



APCC BRIEFING

HMICFRS State of Policing 2023

19th July 2024

Overview

This paper provides a summary of key points from the HMICFRS State of Policing 2023 report, which was published on 19th July 2024. You can find the full report [here](#) and the HMICFRS press release [here](#).

The State of Policing Report is His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMCI) Andy Cooke's independent assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces in England and Wales. The assessment is based on inspection findings and engagement with Chief Constables, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) and other interested parties.

The report makes four recommendations:

1. By 1 April 2025, the Government should abolish the fixed police officer numbers target in favour of a more balanced performance framework.
2. By 1 April 2026, as part of the next spending review, the Government should provide police forces with a multi-year funding settlement that covers at least three financial years.
3. By 1 April 2025, the Home Secretary should develop legislative proposals to grant additional powers to the inspectors of constabulary. And they should write to HM Chief Inspector to explain these plans.
4. By 1 December 2025, as part of the next spending review, the Government should increase the funding allocated to the inspectorate to adequately reflect the scope and scale of the work of the inspectorate.

Restoring public trust and confidence

Recognising and addressing public perceptions

Chief Constables and PCCs are taking action to strengthen public trust and confidence. More needs to be done to communicate this to the public, and activities should be tailored to different communities.





There must be a sustained focus on improving vetting and tackling misconduct. HMCI fully supports the findings of the Angiolini Inquiry Part 1 report and urges all parties to take action. National developments such as the updated College of Policing Vetting Code of Practice, and the Government's dismissals and conduct reforms should support forces to remove those who do not uphold the standards of professional behaviour.

Neighbourhood policing is key to improving public confidence. Investment in neighbourhood policing through the Police Uplift Programme (PUP) has led to improvements in preventing and deterring crime. However more work is needed in respect of abstractions, training and measuring the impact of prevention activity.

Most crime is on a long-term downward trend

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The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) shows a long-term downward trajectory for most crime types, including homicide. Some crimes such as shoplifting have increased. Forces have listened to calls from businesses about the rise in shoplifting. There is still more to do to build confidence among the retail community and addressing retail crime should form part of neighbourhood policing strategies.

Violence against women and girls is still highly prevalent. Forces are increasingly prioritising violence against women and girls, and this was reinforced through inclusion in the Strategic Policing Requirement.

Providing a service to victims and the most vulnerable

Victim Satisfaction with the police and criminal justice system

Most victims of crime were dissatisfied with the police response, didn't feel they were taken seriously, and were not confident that the police thoroughly investigated. Very few victims perceived the criminal justice system (CJS) to be effective and fair.

Organisations recognise the importance of supporting victims but some are more focused on compliance with the Victims' Code rather than improving the quality of interactions. The Victims and Prisoners Act 2024 should help amplify the voice of victims and improve the services victims receive.

Getting the basics right

Some forces are failing to get the basics right when it comes to call handling, response times, investigations, keeping victims informed and bringing offenders to justice. In recent PEEL inspections, forces are receiving the worst grades for how well they respond to the public and investigations.

There continues to be widespread poor performance in relation to call handling, and the NPCC has yet to establish a national standard for attendance times. There has been a sustained reduction in victim-based offences that are brought to justice and there is significant variation in performance between forces.

The criminal justice system isn't providing access to justice

Despite the downward trend in crime and prosecutions, there are longer court backlogs and the prisons are fuller than ever. HMCI asks the Government to establish a Royal Commission into criminal justice and fundamental reform.

Changes to guidance, a lack of shared performance measures and significant challenges presented by ICT systems were undermining the effectiveness and efficiency of the police and CPS working together.

Setting up the workforce for success

Impact of Police Uplift Programme (PUP)

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The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in England and Wales reached 147,430 on 31 March 2023 – an all-time high. By September 2023, the figure dropped slightly to 147,098. There has been some improvement in diversity of officers, but not as much as had been hoped for.

It will take time to feel the full benefits of this uplift. The uplift has created challenges due to the inexperienced workforce that requires training and supervision, and the impact of uplift restrictions on the workforce blend / composition of police officers and staff.

Recommendation 1: By 1 April 2025, the Government should abolish the fixed police officer numbers target in favour of a more balanced performance framework.

An effective workforce needs strong leadership

Many in the service do not feel valued by their force, the Government or the public and there are concerns about the impact of these negative factors on attrition. The rate of voluntary police officer resignations is increasing but still comparatively low to other public services.

To mitigate, forces need to better understand why people are leaving, address high workloads and tackle ineffective performance management to get the most out of their workforce.

Funding the police

Current and future funding

Whilst there have been some improvements, forces need to improve their use of data, understanding of demand and governance processes to become more efficient and effective within their current budgets.

Improvements can also be made through examining productivity and removing inefficiencies. This includes implementation of new approaches such as Right Care, Right Person, and utilising technology.





Police finances are an area of increasing concern. HMCI calls for the Government to ‘fix’ the outdated and unfair funding formula, provide medium-term financial stability and increase the capital grant provided to forces for greater investment in the estate and ICT systems.

Recommendation 2: By 1 April 2026, as part of the next spending review, the Government should provide police forces with a multi-year funding settlement that covers at least three financial years. As part of this, the Government should:

- ***conclude its review of the police allocation formula and make changes to ensure that funding is distributed according to the needs of communities; and***
- ***substantially increase the amount of capital funding that it provides to forces.***

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The Inspectorate

Additional Powers

HMCI remains resolute in requesting the additional powers set out in last year's state of policing report.

Recommendation 3: By 1 April 2025, the Home Secretary should develop legislative proposals to grant additional powers to the inspectors of constabulary. And they should write to HM Chief Inspector to explain these plans. The changes requested include:

- a requirement for PCCs to provide an annual update on outstanding recommendations;
- a requirement for additional organisations to respond to recommendations;
- clarification of powers to inspect all aspects of policing, including where certain chief constable functions are commissioned by PCCs or carried out by their staff;
- a power to direct police forces in certain, limited, circumstances, where our inspections identify failings that pose a significant risk to public safety; and
- reintroducing the role of the inspectors of constabulary in the selection of chief constables.

Support for the above has been mixed across policing. It is acknowledged that these proposed powers have a direct impact on PCCs, and greater engagement to understand PCC views would be required.

Positive changes made through better collaborative working

The legislative changes proposed were not taken forward by the previous Government, who instead pushed for greater collaboration.

The College of Policing has introduced revised guidance on appointing chief officers which makes it clear that PCCs may find the involvement of HMICFRS useful during the appointment process. Many PCCs have subsequently included HMICFRS in their selection processes and found this beneficial.

HMICFRS has engaged with the APCC and PCCs to improve compliance with the statutory requirement for PCCs to respond to inspection reports. Whilst there has been an improvement to compliance rates and timeliness, there is still room to improve and HMCI requests a continued focus on this area from PCCs.



Funding

The Inspectorate is operating on a reduced real-terms budget. HMCI recommends an increase in funding of £13m to deliver further benefits including innovative use of data and creating early warning systems.

Recommendation 4: By 1 December 2025, as part of the next spending review, the Government should increase the funding allocated to the inspectorate to adequately reflect the scope and scale of the work of the inspectorate.

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