported missing wasn't always appropriate.
- Limited enquiries were conducted to find these children, despite the fact that they were known to be at risk.

We will continue to support the development of this inspection programme.

Our specialist inspections

The Police Service of Northern Ireland's handling of the Bobby Storey funeral on 30 June 2020

On 21 June 2020, Bobby Storey, a senior republican, died in England.

His funeral was held in Belfast on 30 June 2020 during the first lockdown in Northern Ireland.

At that time, the Northern Ireland Assembly had imposed restrictions on liberty and economic activity. These included restrictions on the numbers of people who were allowed to attend a funeral.

Hundreds of mourners attended the funeral. Among those present were members of Sinn Féin, including its

president, and Members of the Northern Ireland Legislative Assembly (MLAs).

Immediately after the funeral, there was anger from both the public and several politicians. They questioned the actions of the MLAs who had attended the funeral: they had appealed to the public to follow the lockdown regulations, but then seemingly ignored the rules that they had set themselves.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) responded to the criticism by opening an investigation into the potential breaches of the lockdown regulations.

The PSNI consulted the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) for Northern Ireland to determine whether the lockdown regulations had been breached to the extent that prosecutions should be pursued.

In March 2021, the PPS announced that there would be no prosecutions associated with attendance at Mr Storey's funeral. This was because of concerns about the confusing lockdown regulations and the way in which the PSNI had handled engagement before the funeral.

We carried out our inspection in April 2021.

Conclusions

If public confidence in the PSNI suffered because of the handling of Mr Storey's funeral – and it is our view that, unfortunately, it did – then there are a number of factors to consider.

The PSNI

There were grounds for criticising the PSNI's approach before, during and after the funeral. But we should emphasise that these were not particularly serious failings: in any other part of the UK, they would pass without sparking public controversy.

Our most significant criticism was that, although its efforts were commendable, the PSNI didn't communicate with the public as well as it should have done before the funeral.

There was a degree of informality in the PSNI's dealings with organisers that, in the unique circumstances of Northern Ireland, was easily understood and, perhaps, forgivable: senior officers typically have regular contact with a relatively small cohort of politicians and community leaders throughout the political spectrum.

But it is important that these remarks are seen in context. There is no serious suggestion that PSNI officers on the ground could or should have done anything to deal with potential breaches of lockdown regulations during the funeral.

Most importantly, we saw nothing to suggest that there was any bias towards one community or another in the way the PSNI dealt with this funeral.

The lockdown regulations in Northern Ireland

Between March and June 2020, the lockdown regulations in Northern Ireland had been amended on nine occasions. The regulations in force at the time of the funeral were both confusing and controversial. That alone posed an arguably insurmountable problem for the PSNI. And throughout the UK, the police needed to consider the relationship between the regulations and human rights law.

Sinn Féin

Sinn Féin politicians played a major role in organising Mr Storey's funeral and many senior figures attended on the day. It wasn't difficult to see why some people were outraged: many had lost loved ones, and they weren't able to hold the funerals they wanted. And, for others, it was easy to interpret the funeral as wilfully disregarding the regulations for political ends.

The PPS

The PPS decision not to prosecute undoubtedly sparked much of the criticism of the PSNI. In our assessment of the decision not to prosecute, we found the PPS arguments wholly persuasive.

We reached the same conclusion: we were not confident that any of the funeral attendees could have been shown to have committed an offence under the lockdown regulations in place at the time.

A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape – Phase one: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action

Rape victims need to be able to trust in the criminal justice system to handle their cases thoroughly, fairly and effectively.

Reports of rape recorded by the police increased by almost 20,000 in the four years to March 2020. At the same time, the number of rape cases referred by the police to the CPS decreased steadily.

Dataset 4: Rape offences recorded: how many were referred to the CPS and the number of successful prosecutions from 2015/16 to 2019/20

The number of rape cases referred to the CPS is much lower than the number of cases reported. The number of successful prosecutions is lower still.

In 2019/20, 56,000 rapes were recorded by the police, 4,200 were referred to the CPS, but only 1,440 successful prosecutions took place. This pattern is the same in all years since 2015/16.

Source: Home Office and CPS data

In July 2021, we published the first of two reports that together considered the response, decision-making and effectiveness of the police and the CPS at every

stage of a rape case – from when it is first reported to when it is finalised. This inspection was carried out jointly with HMCPST.

The first report focused on cases where either the police or the CPS decided to take no further action. The second report, which considered cases from when the suspect is charged to when the case is finalised, will be published next year.

Methodology

To assess the effectiveness of the investigation and prosecution of rape cases, we:

- established an external reference group with members from victims' groups and other interested parties;
- commissioned an independent research company, Opinion Research Services, to support our work by evaluating the experiences of adult rape victims (men, women, and non-binary);
- carried out fieldwork in eight forces (covering seven CPS areas);
- jointly reviewed and assessed 502 police and CPS case files (from five police forces and CPS areas) in which either the police or CPS decided to take no further action, or cases were marked as 'admin finalised' (meaning that the CPS were waiting for further material and information from the police before taking any further action);

- held 39 interviews and 29 focus groups with police investigators and prosecutors;
- held focus groups with independent sexual violence advisers⁶⁹ (ISVAs) in six police forces; and
- held 13 interviews with national leads from the police and the CPS, Home Office and Ministry of Justice representatives, the Victims' Commissioner for England and Wales, the College of Policing and representatives of national victims' groups and other interested parties.

Our findings

Throughout our inspection, we found evidence of many dedicated people who were unwavering in their efforts to do the right thing for victims of rape, often in very difficult circumstances. This commitment to make improvements is highly commendable.

But we also found some evidence of ineffective joint working between the police and prosecutors. This contributed to lengthy delays in decision-making, as well as inadequate results for victims and unacceptably poor levels of communication with them.

⁶⁹ These are specialists who give a service to victims who have experienced rape and sexual assault, irrespective of whether they have reported to the police; the nature of the support provided varies, depending on the needs of the individual and their particular circumstances; provide impartial information to the victims about all of their options, such as reporting to the police, and accessing specialist support such as pre-trial therapy and sexual violence counselling; also provide information on other services that victims may require, for example in relation to health and social care, housing, or benefits.

We also found that concern about the low charge and conviction rates can result in a cautious approach to rape investigations and prosecutions. This can, in turn, lead to a disproportionate focus on the victim; as a result, victims may withdraw their support for the case.

Our recommendations

There is no single, easy answer to these problems, but several improvements would help. We jointly made 13 recommendations:

- Immediately, police forces should ensure information on the protected characteristics of rape victims is accurately and consistently recorded.
- Police forces and support services should work together at a local level to better understand each other's roles. A co-ordinated approach will help make sure that all available and bespoke wrap-around support is offered to the victim throughout every stage of the case. The input of victims and their experiences should play a central role in shaping the support offered.
- Police forces should collect data to record the different stages when, and reasons why, a victim may withdraw support for a case. The Home Office should review the available outcome codes so that the data gathered can help target necessary remedial action and improve victim care.

- Immediately, police forces and CPS areas should work together at a local level to prioritise action to improve the effectiveness of case strategies and action plans, with rigorous target and review dates and a clear escalation and performance management process. The NPCC lead for adult sexual offences and the CPS lead should provide a national framework to help embed this activity.
- Police forces and the CPS should work together at a local level to introduce appropriate ways to build a cohesive and seamless approach. This should improve relationships, communication and understanding of the roles of each organisation. As a minimum, the following should be included:
 - considering early investigative advice⁷⁰ in every case and recording reasons for not seeking it;
 - the investigator and the reviewing prosecutor including their direct telephone and email contact details in all written communications;
 - in cases referred to the CPS, a face-to-face meeting (virtual or in person) between the investigator and prosecutor before deciding to take no further action; and

⁷⁰ This is guidance and advice provided to the police by a CPS lawyer in serious, sensitive or complex cases, or any case where a police supervisor considers it would be of assistance. It is meant to be given at a very early stage of a case, to help decide what evidence will be required to support a prosecution, and to decide if a case can proceed to court.

- a clear escalation pathway available to both the police and the CPS in cases where the parties don't agree with decisions, subject to regular reviews to check effectiveness, and local results.
- The police and the CPS, in consultation with commissioned and non-commissioned services and advocates, and victims, should review the current process for communicating to victims the fact that a decision to take no further action has been made. They should implement any changes needed so that these difficult messages are conveyed in a timely way that best suits victims' needs.
- Police forces should ensure investigators understand that victims are entitled to have police decisions not to charge reviewed under the Victims' Right to Review scheme and should periodically review levels of take-up.
- The National Criminal Justice Board should review the existing governance arrangements for rape and instigate swift reform, taking into account the findings from this report and from the Government Rape Review. The recent appointment of the Minister for Crime and Policing to lead the implementation of the Rape Review should make sure that there is sustained oversight and accountability throughout the whole criminal justice system, sufficient resourcing for the capacity and capability required, and improved outcomes for victims. To support this, a clear

oversight framework, escalation processes and scrutiny need to be in place immediately.

- Immediately, the CPS should review and update the information on the policy for prosecuting cases of rape that is available to the public. The information provided about how the CPS deals with cases of rape must be accurate. Victims and those who support them must be able to rely on the information provided to inform their decisions.
- Immediately, and in consultation with the CPS, the College of Policing and the NPCC lead for adult sexual offences should review the 2010 ACPO guidance on the investigation of rape. The information contained in available guidance must be current to inform effective investigations of rape and provide the best service to victims.
- The Home Office should undertake an urgent review of the role of the detective constable. This should identify appropriate incentives, career progression and support for police officer and police staff investigators to encourage this career path. It should include specific recommendations to ensure there is adequate capacity and capability in every force to investigate rape cases thoroughly and effectively.
- The College of Policing and the NPCC lead for adult sexual offences should work together to review the current training on rape, including the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigators Development Programme (SSAIDP), to make sure that there is

appropriate training available to build capability and expertise. This should promote continuous professional development and provide investigators with the right skills and knowledge to deal with reports of rape. Forces should then publish annual SSAIDP attendance figures, and information on their numbers of current qualified rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) investigators.

- The College of Policing, the NPCC lead for adult sexual offences and the CPS should prioritise action to provide joint training for the police and the CPS on how trauma affects victims, to promote improved decision-making and victim care.

A review of ‘Fraud: Time to choose’ – A revisit of the 2018 fraud inspection to assess progress

In 2018, the Home Secretary commissioned us to carry out a thematic inspection of fraud. Between March and July 2018, we inspected 11 police forces in England and Wales.

In April 2019, we published [*Fraud: Time to choose – An inspection of the police response to fraud*](#). In our report, we made 16 recommendations and identified five areas for improvement⁷¹ (AFIs).

We have revisited that inspection to assess what progress has been made by the service against the recommendations and AFIs we made.

Our findings

Not enough has changed since the publication of our 2019 report. Too many victims still receive a poor service and are denied justice. Investigating and preventing fraud offences by police forces remains, in many respects, under-resourced and isn't made enough of a priority. We also found that too many fraudsters get away with committing these crimes.

In 2019, we concluded that a lack of capacity and capability in tackling fraud had an adverse effect on the quality of service provided to many victims of fraud; this is still true.

In the UK, the chance of becoming a victim of fraud is still far too high. It can be devastating for victims, both individuals and businesses, and is damaging for the economy. It is estimated to be the most prolific crime in England and Wales – adults are still more likely to be victims of fraud than of any other crime.

⁷¹ If we find an aspect of a force's practice, policy or performance that falls short of the expected standard, it will be reported as an 'area for improvement'.

Dataset 5: The likelihood of being a victim of crime varies by crime type for the year ending March 2020 in England and Wales

The crime survey for England and Wales reports that 19.3 percent of adults in England and Wales reported being a victim of crime in the year ending March 2020. People were more likely to be a victim of fraud than any other crime type: 6.6 percent of respondents reported being a victim. The next most frequent crime type is vehicle-related theft: 3.8 percent of respondents reported being a victim.

Source: [Office for National Statistics CSEW: Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)

Progress made against our 2019 recommendations and areas for improvement

So far, only ten of our 16 recommendations have been implemented. Some progress has been made on at least two of our recommendations, while three remain outstanding. One of our recommendations is no longer relevant.

Only one of the AFIs we issued has been fully addressed. Some progress has been made on three more, but one is still outstanding.

Forces are better at tackling fraud, but more needs to be done

Some improvements have been made. For example, many forces are now better at identifying fraud-related organised crime groups and prioritising them according to the threats they present. We have seen that fewer people are being drawn into fraud or committing further offences, but more needs to be done in these respects.

Work has begun to improve the co-ordination of the response to fraud at national and regional levels. But information about the best ways of doing things isn't routinely identified, evaluated or passed on to those tackling fraud. And not enough effort has been made to find out how effective fraud alerts and campaigns are. More needs to be done to make progress against our recommendations and the AFIs that haven't yet been completed.

There is now a clear plan to tackle fraud, but resources remain insufficient

The Economic Crime Strategic Board has extended its remit to all forms of fraud, and the Home Office is developing a national fraud strategy. The City of London Police's role as the national lead police force for fraud is clearer than it was. And a three-year national policing strategy for tackling fraud has now been established.

At the time of our inspection, annual financial settlements were the norm; funding was only confirmed

a year at a time and with relatively short notice, which made it difficult for forces to plan and invest for the long term. The levels of resources allocated to tackling fraud wasn't commensurate to the amount of intelligence, investigation and prevention work required to tackle it.

The National Fraud Intelligence Bureau is planning to introduce a new computer system

The computer system used by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau (NFIB) to collect and analyse intelligence about fraud isn't fit for purpose. Rather than fix the current system, the plan is to replace it with a new one – but this won't be until 2024. This means that the police will have to keep using the existing, poorly functioning system until then.

The NFIB has better intelligence products

The NFIB has improved its intelligence products and forces now make better use of them. Forces have been given guidance on how to record and report on cases sent to them for investigation. This has led to a more consistent approach, and reporting on the actions taken by forces has improved greatly.

Too many victims still get a poor service

While some improvements have been made to the service provided to victims, more still needs to be done.

Action Fraud is the UK's national reporting centre for fraud and cyber-crime. In response to our

recommendations, it has taken steps to raise awareness of its role with both the public and police officers and staff. Forces are now generally better at identifying vulnerable fraud victims and communicating with them promptly. Some forces have created victim-care roles.

But many forces are confused about when and how they should respond to a report of fraud. Many victims don't get enough information about how or whether their cases will be investigated.

Action Fraud still takes too long to answer its telephones, and many people hang up before their calls are answered; this is unacceptable.

Our recommendations

We made three further recommendations in this revisit report to improve the police response to fraud:

- chief constables should make sure that their forces follow guidance on fraud-related calls for service;
- there should be an effective process for co-ordinating police responses to fraud; and
- chief constables should adopt previously issued guidance that is designed to improve the information given to victims after they report fraud.

Police response to violence against women and girls: Final inspection report

In March 2021, the Home Secretary commissioned us to carry out an inspection into how effectively the police engage with women and girls. This was part of the Government's response to the murder of Sarah Everard on 3 March 2021.

We were asked to include a broad assessment of the quality and effectiveness of interactions between the police and women and girls (as victims, offenders and witnesses). We were asked to focus on the experiences of women and girls.

The first stage of our response to this commission focused on how the police interact with women and girls who have been victims of crimes of violence and abuse that disproportionately affect women and girls (sometimes called VAWG offences), including:

- domestic abuse;
- harassment and stalking; and
- rape and serious sexual assault.

We had already gathered significant amounts of evidence on the police response to VAWG offences through previous inspections, which included our force inspections as well as our thematic reports. We combined this evidence with new fieldwork in June and July 2021. As a result, we were able to make a comprehensive assessment of how effective the police

were at responding to these offences. This included the work they were carrying out to prevent these crimes, and how they manage convicted offenders.

Our inspection

Our methodology for this inspection included:

- consulting widely with experts from policing, the Government, academia and the third sector;
- reviewing evidence from more than 30 of our previous and current inspections of the police response to different VAWG offences;
- conducting focused fieldwork in four forces, including interviews, focus groups and reviews of the management of the most dangerous offenders against women and girls in their areas;
- interviewing more than 60 victims and victim representatives (such as domestic abuse practitioners); and
- surveying police officers and staff, and female members of the public (including victims) who were 18 and over.

In July 2021, we published an interim report to make sure that our findings were available as soon as possible to inform work carried out by the Government in its [*Tackling violence against women and girls strategy*](#), which was published later that month.

In September 2021, we published our final report. In 2022/23, we intend to complete an inspection of

the police response to women and girls as offenders for the next stage of our response to the Home Secretary's commission.

Our findings

The scale and evolving nature of VAWG offences is extremely worrying and women and girls frequently report that they don't feel safe going about their daily lives. This has led to increased demand on forces.

Figure 6: Percentage of women who worry about sexual harassment and/or change their behaviour to avoid sexual harassment in locations within the UK

About half of respondents worry about sexual harassment and/or have changed their behaviour to avoid it at work or a place of study. Worry and/or change of behaviour is more common in other locations. 73 percent worry about sexual harassment and 66 percent have changed their behaviour to avoid it in outdoor public spaces. 69 percent worry about sexual harassment and 61 percent have changed their behaviour to avoid it in indoor public spaces. And 72 percent worry about sexual harassment and 62 percent have changed their behaviour to avoid it on public transport.

Source: [Government Equalities Office 2020 Sexual Harassment Survey](#)

Although the police service has improved its response, much more still needs to be done. VAWG needs to be

made a greater priority and the police need to have the capacity and capability to tackle it effectively. We also recognise that the police can't tackle VAWG alone; a whole-system approach involving the health, education and criminal justice systems is needed.

How well prepared are the police to engage with women and girls and respond to VAWG offences?

The leaders we spoke to in the Government and in policing understood the need to improve the police's response to VAWG offences. Some forces were putting in place different plans and pilots as a result. But there was little consistency or clear co-ordination in this respect. We also found that there were major gaps in local and national information on VAWG offences; this didn't allow for proper oversight and accountability.

In particular, information on any other protected characteristics of female victims (such as their race, and whether they had a disability) wasn't always recorded. This meant forces couldn't always target support for victims or understand fully the profile of offending in their areas.

How effectively do the police prevent VAWG offences?

We found that adequate prevention activity wasn't always carried out by inspected forces. We saw some evidence of the police carrying out targeted prevention work, often in partnership with other organisations, but forces didn't always tell other forces how effective these initiatives were. The dissemination of such information

would help policing to improve throughout England and Wales.

How effectively do the police protect women and girls?

Protective measures include orders (such as stalking protection orders, restraining orders and forced marriage orders), and other measures designed to keep victims safe (such as the domestic violence disclosure scheme, known as Clare's Law). We found that forces didn't use protective powers in the same way, and we even found that officers used them differently within the same force. We concluded that the oversight and use of protective powers and measures needed immediate improvement, and that better offender management was urgently required.

How effectively do the police pursue VAWG perpetrators?

We found that breaches of protective orders weren't always acted on and that offender management of the men who posed the greatest risk to women and girls was carried out inconsistently.

In addition, the large proportion of VAWG offences closed by the police as needing no further action was a matter of great concern. When a crime is confirmed and the victim supports the police investigation, but evidential difficulties prevent further action, the case is closed with the code 'outcome 15'. When a victim no longer supports police action, the case is closed with the code 'outcome 16'. The use of both of these

outcome codes varied significantly between forces, with limited explanations as to why this was the case.

Our recommendations

As a result of these findings, we made five recommendations:

- There should be an immediate and unequivocal commitment that the response to VAWG offences is an absolute priority for government, policing, the criminal justice system, and public-sector partnerships. This needs to be supported at a minimum by a relentless focus on these crimes; mandated responsibilities; and sufficient funding so that all relevant agencies can work effectively as part of a whole-system approach to reduce and prevent the harms these offences are causing.
- The relentless pursuit and disruption of adult perpetrators should be a national priority for the police, and their capability and capacity to do this should be enhanced.
- Structures and funding should be put in place to make sure victims receive tailored and consistent support.
- All chief constables should immediately review and ensure that there are consistently high standards in their forces' responses to VAWG and should be supported in doing so by national standards and data.
- All chief constables should immediately review the use of outcomes 15 and 16 in VAWG offences.

Each of these recommendations had sub-recommendations, which are designed help the service improve its overall response to VAWG offences.

One of our sub-recommendations was for the NPCC to appoint a full-time lead to co-ordinate the police response to VAWG offences. In response to our recommendation, in September 2021 the NPCC appointed deputy chief constable Maggie Blyth as the national police lead for violence against women and girls offences.

Our specialist rolling inspections

Joint custody

We inspect police custody suites jointly with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Prisons. We do this as a member of the UK's National Preventive Mechanism (NPM). Members of NPM monitor and inspect places of detention, in compliance with the UK's obligations under the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. Our inspections take place on a rolling programme so that all police custody suites are visited regularly.

We restarted our custody inspections in May 2021, when we assessed it was safe to visit custody suites. We gave forces notice of our inspections (previously they were unannounced) so we could establish with them how we would inspect. This was in an effort to mitigate the health risks posed by the pandemic.

We tried to keep our presence in the custody suites to a minimum and carried out some activities remotely; this included examining custody records, as well as holding interviews and focus groups.

In the future, we hope to retain some remote-working methods as we found them to be effective and efficient, both for us and forces.

Between April and November 2021, we inspected five forces. While we did take into account the fact that, as a result of the pandemic, forces made changes to keep people safe, we continued to assess their custody provision and the safe and respectful treatment of detainees using the standards set out in [Expectations for police custody](#).

Our findings

Overall, we found that forces were improving their provision of custody services in some areas. We found that:

- forces carried out some good work to keep children and vulnerable people out of custody and divert them from the criminal justice system;
- many aspects of care for detainees continued to improve;
- healthcare professionals generally met detainees' health needs well; and

- in many areas, support for children and vulnerable people was improving as a result of the work carried out by the criminal justice liaison and diversion services in custody.

But forces needed to do more to tackle the problems that we routinely identified. We found that forces didn't always:

- meet all legal requirements (Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and its codes of practice);
- manage the risks for detainees well enough, especially those under the influence of alcohol, drugs and other substances; and
- have enough information available to show how well they provided custody services; in particular, they didn't always have enough information to show how or when they used force or restraint on detainees.

Keeping people out of custody

In general, forces remained committed to keeping people out of custody – especially children and vulnerable adults – and to keeping them from entering the criminal justice system in the first place. Some worked well with other agencies to achieve this.

Officers generally only placed children in custody after they had explored all other options, or the seriousness of the offence left no alternative. But when children were charged with an offence and remanded in custody, rarely were they moved to accommodation arranged by the local authority as they should have

been. We have voiced this concern many times but, despite the fact that forces and children's social services did work together, we didn't see any improvement.

Other than in exceptional circumstances, police officers are not permitted to place those with mental ill health and detained under section 136 of the Mental Health Act 1983 in custody as a place of safety. We continued to find very few instances of this happening. But police officers still need to respond effectively to incidents involving people with mental ill health.

Some forces received effective advice and help from mental health professionals. This helped police officers to deal with incidents and, where possible, avoid detaining people under section 136. Instead, they found other ways of getting the necessary support for the individuals in question.

In forces where help from mental health professionals wasn't so readily available, officers told us they were more likely to detain a person under section 136 and take them to a mental health facility. They said they needed to do this to manage the risks that the person posed to himself, herself or others.

In custody, the criminal justice liaison and diversion services generally provided good support for vulnerable people and children. They often helped them get further support in the community to prevent or minimise reoffending.

In [State of Policing 2019](#), we said we had concerns that some forces were detaining people under section 136 while in custody and that we would follow this closely.

We found that use of section 136 had continued in custody and that it was potentially being used more. If a Mental Health Act assessment wasn't carried out in custody, forces further detained people under section 136 so that they could be taken to a hospital for assessment. This practice started following certain changes made to legislation in 2017 that allowed it. We will continue to assess why this happens and how detainees are affected.

Caring for detainees

Most forces cared for detainees well. Custody officers and staff treated detainees with respect and were good at recognising their diverse needs. Some aspects of care could have been better. For example, showers and exercise weren't always offered or provided as much as they should have been. Forces were generally making more use of distraction activities, such as puzzles, jigsaws and foam footballs, to help detainees who were anxious or had neurodiverse needs.

We found some forces were better at arranging for an appropriate adult⁷² to support children and vulnerable adults. There were still some long waits for appropriate adults to arrive at custody suites, but more forces were arranging for this support to be provided much earlier in individuals' detention.

Healthcare professionals generally met detainees' health needs promptly. Nearly all detainees we spoke to were appreciative of the service they had received.

Managing detainee risks

Custody officers were generally thorough when identifying detainee risks. But sometimes these risks weren't managed well enough. Observation levels for detainees were usually set at the right level but weren't always carried out correctly, and sometimes officers didn't follow the guidance established in the College of Policing's approved professional practice.

We had particular concerns for detainees who were under the influence of alcohol, drugs and other substances. Sometimes they weren't roused in the way they should have been, and sometimes they weren't observed as regularly as required.

⁷² This is a parent, guardian, social worker, or any responsible person over 18 years old, and who is not a police officer, or a person employed by the police. Appropriate adults must be called whenever the police detain or interview a child or vulnerable adult. An appropriate adult must be present during a range of police processes, including interviews, intimate searches and identification procedures, to safeguard the interests of children and vulnerable adults detained or questioned by police officers.

Meeting legal requirements

We found that too often forces weren't meeting the requirements of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 or the guidance in its codes of practice.

Reviews of detention were the main area failing to meet these requirements. We raise this in most inspections, but have seen little improvement as a result.

Overseeing the provision of custody

Some force leaders didn't have sufficient knowledge of how well custody services were being provided or how detainees were looked after and treated in custody. Most forces didn't collect enough of the right information to show this, and some information was inaccurate. We found that the information on custody records wasn't always detailed enough, and that sometimes important information was missing.

We found information on the use of restraint or force on detainees was often limited and frequently inaccurate. In every force we visited, we examined incidents on CCTV and found that, on balance, these were well managed. However, not one force did enough monitoring of this, and none could show us that when force was used it was always proportionate and justified.

Other work

Police super-complaints

Super-complaints are complaints about a feature, or combination of features, of policing in England and Wales by one or more than one police force which is, or appears to be, significantly harming the interests of the public.

On 1 November 2018, the police super-complaints system started. It brings together the three policing oversight bodies: HMICFRS, the College of Policing, and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC). Each body contributes its expertise and experience and has joint responsibility for taking decisions about super-complaints.

The system isn't designed for individual complaints and doesn't replace existing police complaints systems. Nor is it a way to investigate complaints from those systems. It instead focuses on systemic problems of local, regional, or national significance, which may not be addressed elsewhere.

Super-complaints can be made about:

- any one or more of the 43 police forces in England and Wales;
- the National Crime Agency;
- the Ministry of Defence Police;
- the Civil Nuclear Constabulary; and
- the British Transport Police.

Only bodies designated by the Home Secretary can make a super-complaint. In June 2018, 16 bodies, covering a range of issues, were designated.

On 17 December 2020, we published our report on the first super-complaint, [*Safe to share? Report on Liberty and Southall Black Sisters' super-complaint on policing and immigration status*](#). Since then, some positive steps have been taken to encourage victims with insecure immigration status to contact the police when they need help. However, we are concerned by the Home Office's decision to not create a firewall to prevent information on certain victims of crime from being exchanged between the police and immigration enforcement services. As a result, many victims may not be able to get the support that they need. Worse still, we think that this decision plays into the hands of perpetrators who threaten victims with deportation if they report cases of abuse to the police.

Super-complaint reports published between April 2021 and November 2021

Hestia

In May 2021, in collaboration with the College of Policing, and the IOPC, we published the police super-complaint report, [*The hidden victims: Report on Hestia's super-complaint on the police response to victims of modern slavery*](#). This followed an investigation relating to a super-complaint submitted by Hestia in March 2019. The super-complaint raised concerns that modern slavery victims weren't always getting the support and understanding they needed from the police.

The investigation found that the police response to modern slavery had broadly improved since the 2017 HMICFRS modern slavery inspection. But there was still too much inconsistency between forces, and more needed to be done to recognise and support victims of slavery.

The report recommended that the Home Office, chief constables, the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, victims' commissioners, and the CPS work together to better understand victims' experiences and what improvements they need to make.

It also made other recommendations, including that chief constables should:

- make sure staff have access to training and specialist knowledge, and understand victim support arrangements;
- allocate modern slavery investigations to teams and people with the right skills and experience; and
- work with police and crime commissioners to understand what support victims of modern slavery need.

The Centre for Women's Justice

In August 2021, in collaboration with the College of Policing and the IOPC, we published the third police super-complaint report, [*A duty to protect: Police use of protective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls*](#). It related to a super-complaint from the Centre for Women's Justice (CWJ) about police use of protective measures in cases of violence against women and girls. The CWJ was concerned about the police's use of bail conditions, their treatment of breach of non-molestation orders, and their use of domestic violence protection notices and orders and restraining orders.

The investigation found that the police don't always use protective measures effectively to safeguard women and girls, even though HMICFRS, the College of Policing and the IOPC found good examples of the police using these measures.

The report made several recommendations, including that:

- chief constables should make sure their officers understand all the protective measures available;
- the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should intensify and accelerate their consideration of creating a bespoke offence of breaching pre-charge bail; and
- the Home Office and the Ministry of Justice should review and improve the way the police are told about non-molestation orders.

The report concluded that better data collection on the use of protective measures is needed to help the police determine which ones are most effective in different scenarios.

Other super-complaint investigations

In 2021, we began or continued investigating three more super-complaints with the College of Policing and the IOPC:

- on 6 March 2020, the Centre for Women's Justice submitted a second super-complaint in respect of its concerns about how forces deal with cases in which allegations have been made of domestic abuse perpetrated by police officers or staff;
- on 7 August 2020, the Tees Valley Inclusion Project submitted a super-complaint about the police's treatment of BAME victims of sexual abuse; and

- on 19 May 2021, a super-complaint was submitted by the Criminal Justice Alliance relating to the police's application of stop-and-search powers, with a specific focus on the use of section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994.

The reports resulting from each of these complaints will be published in 2022/23.

Future super-complaints

We expect to receive further super-complaints in 2022/23. We will work with the IOPC and the College of Policing to assess whether any other super-complaints submitted are eligible and, if so, determine who will hold responsibility for any future investigations.

Special grants

Forces should include reasonable contingencies in their policing and budget plans for unexpected events. But, from time to time, there may be exceptional events that could threaten a force's financial position. In these cases, police and crime commissioners can apply to the Home Office for special grant funding to ease the financial burden.

The Home Office may refer applications to us to assess. We are normally asked to determine whether the resources deployed are reasonable and proportionate to the aims of the operation or investigation and its associated risks. Our reports aren't published but, on the basis of our findings, the Home

Office officials advise ministers, who then make the final decision about funding.

Special grants work in 2021

In 2021, we produced two reports on applications for funding from two forces. The applications related to police operations involving SOC, rural crime and roads policing.

We were also members of Home Office panels that were designed to provide assurance on three national policing operations.

The Rape Monitoring Group

The Rape Monitoring Group (RMG) is a multi-agency group in England and Wales. It was established to promote improvements in the response to rape across all the agencies that make up the criminal justice system. On the group's behalf, we publish criminal justice system data on rape. This shows the number of rapes reported, prosecutions brought and successful convictions for each force, as well as other data.

We want the people who are involved in preventing rape and supporting victims to use this data to better understand what improvements they should focus on in their local areas.

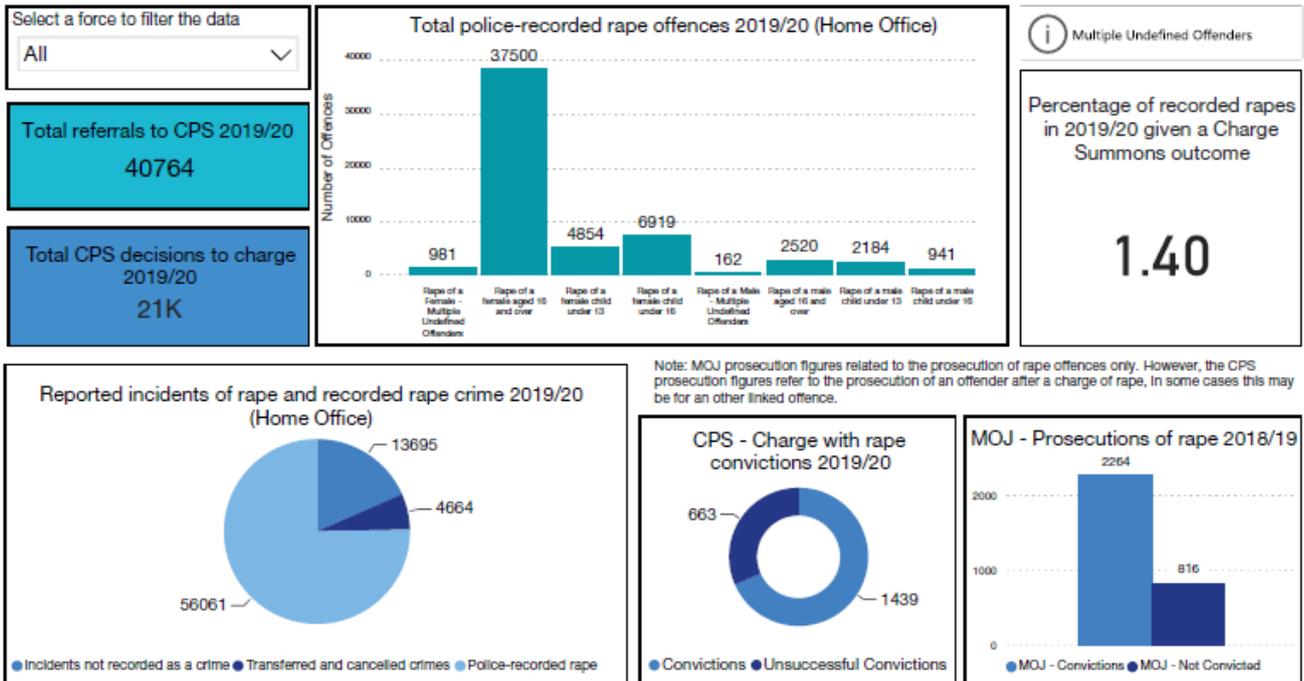
Our interactive dashboard

In July 2021, we published our latest update to the RMG interactive dashboard (see Figure 7).

Figure 7: Rape Monitoring Group dashboard

Rape Monitoring Group (RMG) dashboard Latest Data summary page

This page contains a summary of the latest published data relating to the response to cases of rape. There is a lag between every stage of the criminal justice process: between recording of the crime, referral to the CPS for charging and prosecution, and finally conviction and sentencing. As such, the data presented in these visualisations may not belong to the same cohort of cases and aren't directly comparable.



Source: [Rape Monitoring Group digests](#)

The dashboard collates annual data gathered from the Home Office, the CPS and the Ministry of Justice. It allows for a better analysis of how rape is dealt with across the criminal justice system and makes it possible to compare data from different CPS areas and police forces.

The RMG dashboard was published at the same time as our report, [A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape – Phase one: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action.](#)

Value-for-money profiles

Every year since 2009, we have published a value-for-money profile for each force. Every profile contains a set of comprehensive information about:

- the force's overall expenditure according to personnel (police officers, police staff, and police community and support officers) and non-staff costs (land and buildings, vehicles, ICT, forensics, equipment, horses, dogs, aircraft and professional services);
- the force's income from its central government grant, council tax and reserves, and private sources for services such as policing sporting events, and how that funding has changed over time;
- the force's costs of individual, specific policing functions such as call-handling, response, investigation, neighbourhood policing, SOC, public order and corporate functions (sometimes known as back-office functions);
- the composition of the workforce by numbers of police officers (including their ranks) and other staff, their responsibilities, length of service, sickness rates and turnover;
- the volumes of crime, classified by type;
- the results of police action, for example offences charged, out-of-court disposals (such as cannabis warnings), and offences taken into consideration; and

- circumstances in which no police action is taken, for example because of evidential difficulties (such as a complainant deciding not to co-operate), and determinations by the CPS that a prosecution isn't in the public interest.

The main purpose of the profile is to present information that lets us and others make comparisons.

Comparisons are made largely according to the costs or other numbers per 1,000 of the force area's resident population.

The comparisons are made between comparator forces which are members of the most similar group (MSG) of forces. MSGs are groups of forces that have been found to be the most similar to each other using statistical methods based on demographic, economic and social characteristics which relate to crime.

Areas which have similar demographic, social and economic characteristics will generally have reasonably comparable levels of crime.

For example, the comparator forces (members of the relevant MSG) for the Metropolitan Police Service are Greater Manchester Police, West Midlands Police and West Yorkshire Police. Similarly, Norfolk Constabulary's MSG members are Suffolk Constabulary, North Wales Police, North Yorkshire Police, West Mercia Police, Devon and Cornwall Police, Lincolnshire Police and Wiltshire Police.

In other words, we compare like with like.
Making comparisons in this way gives the best indicators of where and to what extent forces deviate from the MSG in different categories (for example, in costs, funding, workforce and crimes).

Part 3: Our reports

Our reports

Between 1 April 2021 and 30 November 2021, we published 36 reports, which are all available on our website.

As well as our work with the 43 Home Office forces, and the other inspectorates, we carried out various other inspections. These are part of our statutory duties to inspect non-Home Office police forces and certain other law enforcement agencies. We gave our reports for these inspections to the relevant Secretaries of State. Except where national security considerations precluded it, these were then published on our website.

Information sources

The inspectors of constabulary obtain information about police forces in seven principal ways:

- in the police and crime plan in respect of each force, to enable them to understand the priorities of the local policing body;
- through in-force inspections (otherwise referred to as fieldwork), and the work which forces do to prepare for in-force inspections;

- through regular monitoring of and liaison with forces, primarily through the inspectorate's force liaison staff and the contacts maintained by inspectors of constabulary and force liaison leads with chief officers, local policing bodies and others;
- through the formal provision of information and documents requested of forces for the purposes of inspection (including their data returns to the inspectorate and their force management statements);
- from their annual data returns to the Home Office;
- from information provided by forces to the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy in relation to the costs of individual and specific police functions such as investigations, call-handling, response and corporate support; and
- from information and intelligence available from sources outside policing, including in media reports, reports of proceedings in Parliament and local institutions, other regulatory bodies or inspectorates concerned with safeguarding and the prevention of crime and disorder or their consequences, academic bodies, public policy institutions (such as think tanks) and commentators, and official publications such as the Crime Survey of England and Wales.

Over the next few pages, we have listed our reports, along with:

- a short description of the inspection's focus;
- the names of the other inspectorates, if it was a joint inspection;
- the publication date; and
- the name(s) of Her Majesty's Inspector(s) (HMI) responsible for the inspection.

Reports published

1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021

PEEL inspections

PEEL: Dyfed-Powys Police cause of concern – crime data integrity

Accelerated cause of concern we issued to Dyfed-Powys Police because the force was failing to always record reported crimes and has failed to make improvements.

Published: 7 May 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

Review of policing domestic abuse during the pandemic

This review expands on the findings in our recent policing COVID-19 report. It identifies good ways of doing things, as well as areas of innovative practice. It also makes three recommendations that are designed to make sure that forces continue to resolve the problems they face when policing domestic abuse during the pandemic.

Published: 23 June 2021

Lead HMI: Zoë Billingham

Cleveland Police causes of concern revisits

We revisited Cleveland Police to assess progress made against the five causes of concern we issued relating to workforce, ethics, crime prevention, public engagement and understanding demand.

Published: 1 July 2021 – 3 September 2021

Lead HMI: Andy Cooke

PEEL: Greater Manchester Police cause of concern – responding to vulnerable people

Accelerated cause of concern we issued to Greater Manchester Police because the force's response to some vulnerable victims was inadequate. The force had also failed to make improvements.

Published: 30 September 2021

Lead HMI: Andy Cooke

Progress update on how forces are addressing our recommendations

The recommendations included in this first release are from our 2018/19 Integrated PEEL assessment inspection reports.

Published: 22 October 2021

Lead HMI: Andy Cooke

Police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) force reports

PEEL inspections of five forces.

Published: 27 October 2021 – 24 November 2021

Lead HMIs: Andy Cooke, Matt Parr, Roy Wilsher, Wendy Williams

Child protection inspections

National Child Protection Inspections

Inspections, revisit inspections and post-inspection reviews of how the police protect children in six forces.

Published: 26 August 2021 – 16 November 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

Blackpool youth offending services

Inspection of youth offending services in Blackpool.

Joint inspection with HMI Probation, Ofsted, Care Quality Commission

Published: 7 September 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

Neath Port Talbot Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements

Joint inspections of child protection arrangements in Neath Port Talbot.

Joint inspections with Care Inspectorate Wales, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, HMI Probation, Estyn

Published: 13 October 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

Specialist inspections

Policing in the pandemic – The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020

Inspection of the police response to the pandemic between March and November 2020.

Published: 20 April 2021

Lead HMI: Matt Parr

Custody services in a COVID-19 environment

Inspection of how custody services operated in the context of the pandemic between March 2020 and November 2020.

Published: 20 April 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

An inspection into the Police Service of Northern Ireland's handling of the Bobby Storey funeral on 30 June 2020

We were commissioned to examine how the Police Service of Northern Ireland handled the funeral of Bobby Storey.

Published: 17 May 2021

Lead HMI: Matt Parr

Inspection into how effectively the police engage with women and girls – Interim report

This interim report sets out findings and recommendations from one part of this inspection, which focuses on how effectively the police respond to violence against women and girls. These are violent and high-harm crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls.

Published: 7 July 2021

Lead HMI: Zoë Billingham

National Crime Agency crime reduction function

This inspection, our eighth of the National Crime Agency, examines its crime reduction (investigations) function managed through its UK-wide branch network.

Published: 13 July 2021

Lead HMI: Matt Parr

Neurodiversity in the criminal justice system

Review of neurodiversity in the criminal justice system. The review focuses on screening, adjustments, interventions and training.

Joint inspection with HMI Prisons, HMI Probation

Published: 15 July 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

A joint thematic inspection of the police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape – Phase one: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action

This report focuses on rape cases where either the police or the Crown Prosecution Service made the decision to take no further action (that is, not to proceed with the case).

Joint inspection with HMCPSP

Published: 16 July 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

A review of 'Fraud: time to choose'

Revisit of our previous fraud inspection to see how the police service acted on the recommendations we made in that report.

Published: 5 August 2021

Lead HMI: Matt Parr

Unannounced inspection of police custody suites – Cleveland Police

Inspection of Cleveland Police's custody arrangements, to evaluate strategy, treatment and conditions, individual rights and healthcare of people.

Joint inspection with HMI Prisons

Published: 12 August 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

Police response to violence against women and girls – Final inspection report

This report sets out findings from our inspection of how effectively the police respond to violence against women and girls. These are violent and high-harm crimes that disproportionately affect women and girls, such as domestic abuse, sexual violence, stalking and female genital mutilation.

Published: 17 September 2021

Lead HMI: Zoë Billingham

Mental health of defendants

This inspection followed the progress of individuals with mental health needs and disorders through the criminal justice system, from first contact with the police to release from prison.

Joint inspection with HMCPSP, Care Quality Commission, Healthcare Inspectorate Wales, HMI Prisons

Published: 17 November 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

Non-inspection publications

[The hidden victims: Report on Hestia's super-complaint on the victims of modern slavery](#)

Report investigating a super-complaint about how the police support victims of modern slavery.

Published: 26 May 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

[HMICFRS strategy 2021-25](#)

HMICFRS's strategy for 2021–2025. This explains what we aim to achieve as we fulfil our statutory objectives and how we will continue to use our powers, insight and influence to best effect.

Published: 15 June 2021

Lead HMI: Sir Thomas Winsor

State of Policing – The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2020

Report on our inspections under section 54 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011), including Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary's assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of police in England and Wales for 2020.

Published: 21 July 2021

Lead HMI: Sir Thomas Winsor

Policing inspection programme and framework 2021/22

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary's 2021/22 Inspection Programme and Framework – prepared under Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996.

Published: 21 July 2021

Lead HMI: Sir Thomas Winsor

Rape Monitoring Group data update

Every year, the Rape Monitoring Group publishes data on the 44 different force areas in England and Wales (the 43 Home Office-funded police forces and the British Transport Police). This data shows how cases of rape are dealt with at all stages of the criminal justice process.

Published: 26 July 2021

Lead HMI: Wendy Williams

A duty to protect: Police use of protective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls

Report of an investigation of a super-complaint about the police's alleged failure to use protective measures to safeguard women and girls.

Published: 24 August 2021

Lead HMI: Zoë Billingham

Responses to our consultation on our proposed 2021/22 policing inspection programme and framework

This consultation sought views on whether our proposed programme covered the right themes and areas of policing.

Published: 13 October 2021

Lead HMI: Sir Thomas Winsor

Annexes

Annex A: Police force areas

The 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales are:

- Avon and Somerset
- Bedfordshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Cheshire
- City of London
- Cleveland
- Cumbria
- Derbyshire
- Devon and Cornwall
- Dorset
- Durham
- Dyfed-Powys
- Essex
- Gloucestershire
- Greater Manchester
- Gwent
- Hampshire
- Hertfordshire
- Humberside

- Kent
- Lancashire
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Merseyside
- Metropolitan
- Norfolk
- North Wales
- North Yorkshire
- Northamptonshire
- Northumbria
- Nottinghamshire
- South Wales
- South Yorkshire
- Staffordshire
- Suffolk
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Thames Valley
- Warwickshire
- West Mercia
- West Midlands
- West Yorkshire
- Wiltshire.

Annex B: About us

Our history

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary was established in 1856, under the same statute that required every county and borough that hadn't already done so to set up and maintain a permanent salaried police force (the County and Borough Police Act 1856).

Under the 1856 Act, three Inspectors of Constabulary in England and Wales were appointed. It was their duty to "inquire into the state and efficiency of the police" (section 15). The Act also introduced the concept of annual inspection.

The first Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCIC) was appointed in 1962, as part of a major package of reforms to improve police governance and expand the role of the inspectorate.

Our role and influence have evolved over the last century and a half. Most of our current functions are set out in the Police Act 1996 (as amended by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 and the Policing and Crime Act 2017).

We are independent of both the police service and the Government. Both our independence and inspection rights are vested in Her Majesty's Inspectors, who are Crown appointees (section 54(1), Police Act 1996).

Our statutory responsibilities

Inspecting territorial police forces in England and Wales

We must inspect and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of every police force maintained for a police area (section 54(2), Police Act 1996).

The Secretary of State may at any time direct us to carry out an inspection of a police force in any police area (section 54(2B), Police Act 1996).

From time to time, the Home Secretary may also direct us to carry out other duties to help improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the police (section 54(3), Police Act 1996).

The local policing body for a police area may at any time ask us to carry out an inspection of a police force in that area (section 54(2BA), Police Act 1996).

Inspecting other police forces and agencies

We also have statutory duties to inspect other police forces and agencies, whose remits are not limited to a particular territorial area. Instead, they police specific areas of infrastructure or particular types of crime. In these cases, we give our report to whichever government body is responsible for what the force or agency does.

We have a duty to inspect:

- Armed Forces Police – Royal Navy, Royal Military and Royal Air Force Police (section 321A, Armed Forces Act 2006);
- British Transport Police (section 63, Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003);
- Civil Nuclear Constabulary (section 62, Energy Act 2004);
- HM Revenue & Customs (section 27, Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005, and the Revenue and Customs (Inspections) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/1133));
- Ministry of Defence Police (section 4B, Ministry of Defence Police Act 1987);
- Police Service of Northern Ireland (section 41, Police (Northern Ireland) Act 1998, subject to appointment by the Department of Justice, Northern Ireland);
- National Crime Agency (section 11, Crime and Courts Act 2013); and
- Customs functions (section 29, Borders, Citizenship and Immigration Act 2009, and the Customs (Inspections by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary and the Scottish Inspectors) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2840)).

In summer 2017, we took on inspections of England's fire and rescue services, assessing and reporting on their efficiency, effectiveness and people. To reflect this new role, our name changed to Her Majesty's

Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS).

Collaborative working

The long history of collaborative working between the criminal justice inspectorates – of Constabulary, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Prisons and the National Probation Service – was enshrined in law through the Police Act 1996.

Schedule 4A to the 1996 Act says that the inspectors of constabulary:

- must co-operate with other inspectorates, where appropriate, so they can operate efficiently and effectively (paragraph 4);
- must draw up a joint inspection programme with other inspectorates (paragraph 5); and
- may tell certain other inspectorates not to carry out an inspection, or not to do so in a particular way, if HMCIC believes the inspection would impose an unreasonable burden (paragraph 3).

Publishing reports

We must publish the reports we prepare under section 54 of the Police Act 1996 (section 55(1), Police Act 1996).

We must not publish anything the Inspectors believe would be against the interests of national security or might put anyone in danger (section 55(2), Police Act 1996).

We must send a copy of every published report to the Secretary of State, the local policing body maintaining the police force the report is about, the chief officer for that police force and the police and crime panel for that police area (section 55(3), Police Act 1996).

HMCIC must each year give the Secretary of State a report on our inspections. HMCIC must lay a copy of this report before Parliament (section 54(4), Police Act 1996). The report must include his assessment of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing in England and Wales for that year (section 54(4A), Police Act 1996). This is our *State of Policing* report.

Producing the HMICFRS inspection programme and framework

HMCIC must prepare, consult on and publish an inspection programme and framework (paragraph 2 of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996). He must gain the Home Secretary's approval of the inspection programme and framework. He must then lay the inspection programme and framework before Parliament (paragraphs 2(2A)–(2B) of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996).

Complaints and misconduct

HM Inspectors (HMIs) inspecting a police force must make sure they stay informed about all complaints and misconduct matters relating to that force (section 15(1), Police Reform Act 2002).

Super-complaints

The Policing and Crime Act 2017 established a new system of police super-complaints. The system considers complaints that “a feature, or combination of features, of policing in England and Wales by one or more than one police force is, or appears to be, significantly harming the interests of the public”.

Only bodies designated by the Home Secretary can make a super-complaint. In June 2018, 16 bodies were designated.

Super-complaints must be made in writing to HMCIC. They are considered by HMICFRS, the College of Policing and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), who together decide what (if anything) needs to happen as a result of the super-complaint.

Participating in misconduct proceedings

In misconduct proceedings for chief constables and other senior officers above the rank of chief superintendent, HMCIC, or an HMI he nominates, will sit on the panel for misconduct meetings and misconduct hearings (Police (Conduct) Regulations 2012 (SI 2012/2632), regulation 26). For all chief officer ranks (including chief constables), HMCIC, or an HMI he nominates, will sit on any police appeals tribunal (Police Act 1996, Schedule 6, paragraph 1).

Acting as a check on the removal of senior officers

If a police and crime commissioner is proposing to call on a chief constable or other senior officer to retire or resign, they must invite HMCIC to give his written views on the proposed removal. HMCIC must then give his views and the police and crime commissioner must consider them (Police Regulations 2003 (SI 2003/527), regulations 11A and 11B).

The police and crime panel may consult HMCIC before making a recommendation to the police and crime commissioner on dismissing a chief constable (Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, Schedule 8, paragraph 15).

Our powers

Amendments made by the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 to the Police Act 1996 have strengthened our role as a policing body independent of both the Government and the police. This makes us more accountable to the public and to Parliament.

Access to documents and premises

The chief officer of police must give inspectors information, documents, evidence or other things the inspectors needs to carry out the inspection (paragraph 6A of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996). The chief officer must also give inspectors access to the force's premises, and to documents and other things on those

premises that we need to carry out the inspection (paragraph 6B of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996).

Power to delegate functions

An inspector has the power to delegate any of his or her functions to another public authority (paragraph 1 of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996).

Power to act jointly with another public body

We can act jointly with another public body, where appropriate, to work efficiently and effectively (paragraph 5(1) of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996).

Power to provide assistance to any other public authority

HMCIC may, if he thinks it is appropriate, help any other public authority carry out its role. HMCIC can do this on reasonable terms, including payment terms (paragraph 6 of Schedule 4A to the Police Act 1996).

Who we are

[Biographies for each of the Inspectors of Constabulary are on our website.](#)

Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary

Sir Thomas Winsor

In October 2012, Sir Thomas was appointed as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary. He is the first holder of that office to come from a non-policing background.

Her Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary

Andy Cooke

Andy Cooke QPM DL is Her Majesty's Inspector for the Northern region.

Matt Parr

Matt Parr CB is Her Majesty's Inspector for the National and London regions. He is also Her Majesty's Inspector for Bedfordshire Police and Merseyside Police.

Wendy Williams

Wendy Williams CBE is Her Majesty's Inspector for the Wales and Western region.

Roy Wilsher

Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM is Her Majesty's Inspector for the Eastern region.

Zoë Billingham held the role of Her Majesty's Inspector for the Eastern region during the inspected period. She left office in September 2021.

How we are accountable

The first inspectors of constabulary were appointed under the County and Borough Police Act 1856. The Act required them to inspect and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of most of the police forces in England and Wales.

Our main role hasn't changed materially since then, except that our remit now covers the 43 forces in

England and Wales, and several other forces and agencies. Our main empowering statute is now the Police Act 1996.

There are five inspectors of constabulary. They are neither civil servants nor police officers, and are appointed by the Crown for fixed terms of up to five years. That means we are independent of the police, Government, police and crime commissioners (and their equivalents), other agencies in the criminal justice system and all outside parties.

However, independence doesn't mean a lack of accountability. We are accountable in these ways:

- our statutory duties, enforceable through judicial review or by action for breach of statutory duty;
- our obligation to submit an annual report to the Home Secretary under section 54 of the Police Act 1996; each report must be published and laid before Parliament: section 54(4), Police Act 1996;
- our obligation to lay before Parliament a copy of each inspection programme and inspection framework: Police Act 1996, Schedule 4A, paragraph 2(2A)(a);
- written Parliamentary questions;
- our obligation to give written and oral evidence to Committees of Parliament, including the Home Affairs Select Committee, the Public Accounts Committee and any other select committee which may call on us to give evidence;

- our obligation to carry out other duties the Home Secretary directs us to: section 54(3), Police Act 1996; and
- our obligation to comply with the rules of administrative law and the rules of good public administration, enforceable in the High Court by judicial review.

As a public body, we are also subject to the legal obligations imposed on public authorities, including:

- Official Secrets Acts 1911 and 1989;
- Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974;
- Data Protection Act 2018 and the General Data Protection Regulation (2016/679/EU);
- Human Rights Act 1998;
- Freedom of Information Act 2000; and
- Equality Act 2010.

In our published strategy, we have made public commitments to explain our decisions in clear, comprehensible and reasoned terms. We are also committed to a strictly evidence-based approach, with an unbroken bright line through the design of inspections, fieldwork and the gathering of evidence, its analysis, and our final conclusions with our reasons for them. We take seriously our public law duties, including the duty to act fairly and ensure consistency.

How we work with other organisations

We are mostly funded by the Home Office and are accountable to the Home Office for our spending, even though we are neither a subsidiary nor a part of the Home Office.

We have three concordats with others which set out the relationship or working arrangements between us.

These are:

- a concordat with the Home Office which explains the material parts of the relationship between our two organisations. The concordat sets out our respective roles, and the responsibilities of the main people involved in running, sponsoring and overseeing our affairs. The concordat is published on our website;
- a concordat with the College of Policing. As we have complementary purposes and different powers by which we aim to achieve those purposes, the concordat sets out our respective roles and responsibilities, and how we work with each other; and
- a concordat with the College of Policing and the IOPC in relation to super-complaints. The concordat sets out our respective roles and responsibilities, and how we work with each other.

We also have a statutory duty to co-operate with the other criminal justice inspectorates, namely those concerned with the CPS and the probation and prisons services, and the other named inspectorates set out in paragraph 4, Schedule 4A, Police Act 1996. Our obligations relating to joint inspections are set out in paragraphs 2–5 of that Schedule and we cover those inspections in this report.

Our regions

Our four geographic regions are the Northern, Eastern, National and London, and Wales and Western regions.

The National and London regions' responsibilities include:

- Metropolitan Police Service
- City of London Police
- National Crime Agency
- British Transport Police
- Civil Nuclear Constabulary
- Ministry of Defence Police
- Armed Forces Police
- Guernsey Police
- Royal Gibraltar Police
- States of Jersey Police
- Isle of Man Constabulary
- HM Revenue & Customs
- others by invitation.

Our purpose, values and objectives

Our purpose is to promote improvements in policing and fire and rescue services to make everyone safer.

Our values of respect, honesty, independence, integrity and fairness are at the heart of how we work. They act as a touchstone to help us make decisions – both as individuals and as an organisation.

Our objectives are to:

- demonstrate our values in everything we do;
- conduct informed, independent and evidence-based inspections;
- provide value for money;
- work with others to promote improvements in policing and fire and rescue services;
- report our inspection findings/analysis in a clear and compelling way; and
- ensure that our staff have the skills, knowledge and support to do their jobs.

Annex C: Peelian principles

Sir Robert Peel became Home Secretary in 1822. In 1829, he established the first full-time, professional and centrally-organised police force in England and Wales, for the Greater London area.

His police reforms were based on a philosophy that the power of the police comes from the common consent of the public, as opposed to the power of the state. This philosophy is underpinned by nine principles which have shaped our approach when assessing forces.

1. The basic mission for which the police exist is to prevent crime and disorder.
2. The ability of the police to perform their duties is dependent upon public approval of police actions.
3. Police must secure the willing co-operation of the public in voluntary observance of the law to be able to secure and maintain the respect of the public.
4. The degree of co-operation of the public that can be secured diminishes proportionately to the necessity of the use of physical force.
5. Police seek and preserve public favour not by pandering to public opinion but by constantly demonstrating absolute impartial service to the law.
6. Police use physical force to the extent necessary to secure observance of the law or to restore order only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient.

7. Police, at all times, should maintain a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and the public are the police; the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence.
8. Police should always direct their action strictly towards their functions and never appear to usurp the powers of the judiciary.
9. The test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with it.

Annex D: Our finances and our workforce

Our finances

We are funded mainly by the Home Office. We also receive funding for inspections commissioned by others (such as the National Crime Agency).

We spend 92 percent of our funding on our workforce, with the rest spent on ICT, surveys, accommodation, and other expenses.

Expenditure breakdown 2020/21 (£)

22.2 million (92 percent of our funding) on staff costs including associates

0.7 million (3 percent) on ICT

0.5 million (2 percent) on surveys and inspection services

0.3 million (1 percent) on office expenses and other costs

0.2 million (1 percent) on accommodation

0.1 million (1 percent) on travel and subsistence

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Our workforce

Our workforce comprises the inspectors of constabulary, civil servants, seconded police officers and staff, and secondees from fire and rescue services. We also have a register of associates who provide specialist resource and skills.

Staffing breakdown 2020/21

197 permanent staff (74 percent of our workforce)

38 police secondees (14 percent of our workforce)

14 fire and rescue secondees (5 percent of our workforce)

8 fixed-term appointments (3 percent of our workforce)

3 fire staff (1 percent of our workforce)

3 people from other government departments or on loan (1 percent of our workforce)

2 sandwich students (1 percent of our workforce)

1 police staff (0.3 percent of our workforce)

Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding

Annex E: Our inspections by force

1 April 2021 to 30 November 2021

The 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales are:

- Avon and Somerset
- Bedfordshire
- Cambridgeshire
- Cheshire
- City of London
- Cleveland
- Cumbria
- Derbyshire
- Devon and Cornwall
- Dorset
- Durham
- Dyfed-Powys
- Essex
- Gloucestershire
- Greater Manchester
- Gwent
- Hampshire
- Hertfordshire
- Humberside
- Kent

- Lancashire
- Leicestershire
- Lincolnshire
- Merseyside
- Metropolitan
- Norfolk
- North Wales
- North Yorkshire
- Northamptonshire
- Northumbria
- Nottinghamshire
- South Wales
- South Yorkshire
- Staffordshire
- Suffolk
- Surrey
- Sussex
- Thames Valley
- Warwickshire
- West Mercia
- West Midlands
- West Yorkshire
- Wiltshire.

PEEL inspections

Dyfed-Powys Police cause of concern – crime data integrity

Inspected force: Dyfed-Powys

Policing of domestic abuse during the pandemic

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

Cleveland Police cause of concern revisit – workforce, communication and fair treatment

Inspected force: Cleveland

Cleveland Police cause of concern revisit – ethics and culture

Inspected force: Cleveland

Cleveland Police cause of concern revisit – preventing crime and tackling anti-social behaviour

Inspected force: Cleveland

Cleveland Police cause of concern revisit – public engagement and scrutiny

Inspected force: Cleveland

Cleveland Police cause of concern revisit – understanding demand and strategic planning

Inspected force: Cleveland

Greater Manchester Police cause of concern –
responding to vulnerable people

Inspected force: Greater Manchester

Recommendations progress update

Inspected forces: Cleveland, Dyfed-Powys, Greater Manchester, Metropolitan, Northamptonshire, Northumbria, Nottinghamshire, Sussex, Thames Valley, Warwickshire, West Mercia, West Midlands, West Yorkshire

Police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy

Inspected forces: Durham, Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire, West Midlands, West Yorkshire

Child protection inspections

National child protection inspections

Inspected forces: Derbyshire, Dorset, Hampshire, Kent, Metropolitan, North Wales

Blackpool youth offending services

Inspected force: Lancashire

Joint inspectorate review of child protection arrangements in Neath Port Talbot

Inspected force: South Wales

Specialist inspections

Custody services in a COVID-19 environment

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

Policing in the pandemic – The police response to the coronavirus pandemic during 2020

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

An inspection into the Police Service of Northern Ireland's handling of the Bobby Storey funeral on 30 June 2020

Inspected force: Police Service of Northern Ireland

How effectively the police engage with women and girls – interim report

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

National Crime Agency crime reduction function

Inspected force: National Crime Agency

Neurodiversity in the criminal justice system

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

The police and Crown Prosecution Service's response to rape – Phase one: From report to police or CPS decision to take no further action

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

A review of Fraud: Time to choose

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

Unannounced inspection of police custody suites – Cleveland Police

Inspected force: Cleveland

Police response to violence against women and girls – Final inspection report

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

Mental health of defendants

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

Super-complaints

The hidden victims: Report on Hestia's super-complaint on the victims of modern slavery

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

A duty to protect: Police use of protective measures in cases involving violence against women and girls

Inspected forces: All 43 territorial police forces of England and Wales

Promoting improvements in policing and fire and rescue services to make everyone safer

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire and rescue services – in the public interest.

In preparing our reports, we ask the questions that citizens would ask, and publish the answers in accessible form, using our expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.

We provide authoritative information to allow the public to compare the performance of their police force or fire and rescue service against others. Our evidence is used to bring about improvements in the services they provide to the public.

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