



BRIEFING PAPER

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Policing in the UK

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Summary

The police service in the UK is divided into 47 separate police forces: 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, a national police force in both Scotland and Northern Ireland and 2 specialist police forces: the British Transport Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

Policing policy is devolved, and the UK's constituent countries have taken divergent approaches to the organisation of policing services. Major reforms to policing have recently taken place in both England and Wales and Scotland. In England and Wales power for making policy decisions for local policing have been largely transferred to Police and Crime Commissions and local Mayors. The Home Office has therefore switched its focus to combating serious and organised crime nationally. In Scotland, the former regional police forces have been merged to create one national police force: Police Scotland.

Police services across the UK are having to contend with multiple challenges. Many forces have been under financial pressure following austerity measures implemented since 2010. They are also responding to evolving crime threats including digital crime and serious violence.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has reported that the police have responded well to these challenges. However, they have raised concerns about the resourcing of police forces and called for fundamental reform which facilitates better collaboration between forces at a regional and national level.

How to use this briefing

This briefing is designed to complement the Library briefing [Introduction to police powers](#). Together, these briefings provide a 'beginners' guide' to policing policy in the UK. 'Introduction to police powers' describes the powers police personnel have to carry out their duty of preventing and investigating crime. This briefing provides an overview of the governance and operation of police services. It is divided into three sections:

Governance: Outlines the governance framework of UK policing. It includes a short explanation of key pieces of legislation in each of the UK's constituent countries, an explanation of the role of PCCs and a discussion of how strategic policing policy is set nationwide.

Operation: Outlines how police forces in the UK operate. It discusses the different types of police force and how they work together operationally. It includes an explanation of the roles of police staff and how they are organised 'on the ground'. It also discusses how the College of Policing promotes effective policing and discusses some key police tactics.

Oversight: Outlines how the police are held accountable. It explains the roles of the Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS). It discusses the latest assessment of the state of UK policing published by HMICFRS. It also explains the system for political oversight of Police and Crime Commissioners.

What this briefing does not cover

This briefing does not explain the system for funding police services. This is covered in a separate Library Briefing: [Police funding](#). This paper does not describe the police complaints system in detail. For help understanding how complaints about the police are handled please see the Library paper [Police complaints systems in the UK](#).

This paper does not provide statistics on police services. Information about the number of police staff can be found in the paper: [Police service strength](#).

1. Governance

The police service in the UK is divided into **47 separate police forces**: 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales, a national police force in both Scotland and Northern Ireland and 2 specialist police forces: the British Transport Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

Policing is a devolved policy area in Scotland and Northern Ireland. This means that there is no unified policy for policing across the UK. Policing policy (including funding) is the responsibility of the **Home Office** in England and Wales, the Safer Communities Directorate in Scotland and the Department of Justice in Northern Ireland.

Each police force in the UK is led by a senior police officer (normally a Chief Constable). Most territorial forces in England and Wales are overseen by directly elected **Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs)**. PCCs appoint their Chief Constable and set a strategy and budget for their force. The role of a PCC is assumed by different bodies in certain parts of the UK:

- In London by the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime.
- In the City of London by the City of London Police Authority.
- In Manchester by the Mayor of Greater Manchester.
- In Scotland by the Scottish Police Authority.
- In Northern Ireland by the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The **Metropolitan Police Service (MPS)** is the largest police force in the UK. It is responsible for policing in London but also undertakes some national policing functions (such as co-ordinating counter-terrorism policing and the protection of 'special persons'). It is led by the **Metropolitan Police Commissioner** (currently Cressida Dick) who is appointed directly by the Home Secretary. The Commissioner is considered the most senior police officer in the UK.

The **National Crime Agency (NCA)** is responsible for leading the UK's response to serious and organised crime. They work throughout the UK and in collaboration with police forces and other relevant bodies.

The **College of Policing** is the professional body for the police service in England and Wales. It sets educational requirements for, and publishes guidance to, police officers. In Scotland and Northern Ireland these functions are undertaken by the Scottish Police Authority and the Northern Ireland Policing Board respectively.

The **National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC)** is a co-ordinating body for all police forces in the UK. The NPCC co-ordinates national police operations and the implementation of College of Policing guidance. The Chief Constable of each UK police forces (including the Metropolitan Police Commissioner), the Director General of the NCA and Chief Executive of the College of Policing are all represented at the NPCC. They make decisions collectively via the Chief Constables' Council.

1.1 Legislative framework

England and Wales

The current governance framework for policing in England and Wales is the result of major reforms undertaken by the Conservative led Coalition Government (2010-2015). A blueprint for these policing reforms was contained in the Conservative Party's 2010 election manifesto and the Coalition Government's programme for government.¹ The proposals were outlined in detail in a 2010 Home Office White Paper [Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people](#).

The White Paper proposed the creation of directly elected PCCs to drive policing policy in their local area and hold their Chief Constable to account. It proposed that, with PCCs in post, the Home Office should switch its focus to combating organised crime nationally. This would be achieved through a new agency (what would become the NCA) that would report directly to the Home Secretary.²

[Part I](#) of the *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011* provided the legislation for most of these reforms. This Act abolished Police Authorities (which under previous legislation oversaw police forces) and replaced them with PCCs. The Act repealed, replaced and amended much of the [Police Act 1996](#). However, many provisions in the 1996 Act which contribute to the governance of police services in England and Wales, including those which establish the 43-force territorial structure, were untouched.

Subsequent legislation completed the Coalition Government's reform of policing governance in England and Wales. [Part I](#) of the *Crime and Courts Act 2013* abolished the Serious and Organised Crime Agency and replaced it with the NCA. The Act gives NCA a wider remit than its predecessor body which allowed it to better coordinate a UK response to international organised crime.³

[Part XI](#) of the *Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014* formalised the College of Policing in legislation. The Act transferred the responsibility for issuing codes of practice to Chief Constables from the Home Secretary to the College.⁴

The notable exception to the Coalition Government's reforms was the predecessor body to the NPCC, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). ACPO had developed organically and was not formally established in legislation. Provisions in the 2011 Act allowed ACPO to

¹ See: The Conservative Party, [Invitation to join the Government of Britain: The Conservative Manifesto 2010](#), p57 and HM Government, [The Coalition: our programme for government](#), p13

² Home Office, [Policing in the 21st Century: Reconnecting police and the people](#), Cm7925, July 2010, paragraph 1.21

³ See: [HM Govt. Local to Global: Reducing the Risk from Organised Crime](#), 2011 and Home Office, [The National Crime agency: A plan for the creation of a national crime-fighting capability](#), June 2011

⁴ HM Govt, [Explanatory notes: Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#), March 2014, paragraphs 342 to 344

formalise under a 'collaboration agreement.'⁵ In 2013 PCCs from across England and Wales commissioned an independent review of ACPO. This review, published in 2014, recommended that ACPO be replaced by the NPCC.⁶ [Schedule 14](#) of the *Police and Crime Act 2017* allowed for the change in name in legislation.⁷

Scotland

Around the same time as the UK Government was conducting a significant reform of policing in England and Wales, the Scottish Government was conducting its own major reform of police services. While the UK Government's reforms were focused on localism the Scottish Government took the opposite approach, it proposed to merge the eight regional forces (that existed in Scotland at the time) into one national police force.

In February 2011 the Scottish Government (led by the Scottish Nationalist Party) launched [a consultation on the future of policing in Scotland](#). This consultation advocated for a single police force in Scotland. The Scottish Government cited numerous benefits of centralising policing. It argued that a single police force would provide more flexibility to respond to major incidents and help to standardised police services across the country, but the key reason was to provide better value for money.⁸ Responses to the consultation were published in June 2011 and in September 2011 the Scottish Government announced its plans to implement the reforms.⁹

The [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012](#) created 'The Police Service of Scotland' (also known as Police Scotland) and provides a framework by which it should operate. Police Scotland assumed responsibility for policing across Scotland on the 1 April 2013. The 2012 Act consolidates legislation which governs the framework of policing in Scotland. The Act established the Scottish Police Authority (SPA), a body made up of members appointed by Scottish Ministers, to oversee Police Scotland. It entrusted the SPA with similar powers to PCCs and the College of Policing in England and Wales but also requires the SPA to run the Scottish police's forensic operations.

A Scottish Parliament Information Centre briefing: [The Scottish Criminal Justice System: The Police](#) provides more detailed information about the governance framework for policing in Scotland.

⁵ Eversheds, [National Police Collaboration Agreement—in relation to the setting up of a Co-ordinating Body known as the National Police Chiefs' Council \("NPCC"\)](#), March 2015

⁶ See: [HCDeb, Police and Crime Commissioners and ACPO, 15 Jan 2014, cc341-342WH](#)

⁷ [Schedule 14, Police and Crime Act 2017](#)

⁸ The Scottish Government, [A Consultation on the Future of Policing in Scotland, February 2011](#), foreword from the Cabinet Secretary for Justice, p3-4

⁹ Scottish Government, [Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Bill: policy memorandum](#), January 2012, paragraph 10

Key issue: Leadership in Scottish policing

Since the merger of Scotland's police forces in 2013, Police Scotland and the Scottish Police Authority have been beset by controversy. Both of the first two Chief Constables of Police Scotland resigned before their contracts expired, following strong criticisms of police operations and accusations of misconduct respectively.¹⁰

The Scottish Police Authority has been under intense scrutiny. Its last two leaders have also resigned. The first following several highly critical reports of the SPA published in 2017. The Police Investigations & Review Commissioner (Pirc) reported that the SPA's complaint handling procedures were ineffective, inefficient and lacked transparency.¹¹ Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in Scotland (HMICS) found that "more needs to be done to demonstrate that the SPA is genuinely trying to carry out its functions in a way which is proportionate, accountable and transparent."¹² The Scottish Parliamentary committees for Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny and Policing questioned the SPA's prudence with public money.¹³

Under the new leadership of Susan Deacon, the SPA began to change its governance structures. It increased its membership from 27 to 40, adding 7 new board members.¹⁴ Audit Scotland approved of the SPA's increased capacity saying that it allowed the board more time to focus on strategic issues and external engagement.¹⁵ The Scottish Parliament's Justice Committee also welcomed these changes in their review of the *Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012* published in March 2019. However, they expressed concerns that "despite the legislation clearly defining roles and responsibilities, past governance arrangements were unduly affected by personalities."¹⁶ The Committee called on the Scottish Government to look again at aspects of the governance arrangements to ensure the system worked effectively.¹⁷ The Scottish Government had published a review of the SPA in March 2018. In that review they concluded that there is "essentially no fundamental issues with both the framework and structure of the SPA as originally envisaged".¹⁸ However, they did make a number of recommendations designed to "refine both roles and relationships, as well as the culture, within the organisation."¹⁹

HMICS published their [latest thematic inspection of the SPA](#) in September 2019.²⁰ HMICS noted that there has been "genuine progress" over the last 18-24 months but that there remains "differing interpretations" of the SPA's role as set out by the 2012 Act. HMICS recommended that the Scottish Government "clarify in what respects the Scottish Police Authority differs from other public bodies and specify the implications for the system of governance for policing".²¹ Only two months after the publication of the inspection Susan Deacon resigned. Ms Deacon said there was "the governance and accountability arrangements for policing in Scotland are fundamentally flawed, in structure, culture and practice". She said there was 'little more' she could do to make improvements.²²

¹⁰ *The Financial Times*, [Scotland's new chief constable seeks to repair force's battered reputation](#), August 2018

¹¹ Pirc, [Scottish Police Authority Complaints Audit 2017](#), December 2017, paragraph 8.1

¹² HMICS, [Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority - Phase 1 Review of Openness and Transparency](#), June 2017, paragraph 16

¹³ Scottish Parliament Public Audit and Post-Legislative Scrutiny Committee, [The 2015/16 audit of the Scottish Police Authority](#), [last accessed 3/06/19] and Scottish Parliament Justice Sub-Committee on Policing, [Audit Scotland's 2015-16 audit report on the Scottish Police Authority](#) [last accessed 3/06/19]

¹⁴ Scottish Parliament Justice Committee, [Report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012 - The Police Service of Scotland](#), 25 March, paragraph 70

¹⁵ Audit Scotland, [The 2017/18 audit of the Scottish Police Authority](#), November 2018, paragraph 15

¹⁶ Scottish Parliament Justice Committee, [Report on post-legislative scrutiny of the Police and Fire Reform \(Scotland\) Act 2012 - The Police Service of Scotland](#), 25 March, paragraph 79

¹⁷ *Ibid*, paragraphs 88, 99, 293

¹⁸ Safer Communities Directorate, Scottish Police Authority (SPA) Executive: review, March 2018, paragraph 114

¹⁹ *Ibid*, paragraph 115

²⁰ HMICS, [Thematic Inspection of the Scottish Police Authority](#), September 2019

²¹ *Ibid*, recommendation two

²² *BBC News*, [Police watchdog chief Susan Deacon quits over 'fundamentally flawed' system](#), December 2019

Northern Ireland

In 1998, following the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, an independent commission on policing was set up for Northern Ireland. The commission considered how to implement the Good Friday's Agreement's commitment for a 'fresh start' in Northern Ireland with regards to policing. The commission published its report [A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland](#) in September of 1999. The UK Government accepted all the recommendations and the [Police \(Northern Ireland\) Act 2000](#) provided the legislation which was needed to implement the reforms. The Act established the Police Service in Northern (PSNI), the Northern Ireland Policing Board to oversee it and the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland to investigate complaints against it.

1.2 Police and Crime Commissioners

Each territorial police force in England and Wales, apart from the Metropolitan Police Service, the City of London Police and Greater Manchester Police, is overseen by a PCC. The [Association of Police and Crime Commissioners](#) is a membership organisation for PCCs. It represents their interests and provides them with professional assistance.²³

PCCs are directly elected politicians. They are elected on four-year terms using a supplementary vote system (the same system used to elect mayors). The last election of PCCs took place in 2016 and therefore the next election is due to take place in 2020.

Powers and responsibilities

PCCs in England and Wales oversee their police force. To do so they execute three core functions:

- 1 They are responsible for appointing the Chief Constable and holding them account for the running of their force. If necessary, they have the power to call on them to retire or resign.
- 2 They set out a five-year police and crime plan (in consultation with the Chief Countable) which determines the local policing priorities.
- 3 They set the annual force budget and decide at what level to set the annual council tax precept.

Outside these core functions PCCs have other duties. For example, PCCs are required to respond to inspection reports published about their force, the commission victims.²⁴

Powers regarding fire and rescue services

Provisions in the *Policing and Crime Act 2017* allowed PCCs to assume responsibility for overseeing their local fire and rescue service as well as their local police force.²⁵ Some PCCs have assumed responsibility for

Further Reading on PCCs

[Section 4.3](#) of this paper discusses the political oversight of PCCs.

An historic Library paper: [Police and Crime Commissioners](#) provides more detail on the role of PCCs and some background to their introduction.

The Library paper: [Police and Crime Commissioner Elections: 2016](#) analyses the results of last election of PCCs.

The Library paper: [Police funding](#) discusses PCCs funding powers.

The Gov.UK collection [Police and Crime Commissioners](#) brings together relevant government documents.

²³ Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, [About the APCC](#) [last accessed 3/06/19]

²⁴ HMICFRS, [How HMICFRS works with PCCs and Mayoral Offices](#), 27 June 2018

²⁵ s6, *Policing and Crime Act 2017*

their local fire and rescue services.²⁶ This was part of a wider government policy to encourage police forces to work more closely with other local emergency services, particularly fire and rescue services.²⁷

Relationship with Chief Constables

PCCs are intended to provide democratic accountability for how their local police force is performing. However, Chief Constables continue to have operational independence to run their force. This independence is seen as a fundamental characteristic of the British policing.²⁸ There is therefore an inherent tension between the roles and functions of PCCs and Chief Constables.

The [Policing Protocol Order 2011](#) provides a framework by which the relationship between PCCs and Chief Constables should operate. PCCs and Chief Constables must have regard for the Protocol when exercising their duties.²⁹ The Protocol says that PCCs and Chief Constables should maintain an “effective working relationship” based on “the principles of goodwill, professionalism, openness and trust”.³⁰ The Protocol states that PCCs and Chief Constables

“...must work together to safeguard the principle of operational independence, while ensuring that the PCC is not fettered in fulfilling their statutory role.”³¹

Alternatives to PCCs

Police Authorities

Prior to the passing of the *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011* the oversight function of most police forces in England and Wales was undertaken by police authorities. The ‘police authority model’ is still used to oversee the City of London Police, Police Scotland, the British Transport Police and the Civil Nuclear Constabulary.

Police authorities are membership organisations which function as ‘non-departmental public bodies’ (apart from the City of London Police Authority which is a Committee of the City of London). The existing authorities consist of individuals appointed by the relevant Government minister. The police authorities which in the past oversaw territorial police forces in England and Wales had a mixed membership of local magistrates, councillors and appointees.

Local Mayors

The Mayor provides the oversight role of the local police in both London and Manchester. In London the Mayor’s Office of Police and Crime executes the functions of a PCC. It is led by the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime. However, the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police is appointed directly by the Home Secretary and not by the Deputy Mayor. This is because the Metropolitan Police Service plays a

²⁶ Home Office, [Three more PCCs to take on responsibility of local fire and rescue services](#), March 2018

²⁷ Home Office, [More police and crime commissioners to be given fire authority voting rights](#), June 2018

²⁸ [p30, The Policing Protocol Order 2011](#)

²⁹ [s79\(2\), Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)

³⁰ [p8, The Policing Protocol Order 2011](#)

³¹ [p35, The Policing Protocol Order 2011](#)

major role in policing across the UK as well as providing for a local police service in London.

In other parts of England and Wales, where the creation of a Combined Authority has resulted the establishment of a local Mayor, the role of a PCC may in future be transferred to the Mayor. For example, there is currently a public consultation on the proposed transfer of powers from the West Midlands PCC to the Mayor of the West Midlands Combined Authority.³²

Key issue: Are PCCs providing effective oversight of police forces?

The Government have argued that the creation of PCCs has been a success. They have said that PCCs have provided “clear local accountability and a strong incentive to pursue ambitious reform to improve local services and deliver value for money in the interests of local people.”³³ The Home Affairs Select Committee have agreed. In a 2016 report they said that “the introduction of PCCs has worked well to date and has had some beneficial effect on public accountability and clarity of leadership in policing.”³⁴ However some have concerns about how PCCs function. These include:

- Public understanding of, and engagement with, PCCs is low. The extent to which PCCs are fully accountable to the public is therefore questionable.³⁵
- There are too few applicants for Chief Constable vacancies. PCCs are therefore unable to effectively appoint the most suitable candidate for their force.³⁶
- PCCs are too focused on local crime. They struggle to drive collaboration between forces on crime threats that transcend police force boundaries.³⁷
- A 2017 High Court judgment, which found that the PCC for South Yorkshire had unlawfully requested his Chief Constable to resign, raised issues with how PCCs should hold their Chief Constable to account.³⁸

The Conservative Party have advocated further reforms to increase the political accountability of PCCs. Their 2017 General Election manifesto pledged to replace the supplementary vote system used to elect PCCs with the ‘first-past-the-post system’ (which is currently used to elect MPs).³⁹ This is something that the Home Affairs Select Committee has previously recommended. They argued that using ‘first-past-the-post’ would “bring much needed clarity to the election process”.⁴⁰

1.3 Strategic decision making in policing

In England and Wales responsibility for setting the strategic direction of policing nationally is principally shared between the Home Office and the NPCC. However, other bodies also play a role. For example, The

³² [PQ909411, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner: Mayors](#), answered on 25 February 2019. West Midlands Combined Authority, [Consultation on the transfer of powers and responsibilities of the Police and Crime Commissioner to the Mayor of the West Midlands](#), [last accessed 13/08/19]

³³ HC 822, [Home Affairs Committee Police and Crime Commissioners: here to stay: Government response to the Committee’s Seventh Report of Session 2015–16: Sixth Special Report of Session 2016–17](#), 15 November 2016, p9

³⁴ HC 844, [House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Police and Crime Commissioners: here to stay: Seventh Report of Session 2015–16](#), 22 March 2016, paragraph 67

³⁵ Ibid, page 9-10

³⁶ Ibid, paragraph 47

³⁷ *The Times*, [Times letters: Former Met chiefs lament ‘lawless’ UK](#), 5 July 2019

³⁸ Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, [Response to the South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner’s Decision Not to Appeal](#), 17 June 2017 see also [\[2017\] EWHC 1349](#)

³⁹ The Conservative Party, [Forward, Together Our Plan for a Stronger Britain and a Prosperous Future: The Conservative Party Manifesto 2017](#), p43

⁴⁰ HC 844, [House of Commons Home Affairs Committee Police and Crime Commissioners: here to stay: Seventh Report of Session 2015–16](#), 22 March 2016, paragraph 27

College of Policing sets national professional standards and HMCFRS makes recommendations to forces (individually and collectively). Below, the role of the Home Office and the NPCC is discussed. Other actors are discussed later in this briefing.

The Home Office

The Home Office feeds into strategic decision making in policing in four main ways:

- It publishes a statutory document called the **Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR)**. The SPR sets out the most pressing national crime threats and how police force should be responding to them.
- It convenes the **National Policing Board**. The National Policing Board first met in July 2019. It was attended by senior leaders in policing and Home Office ministers and officials. The Home Office have committed to convening the Board four times a year and has said it will provide a forum to improve collaboration and consistency across the police service.⁴¹
- It publishes **ad-hoc strategy documents** on crime fighting. These documents often focus on cross government and multi-agency approaches. A recent example is the [Serious Violence Strategy](#) which set out an ambition to use early interventions to combat serious violence.⁴²
- It convenes **ad-hoc task forces** on specific types of crime. These task forces bring together senior police officers, other senior public servants, policy makers and community leaders. A recent example is the [Burglary taskforce](#).

The strategic policing requirement

[Section 77](#) of the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act* requires the Home Office “from time to time” to publish a ‘Strategic Policing Requirement’ (SPR) document. This document must set out what the Home Secretary believes to be most pressing national threats and how police services should work to counter them. Police Chiefs are required to have regard to the Strategic Policing Requirement in their duties.⁴³

So far the Government has published two ‘Strategic Policing Requirements’. The [first](#) was published in 2012 (shortly after the commencement of the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act*). The latest [Strategic Policing Requirement](#) document was published in 2015. It set out seven ‘national threats’:

- Terrorism
- Serious and organised crime
- A national cyber security incident
- Threats to public order and safety which cannot be managed by a single police force

⁴¹ Home Office, [Prime Minister opens first meeting of National Policing Board](#), 31 July 2019

⁴² Home Office, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018

⁴³ s77(2), *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*

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- Civil emergencies that require an aggregated response across police force boundaries
- Child sexual abuse
- Child exploitation that is attributed to serious and organised crime.⁴⁴

The SPR describes how Chief Constables and PCCs should work to combat these national threats (based on the 'five Cs'). The SPR discussed how forces should ensure:

- they have **capacity** to combat the national threats. This in turn ensures they **contribute** to national crime fighting.
- They have the **capability** to combat the national threats.
- That there is **consistency** in approach across the country.
- That they take a joined up **connected** approach.⁴⁵

The NPCC

The NPCC sets a ten-year plan for policing in a 'policing vision'. The latest vision is the [Policing Vision 2025](#). This was published jointly with the APCC. The vision has five core strands:

- **Local policing:** local policing will be aligned, and where appropriate integrated, with other local public services to improve outcomes for citizens and protect the vulnerable.
- **Workforce:** Policing will be a profession with a more representative workforce that will align the right skills, powers and experience to meet challenging requirements.
- **Specialist capabilities:** To better protect the public, we will enhance our response to new and complex threats, we will develop our network and the way we deliver specialist capabilities by reinforcing and connecting policing locally, nationally and beyond.
- **Digital policing:** Digital policing will make it easier and more consistent for the public to make digital contact, improve our use of digital intelligence and evidence and ensure we can transfer all material in a digital format to the criminal justice system.
- **Enabling business delivery:** Police business support functions will be delivered in a more consistent manner to deliver efficiency and enhance interoperability across the police service.⁴⁶

The NPCC convenes two sets of [committees](#). Twelve 'Reform and Transformation' committees, where senior leaders in policing agree changes to service delivery (including how to implement the policing vision), and eleven 'Coordination Committees', where forces agree standards for operational duties and business management.

In addition to their 'day jobs' leading individual police forces some police chiefs take on responsibility for being a 'policing lead' on specific crimes and issues for the NPCC. These officers help shape a national approach to these issues.

⁴⁴ Home Office, [The Strategic Policing Requirement](#), March 2015, Part A, p7 and 8

⁴⁵ Ibid, Part B, p9-14

⁴⁶ NPCC, [Policing Vision 2025](#), [last accessed 3/06/19]

Key issue: Does the governance of policing in England and Wales need reform?

In the [Spending Round 2019](#) the Government announced that it would “undertake a formal review of the powers, capabilities, governance and funding” needed by police services.⁴⁷ This announcement follows concerns raised by multiple stakeholders that the current system for organising police services is in need of fundamental reform.

Stakeholders have argued that forces are struggling to coordinate their response to national threats. This is seen as particularly problematic as several crime threats currently high on the national agenda (for example: county lines drug dealing, bank fraud and online sexual abuse) are not confined to a single police force area.

Broadly, the problems identified with the current system are:

- There are too many police forces. This results in a high number of senior decision makers who must agree at a national level. Smaller forces struggle to ensure that they have the resources or capabilities to contribute to coordinated operations.
- Responsibilities for national, regional and local coordination are shared between too many core actors. This fragmentation makes it difficult for a single actor to drive change across the system.
- The Home Office is too light touch. It lacks a comprehensive understanding of policing, the demand police forces face and how they are trying to meet this demand on the ground.

The Home Affairs Select Committee have argued that the Home Office should play a much stronger role in steering the system.⁴⁸ They recommended that the Home Office conduct a fundamental review of the 43-force territorial structure.⁴⁹ They proposed the Home Office establish a new *National Policing Council*, chaired by the Home Secretary, to drive reform.⁵⁰

The Inspectorate of Constabulary have said that a new “national system of police co-ordination should be established to make sure the police are as effective and efficient as they can be.”⁵¹ They said that the “time has come for the police service to realise the pressing need for single-system operation in many, if not all, activities which are not purely local” and have argued that this change needs to be driven by the Home Office.⁵²

The National Audit Office recommended that the Home Office set out more clearly which actors are accountable for what in policing.⁵³ They said that the Home Office should develop an overall strategy for policing which makes clear where services should be delivered nationally and locally.⁵⁴

Former chair of the NPCC Chief Constable Sara Thornton has said that these criticisms fail to appreciate “the deliberate political settlement made with the introduction of police and crime commissioners”. She has argued that the Home Office, police chiefs and PCCs should work together to set a clear plan for the future sustainability of policing. However, she argued that the “time has come for the Home Office to provide greater leadership for the whole system.”⁵⁵

The Home Office had already “recognised” that it “must take a more forward-leaning approach to its engagement with policing”.⁵⁶ It has established the *National Policing Board* to “improve consistency and cooperation” between police forces and has now announced the review of the governance and funding of police services.⁵⁷ However, there has been little detail of how the *National Policing Board* will operate going forward and the Government have yet to announce a ‘terms of reference’ for its review.

Following the 2019 General Election the new Johnson Government used the December 2019 Queen’s Speech to announce it will establish a Royal Commission on the criminal justice process.⁵⁸ The Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council (the coordinating body for UK police forces), Martin Hewitt QPM, issued a statement calling for policing to be a “critical part” of the Royal Commission. He said it would be a “missed opportunity if police structures are excluded”.⁵⁹

The Police Foundation (an independent thinktank) has opened its own [Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales](#). The Review is chaired by Sir Michael Barber (the former Head of No 10s ‘Delivery Unit’). Sir Mark Sedwill (the Cabinet Secretary) welcomed the launch of the review and committed to engaging with its work.⁶⁰

⁴⁷ HM Treasury, [Spending Round 2019: CP 170](#), September 2019, paragraph 2.14

⁴⁸ HC 515: House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, [Policing for the future: Tenth Report of Session 2017–19](#), October 2018, conclusion 61

⁴⁹ Ibid, conclusion 63

⁵⁰ Ibid, conclusion 65

⁵¹ HMICFRS, [State of policing: The annual assessment of policing in England and Wales 2018](#), July 2019, p41

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- ⁵² Ibid
- ⁵³ NAO, [Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018](#), September 2018, recommendation a
- ⁵⁴ Ibid, recommendation d
- ⁵⁵ Sara Thornton, [NPCC Chair Sara Thornton Speech APCC and NPCC Summit 2018](#), October 2018
- ⁵⁶ Home Office, [The Government response to the tenth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee: Session 2017-19 \(HC 5115\): Policing for the future](#), paragraph 155
- ⁵⁷ Home Office, [Prime Minister opens first meeting of National Policing Board](#), 31 July 2019; HM Treasury, [Spending Round 2019: CP 170](#), September 2019, paragraph 2.14
- ⁵⁸ HM Govt, [The Queen's Speech 2019](#), p89
- ⁵⁹ NPCC, [NPCC Chair: Policing must be a critical part of Royal Commission](#), 7 Jan 2020
- ⁶⁰ The Police Foundation, [Sir Michael Barber to head major review of the police service](#), September 2019

2. Operation

Police forces in the UK have two key operational characteristics:

- 1 They are **operationally independent**. They make day to day decisions about how they tackle crime without political interference.
- 2 They operate only with the consent of the people, what is known as **policing by consent**. The police gain the public's consent by using minimal force and applying the rule of law with strict impartiality.

These characteristics were established by the [nine 'general instructions'](#) given to the first officers of the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) in 1829. The 'general instructions' are more commonly known as the **Peelian Principles of Policing** (named after Sir Robert Peel, the Victorian politician who founded the MPS). They define the 'British model of policing'.

The College of Policing has responsibility for setting national standards for policing and coordinating the implementation of these standards. The College does this by issuing official guidance to police personnel and by coordinating the implementation of national recruitment and training standards.

Police forces divide their personnel into teams known as **police units**. Most police units fall into one of two categories: local **response teams** work in shifts to respond to emergency calls whilst centralised **specialist units** investigate specific types of crime. Some officers and teams specialise in **neighbourhood policing** where they build relationships with their local community to help prevent crime.

Each police force in UK organises its officers using a standardise **rank structure** which denotes their seniority and responsibilities. Officers can work their way up the rank structure, others may be fast tracked to leadership roles either through a graduate programme or a talent identification scheme.

Police officers are 'office holders' rather than employees and are therefore prohibited from joining a trade union. Instead there are 'staff associations' which represent some officers. 'Rank and file' officers are represented by the **Police Federation**. **The Police Superintendents Association** represents more senior officers. Police Chiefs and their deputies are represented by the **Chief Police Officers' Staff Association**.

Everyone who works in policing is expected to uphold the policing [Code of Ethics](#) at all times (both on and off duty). **The Code of Ethics** is a statutory document which sets out the expected 'standards of professional behaviour' for police personnel. These standards form the basis of formal misconduct hearings against police officers. Officers found to have breached the Code can be disciplined or dismissed as a result of these hearings.

2.1 Police forces

There are 47 civilian [police forces](#) in the UK. Police forces can be divided into three distinct categories:

- Forty-three **territorial police forces** in England and Wales (as shown on the map below).
- Two **specialists police forces** that fall outside the departmental responsibility of the Home Office:
 - The [British Transport Police](#) (BTP) which polices the railway network across mainland Britain. The BTP is the departmental responsibility of the Department for Transport.
 - The [Civil Nuclear Constabulary](#) (CNC), an armed police force which protects Britain’s nuclear sites. The CNC is the responsibility of the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy.
- Two **national police forces** one in each of Scotland and Northern Ireland where policing policy is devolved.

The Library briefing [The British Transport Police](#) discusses the BTP and proposals to reform it.

In addition to these 47 forces there is the [Royal Military Police](#), a specialist force which polices the British military.



Collaboration between forces

Police forces in England and Wales may collaborate and share resources in a number of ways. The Home Office has issued statutory guidance to police chiefs on [police collaboration](#).⁶¹ This guidance explains how police forces can collaborate and when it might be most appropriate to do so.

Long term collaboration

PCCs have a legal duty to collaborate with other forces when it is in the interests of “efficiency” or “effectiveness” to do so.⁶² Section 22A of the *Police Act 1996* (inserted via [section 89](#) of the *Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011*) allows police forces to enter into formal collaboration agreements.

Collaboration agreements have been used to facilitate both national and regional collaboration. Nationally a collaboration agreement was used to set up the NPCC. This created a collective decision-making body and national policing units focused on specialist types of crime. Regionally, collaboration agreements have been used to allow for both front line policing and administration to be delivered jointly by neighbouring police forces. For example, forces in the South West of England have collaboration agreements which has created multi-force policing units for organised crime, major crimes and forensics (amongst other things).⁶³ Kent and Essex police forces have a collaboration agreement which sees them share “business areas” for serious crime, IT and procurement.⁶⁴

Collaboration agreements are time limited and must be kept under review.⁶⁵ This means that forces can allow them to lapse and then seek either a new collaboration agreement with the same or different force, or return to providing services without an agreement.

Possibility of force mergers

The current framework for policing in England and Wales requires there to be a single police force for each of the 43 ‘police force areas’ listed in [Schedule one](#) of the *Police Act 1996*. However, the 1996 Act does allow for the Secretary of State to bring forward secondary legislation to amend the police force areas. Police forces can present proposals to the Home Office to request that they do so.⁶⁶ Therefore, police forces could request to be merged. The Home Office has stated that they would welcome...

...proposals from any forces that wish to voluntarily merge.
Such proposals would be considered where they are

⁶¹ Home Office, [Statutory guidance for police collaboration](#), October 2012

⁶² [s1\(8\)\(d\), Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)

⁶³ Avon and Somerset Police Force, [Collaboration with other police forces](#), December 2016

⁶⁴ Kent Police and Essex Police, [Kent and Essex Police Force and Police Authority Collaboration Agreements](#), undated [agreement runs to 2025]

⁶⁵ s22B, *Police Act 1996* (as inserted by [s89 Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#))

⁶⁶ [s32, Police Act 1996](#)

supported by a robust business case and have sufficient local consent, including from the relevant PCCs.⁶⁷

Mutual aid

[Section 24](#) of the *Police Act 1996* allows police chiefs to provide officers or other assistance to another force to enable them to meet 'special demand'. This is known as 'mutual aid'. Police forces use mutual aid in special circumstance, such as emergencies, planned events (like large-scale public gatherings) or to facilitate specialists staff deployments to other forces.⁶⁸ When police forces provide 'mutual aid' they charge the receiving force for the cost of the 'police services' provided. The NPCC has published [guidelines on mutual aid cost recovery](#) to assist police forces in setting the value to charge at.

Key issue: Should there be more collaboration between the police and other public services?

The NPCC Policing Vision 2025 set out an ambition that:

By 2025 local policing will be aligned, and where appropriate integrated, with other local public services to improve outcomes for citizens and protect the vulnerable.⁶⁹

The Conservative Government has been pursuing structural reforms to bring the governance of emergency services closer together. The Government have argued that doing so will ensure emergency services provide a better, more integrated, service to the public.⁷⁰ They have also argued that the reforms will allow all emergency services to work more efficiently by pooling similar resources and functions.⁷¹

The Conservative Government of 2015-2017 passed the [Police and Crime Act 2017](#). This Act:

- allowed police forces to enter into formal collaboration agreements with fire and rescue and ambulances services.⁷²
- placed a statutory requirement on each service provider to consider whether a collaboration agreement would be in the interests of "efficiency" and "effectiveness".⁷³
- allowed PCCs to assume the responsibility to oversee the running of their local fire and rescue service as well as their police force.⁷⁴

The Conservative Party's 2017 General Election manifesto pledged to:

... widen the role of police and crime commissioners to help them cut crime for their local communities. We will ensure that commissioners sit on local health and wellbeing boards, enabling better co-ordination of crime prevention with local drug and alcohol and mental health services. We will build on the Policing and Crime Act, which introduced better co-ordination of policing and fire and rescue services, with greater devolution of criminal justice responsibility and budgets to local commissioners.⁷⁵

The Labour Party have opposed these reforms. Their 2017 General Election manifesto pledged to "reinststate separate governance arrangements for fire and police services".⁷⁶ The Police Federation (a staff association for police officers) have said that "while joined-up emergency services are vital" police

⁶⁷ Home Office, [The Government response to the tenth report from the Home Affairs Select Committee: Session 2017-19 \(HC 5115\): Policing for the future](#), paragraph 166

⁶⁸ NPCC, [National Policing Guidelines on Charging for Police Services: Mutual Aid Cost Recovery](#), 2016, paragraph 3.2

⁶⁹ NPCC, [Policing Vision 2025](#), 2015, p7

⁷⁰ HM Government, [Enabling Closer Working Between the Emergency Services: Summary of consultation responses and next steps](#), January 2016

⁷¹ Ibid

⁷² s1, *Police and Crime Act 2017*

⁷³ s2(1), *Police and Crime Act 2017*

⁷⁴ s6, *Police and Crime Act 2017*

⁷⁵ The Conservative Party, [Forward Together: Our plan for a stronger Britain and a prosperous future, Manifesto 2017](#), p40

⁷⁶ The Labour Party, [For the many not the few, Manifesto 2017](#), p79

and fire services are their own “professional specialisms – and we must not merge the services or change things purely as a cost-cutting exercise.”⁷⁷ The House of Commons Public Accounts Committee questioned the way in which the reforms have been managed. They say the light touch approach of the Home Office, which has focused on bottom up reform, creates a risk that individual service providers take decisions without considering “what would be their optimum configuration of joint resources.”⁷⁸

2.2 Police personnel

There are four main types of personnel that work in police forces. Police officers, police specials (volunteer police officers), police community support officers and civilian support staff.

The College of Policing issued [Policing Professional Profiles](#) which describe the responsibilities and functions of generic roles across the policing profession.

Police personnel can specialise in different types of policing. The most notable specialism is ‘investigations’ where detectives spend their time investigating crimes rather than patrolling and responding to emergency calls. However, there are many unique police specialisms. For example, police officers may specialise in public order, neighbourhood, or undercover policing (amongst others). Others are trained to work with police animals like sniffer dogs and horses.

Rank structure

Police officers are organised by a rank structure. The current rank structure (as summarised in the table below) for police forces in England and Wales is set out in [regulation 4](#) of the *Police Regulations 2003*. Whilst the rank structure in England and Wales is set in regulations, these regulations were constrained by past primary legislation which specified many of the ranks that must be regulated for (section 9H and 13 of the *Police Act 1996* which has now been repealed).⁷⁹

The rank structure in Police Scotland is identical to that for forces in England and Wales but set in primary, rather than secondary, legislation. [Section 11](#) of the *Police and Fire Reform (Scotland) Act 2012* provides for the rank structure of Police Scotland.

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) and the City of London Police have a slightly modified rank structure to account for their size and responsibilities.

The current rank structure is little changed from that used by the first British police force (the MPS) when it was created in 1829.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Police Federation, [Police and Fire Services 'different' - we must not change status quo just to cut costs](#), January 2016

⁷⁸ HC 582, House of Commons Committee of Public Accounts Financial sustainability of fire and rescue services: Twenty-third Report of Session 2015–16, February 2016, paragraph 12

⁷⁹ [s48, Policing and Crime Act 2017](#)

⁸⁰ College of Policing, [Leadership Review: Recommendations for delivering leadership at all levels](#), June 2015, paragraph 5.3.3.

Police forces	Metropolitan Police Service	City of London Police
	Commissioner	
	Deputy Commissioner	
Chief Constable	Assistant Commissioner	Commissioner
Deputy Chief Constable	Deputy Assistant Commissioner	Assistant Commissioner
Assistant Chief Constable	Commander	Commander
Chief Superintendent	Chief Superintendent	Chief Superintendent
Superintendent	Superintendent	Superintendent
Chief Inspector	Chief Inspector	Chief Inspector
Inspector	Inspector	Inspector
Sergeant	Sergeant	Sergeant
Constable	Constable	Constable

Source: r4, [Police Regulations 2003](#) and *Ask the police*, [Q300: What is the structure of the ranks in the police?](#) [last accessed 3/06/19]

Reform to the rank structure

In June 2015, in response to a request by the Home Secretary, the College of Policing published a review of leadership in policing.⁸¹ This review looked at how the police service could be reformed to encourage more diversity (of background and skills) in leadership roles. Among the College's recommendations was that the rank structure should be reviewed.⁸² The College argued that the current rank structure is overly bureaucratic and "inhibits the development of an aspirational culture".⁸³ They were supportive of a 'flatter structure' because it allows for "organisations to be more responsive to social shifts and agile in meeting demands".⁸⁴

The 2015-2017 Conservative Government argued that the College of Policing, rather than the Home Office, should be responsible for determining the rank structure of the police.⁸⁵ It put forward legislative proposals to allow for the Home Office, upon recommendation by the College, to bring forward regulations to set police ranks and allow for any ranks currently specified in primary legislation to be removed and replaced. [Section 47 and 48](#) of the *Police and Crime Act 2017* provided for these reforms. However, no secondary legislation to amend the rank structure of the police has been brought forward under the Act yet.

The National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) was tasked to undertake the review of the rank structure.⁸⁶ The Home Office had expected the review to be completed by April 2016, but no report has been made public.⁸⁷ In March 2017, in written evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee, the NPCC stated that police staff should be reorganised in a flatter structure to encourage staff to be more autonomous.⁸⁸ However, the NPCC made no mention of their review of the rank structure or of

⁸¹ Ibid, see also: HCDeb, [Police Reform](#), 22 July 2014, Cc1265- 1126

⁸² Ibid, recommendation 2

⁸³ Ibid, paragraph 5.3.4

⁸⁴ Ibid, paragraph 5.3.5

⁸⁵ Home Office, [Police and Crime Bill Factsheet: Police Ranks](#), February 2016, paragraph 8

⁸⁶ Ibid, paragraph 7

⁸⁷ Ibid

⁸⁸ NPCC, [Policing for the Future Written Evidence by the National Police Chiefs' Council](#), p1

the College's new powers to recommend secondary legislation to reform it.

Welfare

There has been growing concerns about the mental and physical welfare of front-line police personnel. Serious assaults on police officers and the murder of PC Andrew Harper in the summer of 2019 highlighted the dangers police personnel face.⁸⁹ Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has found that increasing demands on police forces are having a negative impact on the mental health of officers. They have cited a 2019 study which estimated that one in five serving police personnel have a form of post-traumatic stress disorder.⁹⁰ They have criticised police forces for not developing costed long-term plans to address the complex welfare needs of their staff.⁹¹

The Police Federation has been running the campaign [Protect The Protectors](#) to raise awareness of officer welfare and lobby for greater support for those serving in police forces.

Government response

The Government has recognised the importance of officer welfare. In 2018 they supported Chris Bryant MP to pass a Private Members Bill: the [Assaults on Emergency Workers \(Offences\) Act 2018](#). This Act doubled the maximum sentence for assault against emergency services workers (from 6 to 12 months in prison) and required that the courts consider stronger penalties for other offences against emergency workers.⁹²

In April 2019 the College of Policing established the [National Police Wellbeing Service](#) (NPWS).⁹³ The College received a £7.5 million government grant in April 2017 to develop the service.⁹⁴ The NPWS provides practical support to police forces about the health needs of their personnel.⁹⁵ The Home Secretary announced in September 2019 that her department is working with the NPWS to develop standards for occupational health provision across all forces.⁹⁶

In July 2019 the Government published the [Front-Line Review](#) of policing. The Front-Line Review was the culmination of a yearlong research project into the welfare of frontline personnel. The Review highlighted that many officers feel undervalued, overworked and are not devoting adequate time to their welfare. It also identified that

⁸⁹ *BBC News*, [Police officer on frontline life: 'I've been spat on, bitten and kicked'](#), 16 August 2019

⁹⁰ HMICFRS, [State of Policing The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales](#), July 2019, p31

⁹¹ *Ibid*, p72

⁹² Ministry of Justice, [Jail time to double for assaulting an emergency worker](#), 13 September 2019

⁹³ College of Policing, [Launch of National Police Wellbeing Service](#), 30 April 2019

⁹⁴ [PO278352, Police: Mental Illness](#), answered 22 July 2019

⁹⁵ Oscar Kilio, [National Police Wellbeing Service](#), [last accessed 23 September 2019]

⁹⁶ Home Office, [Speech: Home Secretary at Police Superintendents' Association](#), 9 September 2019

officers at lower ranks feel disconnected from senior leadership and are sceptical that they have the power to inform change.⁹⁷

In response the Review the Government have committed to⁹⁸:

- Address demand by providing 'good practice guidance' on what cases should generally not involve the police and challenging police Chiefs to address unnecessary internal demand.
- Provide a 'national evaluation mechanism' of wellbeing provision available to police personnel and challenge police Chiefs to devote more time to staff welfare.
- Start a 'Front-Line Review Innovation Project' to enable front-line personnel to propose innovations and improvements.
- Continue to support the HMICFRS assess the wellbeing of police personnel as part of their regular inspections.

The Government has also announced plans to introduce a 'Police Covenant' to recognise the sacrifices of those who work in policing.⁹⁹ In July 2019 they said that they will open a consultation on the principles and scope of the covenant.¹⁰⁰ In September 2019 the Home Secretary Priti Patel announced that the Police Covenant will focus on three key areas: the health and wellbeing of police personnel, the physical protections they need on the job and support for their families.¹⁰¹

Following the 2019 General Election, the establishment of a Police Covenant was included as one of the "main elements" of the [Police Powers and Protections Bill](#) committed to Queen's Speech.¹⁰²

The Police Federation has welcomed the Government's commitment to the welfare of frontline personnel but has urged them to make sure that their promises "become a reality". They have been seeking reassurances that the Government's commitments are backed by the "significant financial investment the service so desperately needs".¹⁰³

2.3 Recruitment and training

The recruitment and training of police personnel is delivered locally by individual police forces. The College of Policing sets national standards which guide the recruitment and training processes in individual forces.

To specialise in some specific policing roles, for example firearms and public order, officers must undergo mandated training and pass national assessments set by the College.¹⁰⁴

⁹⁷ Home Office, [The Front-Line Review Recommendation report](#), July 2019, p5-6

⁹⁸ Home Office, [The Front-Line Review Recommendation report](#), July 2019, p8

⁹⁹ Home Office, [Home Secretary announces plans for a police covenant](#), 18 July 2019

¹⁰⁰ Ibid

¹⁰¹ Home Office, [Speech: Home Secretary at Police Superintendents' Association](#), 9 September 2019

¹⁰² HM Govt, [The Queen's Speech 2019](#), p73

¹⁰³ Police Federation, [Priti promises but now we need action](#), 18 August 2019

¹⁰⁴ College of Policing, [Armed policing: National Police Firearms Training Curriculum](#), [last accessed 19 August 2019]. College of Policing, [Public order: Command](#) [last accessed 19 August 2019]

College of Policing reforms

The College of Policing is currently driving fundamental reforms to police recruitment and training processes. These reforms are designed to standardise police training and make the police a graduate profession.

The reforms include:

- The development of [three new entry routes](#) to become a police constable.
- The introduction of a [Police Educational Qualifications Framework \(PEQF\)](#) for police officer roles.
- The development of the [National Policing Curriculum](#) to support the long-term professional development of all those who work in policing.

New entry routes

All new police constables will be recruited through one of three new entry routes.¹⁰⁵ Not all applicants are required to have a degree under the new entry routes, but they are designed to ensure that all police constables gain a degree level qualification upon the completion of their training. The entry routes are:

- **Degree entry:** candidates with a degree in any subject can apply to join the police. Upon entry they take part in a two-year training programme. At the end of their training they are expected to gain a graduate diploma in policing.¹⁰⁶
- **Pre-join degree:** the College of Policing has worked with universities to develop a specific 'policing degree'. 28 universities are currently offering the course.¹⁰⁷ New recruits who join the police with this degree are fast tracked through the training process.¹⁰⁸
- **Apprentice route:** candidates without a degree can apply. Upon entry they will spend three years working as a 'police apprentice'. At the end of their training they are expected to gain a degree level apprenticeship qualification in policing.¹⁰⁹

Police Educational Qualifications Framework

The PEQF will eventually provide a standardised training and accreditation for all police officers. For now, it is being introduced to provide standardised accredited training for new police constables.

In December 2019 the College says the new training for officers joining the police "will be up and running in more than 30 police forces across England and Wales over the next year". They said they are continuing to

¹⁰⁵ College of Policing, [Entry routes for police constables](#), [last accessed 19 August 2019]

¹⁰⁶ Ibid

¹⁰⁷ College of Policing, [Pre-join degree in Professional Policing: Information for prospective students](#), [last accessed 19 August 2019]

¹⁰⁸ College of Policing, [Entry routes for police constables](#), [last accessed 19 August 2019]

¹⁰⁹ College of Policing, [Entry routes for police constables](#), [last accessed 19 August 2019]

work will all forces to support its implementation across England & Wales.¹¹⁰

National Police Curriculum

The National Police Curriculum has been introduced to guide all training to police personnel. The curriculum has been designed to align with the College's [Authorised Professional Practice](#) documents. The curriculum includes seven 'subjects' (for example; 'ensuring public safety' and 'protecting vulnerable people'). Police personnel can gain recognised qualifications through the curriculum.¹¹¹

Debate about the reforms

The Government and the College of Policing argue that these reforms will ensure that those who work in policing have the right skills and knowledge. It is argued that a well-trained and professionalised police service will be better placed to meet the challenges of the future.¹¹²

The former Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council, Chief Constable Sara Thornton and Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Cressida Dick have supported the reforms. They argue that the policing profession should have accredited qualifications that recognise the complexity of the vocation.¹¹³ The Home Affairs Select Committee have also supported the reforms. They have said that the police service should strive for the...

...maintenance of consistent quality standards, based on accredited professional qualifications, a well-established evidence base, and high levels of practitioner knowledge.¹¹⁴

However, not everyone in policing has welcomed the changes. Those who oppose the reforms argue that they will make it harder for the police to attract minority ethnic candidates, be expensive to implement and result in officers spending too much time studying in classrooms.¹¹⁵ Some have questioned the value of academic knowledge in policing. They say that practical skills are more important 'on the beat'.¹¹⁶

The Chief Constable of Lincolnshire Police, Bill Skelly is one of the loudest critics of the reforms. He estimates that they will result in 10% of his workforce being off the frontline and in the classroom at any one time. He says this will cause him "massive deployability issues". He

¹¹⁰ College of Policing, Legal challenge around training for new officers rejected [last accessed 16 March 2020]

¹¹¹ College of Policing, [National Policing Curriculum](#), [last accessed 19 August 2019]

¹¹² See: College of Policing, [Policing Education Qualifications Framework Consultation](#), February 2019, College of Policing, [Policing Education Qualifications Framework: Frequently Asked Questions for Quality Standards Assessment \(OSA\): Pre-join Degree in Professional Policing](#), April 2018, HL Deb, [Police: Recruitment Criteria](#), 2 April 2019 and Home Office, Speech: [Speech to the Police Education Qualification Framework conference](#) (Brandon Lewis), March 2017

¹¹³ Oral evidence: [Policing for the future](#), HC 515, Q496- 497

¹¹⁴ Home Affairs Select Committee, [Policing for the future, Tenth Report of Session 2017–19](#), paragraph 202

¹¹⁵ College of Policing, [Developing and delivering an educational qualification framework for policing: The Collge of Policing response to the consultation](#), December 2019, p6

¹¹⁶ College of Policing, [Developing and delivering an educational qualification framework for policing: The Collge of Policing response to the consultation](#), December 2019, p6

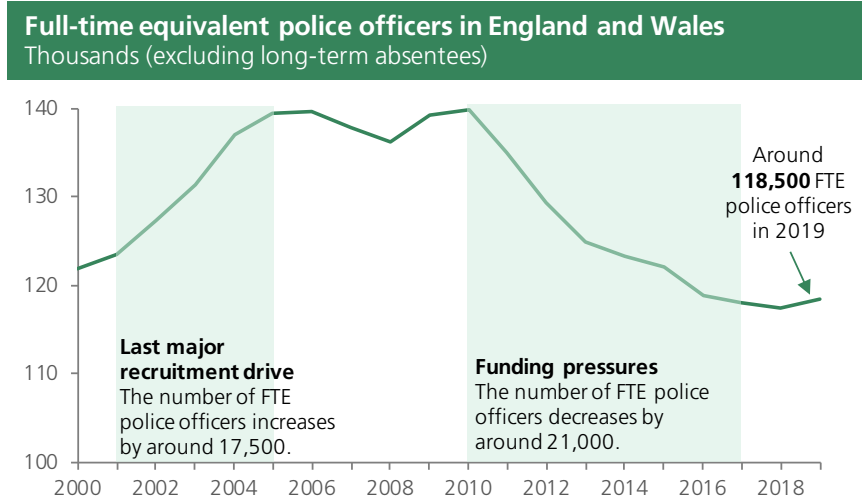
sought Judicial Review of the changes with the support of his Police and Crime Commissioner. They were seeking permission to delay the implementation of the PEQF till 2023.¹¹⁷ However, the courts refused to grant a judicial review to Lincolnshire.¹¹⁸ The College issued a statement following the decision stating a commitment to ‘move forward’ and bring Lincolnshire into the new training regime.¹¹⁹

Key issue: Can the police meet the Government’s pledge to recruit 20,000 police officers?

In his first speech as Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged to put “another 20,000 police on the streets” and said that the recruitment will start “forthwith”.¹²⁰ Mr Johnson has said that the recruitment will take place over the next three years. The Government are hoping to recruit up to 6,000 officers by the end of 2020/21.¹²¹

The pledge represents the largest police recruitment drive since the early 2000s. In the run up to the 2001 General Election the Labour Party promised to bring police officer numbers “to record levels” by 2004.¹²² Their 2001 Manifesto pledged to recruit 6,000 extra officers.¹²³ Following the General Election the Labour Government of 2001-2005 underwent a recruitment drive which saw the number of full-time equivalent police officers increase by around 17,500.¹²⁴

Boris Johnson’s pledge to recruit 20,000 officers has been met with widespread approval from the policing community. The National Police Chiefs Council said the “substantial growth in police officers” will “help us to reduce crime and improve outcomes for victims”.¹²⁵ The Police Federation welcomed the pledge and called it a “positive sign” that the government was committed to policing reform.¹²⁶



However, some have raised concerns with the practicalities of meeting such an ambitious target. The recruitment drive comes at the same time as the College of Policing’s reforms to the recruitment and

¹¹⁷ Lincolnshire Police, [Chief Constable on degree requirements of recruits](#), 9 August 2019

¹¹⁸ Lincolnshire Police, [PEOF - Judicial Review Dismissed on Technicality](#), 5 December 2019; College of Policing, [Legal challenge around training for new officers rejected](#), 5 December 2019

¹¹⁹ College of Policing, [Legal challenge around training for new officers rejected](#), 5 December 2019

¹²⁰ Prime Minister’s Office, [Boris Johnson’s first speech as Prime Minister: 24 July 2019](#), 24 July 2019

¹²¹ HM Treasury, [Spending Round 2019](#), CP 170, September 2019, paragraph 2.12

¹²² BBC News, [Straw pledges record police numbers](#), 8 January 2001

¹²³ Labour Party, 2001 [Labour Party General Election Manifesto: Ambitions for Britain](#), April 2001

¹²⁴ House of Commons Library, [Police service strength](#), table A2, 31 July 2019. **Note:** This figure excludes long term absentees.

¹²⁵ NPCC, [NPCC Chair responds to government announcement on police recruitment](#), 25 July 2019

¹²⁶ Police Federation, [Time to turn promising words in to positive actions](#), 25 July 2019

training of new constables come into force. The College says that the recruitment drive represents a “huge opportunity” but will be a “significant challenge”.¹²⁷ Some have raised concerns that the new entry routes will limit those eligible to apply and there are fears that a competitive job market will make it hard for the police to attract applicants.¹²⁸

Chief Constable Bill Skelly says he won’t be able to resource the new training requirements and as a result he might not be able to meet the pledge.¹²⁹ Resourcing the pledge will be crucial. In the [Spending Round 2019](#) the Government announced additional funding of £750million in 2020/21 and an initial £45million for forces in 2019/20 to support the recruitment.¹³⁰ They have said the first 6,000 new officers will be “shared” between local police forces, national counter-terrorism teams and serious and organised crime operations but have not confirmed exactly how the money will be distributed.¹³¹

The Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) conducted analysis of Labour’s 2017 General Election pledge to recruit 10,000 officers. They estimated that, assuming police pay stood still between 2017-2022, the police would need slightly more than the £300m Labour set aside for the policy in order to increase officer numbers by 10,000. The IFS argued that it might be cheaper for police forces to hire more support staff rather than officers. They said that extra support staff could absorb more of the less specialised work allowing officers to focus on the crime fighting that is shown to be most effective.¹³²

The Director of police recruitment website ‘Allpolicejobs.co.uk’, Richard Place, has warned that the police service may need to recruit 45,000 new officers to increase the number of full-time officers in post by 20,000. Otherwise, he thinks that the number new recruits won’t offset those leaving the profession.¹³³ In 2018/19 just under 2,200 officers left the profession.¹³⁴ The police already have existing recruitment and retention problems in certain positions. As of May 2019, around 14% of detective positions were vacant.¹³⁵ Efforts have been put in place to convince officers coming to the end of their service to stay in the profession, particularly experienced detectives.¹³⁶

To meet Boris Johnson’s recruitment pledge police forces are going to need to keep officers in the force wherever possible, attract new recruits and train them quickly. It will certainly be a “significant challenge” but one the police are eager to meet.

2.4 Policing tactics

Police forces use policing tactics in combination with their formal powers to prevent and investigate crime. The Library Briefing [Introduction to police powers](#) provides an overview of police powers. As with their use of powers, the police’s use of tactics must be compliant with the law, including human rights and equalities legislation.

Choosing the right tactics

The College of Policing conducts research into ‘what works’ in policing so that forces can implement the best tactics when preventing and

¹²⁷ College of Policing, [20,000 officers is a huge opportunity](#), 26 July 2019

¹²⁸ *BBC News*, [Recruitment of 20,000 new police officers to begin ‘within weeks’](#), 26 July and *People Magazine*, [Police forces struggling to attract new recruits](#), 6 August 2019

¹²⁹ Lincolnshire Police, [Chief Constable on degree requirements of recruits](#), 9 August 2019

¹³⁰ HM Treasury, [Spending Round 2019](#), CP 170, September 2019, paragraph 2.12

¹³¹ HM Treasury, [Spending Round 2019](#), CP 170, September 2019, paragraph 2.12; Home Office, [Fact sheet: ‘Be a force for all’ police recruitment campaign](#), 5 September 2019

¹³² IFS, [Police workforce and funding in England and Wales](#), 15 May 2017

¹³³ *Policing Insight*, [Want 20,000 extra police officers? The police service will need to recruit 45,000](#), 26 July 2019

¹³⁴ House of Commons Library, [Police service strength](#), 31 July 2019

¹³⁵ HMICFRS, [PEEL spotlight report ‘A system under pressure’: Emerging themes from the first group of 2018/19 PEEL inspections](#), May 2019, p13

¹³⁶ NPCC, [Chief Constables’ Council Minutes: Wednesday 24 – Thursday 25 January 2018](#), paragraph 16

responding to crime.¹³⁷ The College does this through three main activities:

- They maintain a '[What Works Centre](#)' for policing. Which reviews research on policing tactics and maintains a [Crime Reduction Toolkit](#) which highlights interventions that officers could take for different crime types.
- They maintain a National Policing Library which gives police forces access to thousands of books and journals about policing.
- They maintain the Police Online Knowledge Area (POLKA) where officers can share insights and discuss ideas.

Neighbourhood policing

'Neighbourhood policing' is a policing tactic in which police forces build relationships with their community so that they can work together to combat crime.¹³⁸ The College of Policing has issued [guidelines](#) on neighbourhood policing. These guidelines are designed to support forces to implement effective neighbourhood policing plans in their area.

The role of police community support officers (PCSOs) was designed to be provide a specialist resource for neighbourhood and local policing. Regular police officers can also specialise in neighbourhood policing if they wish.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has been raising concerns that neighbourhood policing in England & Wales is being eroded for some time. In 2016 they criticised dwindling resources for neighbourhood policing teams and a lack of a consistent approach to tackling local problems across the country.¹³⁹ In May 2019 they raised concerns that, owing to demand, PCSOs were too often being taken off neighbourhood work to do immediate work elsewhere.¹⁴⁰

However, the Police Foundation (a policing thinktank) have been more positive about the state of neighbourhood policing in the UK. They outlined a set of principles for delivering "sustainable, preventative, integrated and publicly connected local policing services for the future."¹⁴¹ The Police Foundation has identified good practice in Yorkshire, where they say their principles are being implemented, as proof that neighbourhood policing can be delivered effectively within current resource constraints.¹⁴²

Digital policing

The police use multiple digital resources and tools to conduct their jobs.

¹³⁷ The College of Policing, [About us](#) [last accessed 3/06/19]

¹³⁸ College of Policing, [Definition of neighbourhood policing](#) [last accessed 3/06/19]

¹³⁹ HMIC, [State of Policing The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2016 Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary](#), P27

¹⁴⁰ HMICFRS, PEEL spotlight report A system under pressure: Emerging themes from the first group of 2018/19 PEEL inspections,

¹⁴¹ The Police Foundation, [The future of neighbourhood policing](#), May 2018, section 9.4

¹⁴² The Police Foundation, [So this is modern neighbourhood policing](#), October 2018

Large national computer systems (the [Police National Computer](#) and the [Police National Database](#)) hold case files and intelligence. They allow police forces to share information. They also assist officers to identify and track down known suspects. Most police forces also have local systems which they use to store intelligence information.

Some use of technology is very visible. For example, most on duty officers are now issued with body worn cameras. The video footage taken by officers can then be used as evidence or as part of training exercises.¹⁴³ Other police use of technology might be less obvious to the public. For example, some forces are experimenting with algorithms to assist them when making operational decisions.

Improving the digital resources available to the police forms a key part of the Policing Vision 2025. The NPCC is leading efforts to transform 'digital policing' in the UK through the Digital Policing Portfolio (DPP). The DPP involves three main programmes of work:

- **Digital Public Contact:** ensuring that there are simple, well known and reliable digital contact service between the public and the police. This includes improving the [POLICE.UK](#) website which provides a central web location for the English and Welsh police service.¹⁴⁴
- **Digital Intelligence and Investigation:** improving the knowledge and skills of officers to address digital crime and ensuring there are specialist capabilities to respond to cyber-crime.
- **The Digital First:** a project to effectively digitised case records and improve digital communications with criminal justice partners.¹⁴⁵

Within these three programmes there are a multiple projects. For example, the 'Digital Intelligence and Investigations' programme includes a project to "map" forces capabilities as well as projects engaging with experts to propose technical solutions to aid policing.¹⁴⁶

Key issue: Algorithms in policing

Police forces have been developing computer programmes (algorithms) to help them predict patterns in crime and proactively police. The Government has provided funding at a national and local level to support the development of these technologies. Nationally, they are investing in replacements of existing police systems which hold crime records, intelligence and biometrics. The Government has said that these systems "will use more efficient and powerful algorithms than the current systems."¹⁴⁷ Locally, they are supporting individual forces to develop and trial predictive technologies by providing funding through the *Police Transformation Fund*.¹⁴⁸

Algorithms are being developed and tested to help police across their work. For example, Durham, Avon & Somerset and West Midlands Police have all been trialling algorithms which assess the

¹⁴³ College of Policing, [Body-worn video](#), August 2014

¹⁴⁴ [POLICE.UK](#), [Police.uk is changing](#), 30 July 2019

¹⁴⁵ NPCC, [Digital Policing](#), [last accessed 3/06/19]

¹⁴⁶ [PO 162550, Police: ICT](#), answered on 16 July 2018

¹⁴⁷ [PO 174711, Police: ICT](#), answered on 13 September 2018

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid*, see also Home Office, [Police transformation fund: investments in 2018 to 2019](#), 1 August 2019

likelihood that arrested suspects will reoffend. These systems assist officers making bail decisions and decisions about where to target rehabilitative programmes.¹⁴⁹

Other forces are using algorithms to identify 'hot spots' for crime and target police patrols. Officers continually feed data into the computer systems to improve their decision making about where they should patrol. The Home Office has been supportive of 'hot spot policing' arguing that the tactic is shown to result in "genuine reductions in crime".¹⁵⁰ The College of Policing has reviewed the evidence on the effectiveness of 'hot spot policing' and found that overall it does reduce crime, particularly drug and violent crime. However, the College has found that there is a risk the tactic can lead to displacement of crime to areas surrounding the 'hot spot'.¹⁵¹

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has been using the 'Gangs Matrix' database to identify those at risk of committing, or being a victim of, gang related violence. In November 2018 the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) found that the 'Gangs Matrix' was breaking data protection legislation.¹⁵² The ICO ordered the MPS to improve the data processing associated with the system to make it compliant with the law. The MPS were already implementing an action plan for the system and the ICO said it was "pleased" that the MPS was cooperating on the matter.¹⁵³ The month following the ICO ruling, London Mayor Sadiq Khan published a review of the Gangs Matrix. He argued that this review had shown that it can be used effectively but that it was important that its recommendations were carried out "quickly and transparently to ensure Londoners have confidence in how it is used."¹⁵⁴

Civil rights groups have been critical of the use of algorithms in policing. They have argued that they can reinforce discrimination. The civil rights campaign group *Liberty* has called for the end of the use of "mapping programmes" used to facilitate 'hot-spot policing' and predictive programmes like the 'Gangs Matrix' and 'Hart'. They concluded that decisions about who to release or where to patrol were "too important to hand over to a machine- and the risk to our civil liberties are too great".¹⁵⁵

The Government has established the [Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation](#) (CDEI) to develop the right governance regime for data-driven technologies.¹⁵⁶ The CDEI has commissioned the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI- a defence and security think tank) to review the police use of algorithms.¹⁵⁷ RUSI published the first of two papers associated with this review in September 2019.¹⁵⁸ RUSI found that the use algorithms in policing has "numerous potential benefits, but also carries significant risks, including those relating to bias". RUSI concluded that multiple types of bias can occur including discrimination, the skewing of decision-making processes and systemically unfair outcomes for individuals in particular groups. RUSI argues that the development of standard operational guidance for police forces on the use and development of algorithmic tools should consider the legal, ethical and operational implications of the technology.¹⁵⁹ Their second report for the CDEI (expected in early 2020) will include specific recommendations for a 'Code of Ethics' for police algorithms.¹⁶⁰

RUSI is not the only organisation that has considered the police use of algorithms recently. The Police Foundation (a policing think-tank) and the Law Society (a representative organisation for solicitors) have both published reports on the subject. Like RUSI, both organisations have noted the potential of the

¹⁴⁹ Royal United Services [Institute. Briefing Paper: Data Analytics and Algorithmic Bias in Policing](#), September 2019, p9

¹⁵⁰ Home Office, [Serious Violence Strategy](#), April 2018 Box 1: Hot-spot policing- what it is and why it works, p32

¹⁵¹ College of Policing, [Crime reduction toolkit: Hot spots policing](#), [last accessed 23 September 2019]

¹⁵² ICO, [ICO finds Metropolitan Police Service's Gangs Matrix breached data protection laws](#), 16 November 2018

¹⁵³ Ibid

¹⁵⁴ Mayor of London, [Gangs Matrix – Mayor publishes review recommending comprehensive overhaul](#), 21 December 2018

¹⁵⁵ Liberty, [Policing by Machine](#), p9

¹⁵⁶ Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, [About us](#), [last accessed 23 September 2019]

¹⁵⁷ Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation, [Report commissioned by CDEI calls for measures to address bias in police use of data analytics](#), 16 September 2019

¹⁵⁸ Ibid

¹⁵⁹ Royal United Services [Institute. Briefing Paper: Data Analytics and Algorithmic Bias in Policing](#), September 2019

¹⁶⁰ Ibid, p3

technology but have advocated for the introduction of new and clearer regulations for its use by the police.¹⁶¹

¹⁶¹ The Police Foundation, [Data- driven policing and public value](#), March 2019, Recommendation 3. & The Law Society, [Algorithm use in the criminal justice system](#), 4 June 2019, Recommendation 1

3. Oversight

Police services in the UK are overseen by a number of public bodies.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports on the 'effectiveness and efficiency' of each police force in England and Wales as well as the Police Service of Northern Ireland. HMICFRS uses the evidence they gather from their inspections to publish an annual 'state of the nation's policing report'. The HMICFRS also draws findings from their inspections to publish thematic reports on particular aspects of policing where they see a need or have been specifically requested to. In Scotland the police are inspected by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary Scotland (HMICS).

Most complaints about police conduct are dealt by the relevant force. In England and Wales, the **Independent Office of Police Conduct (IOPC)** oversees the police complaints system and investigates the most serious cases. The IOPC publish the findings of their investigations and make recommendations to police forces that result from them. In Scotland the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (Pirc) carries out the functions of the IOPC, in Northern Ireland these functions are carried out by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

The functions of HMICFRS, the IOPC and the College of Policing are complementary. As such, each body has signed a '[concordat](#)' which sets out their roles and responsibilities and describes how they work together.

In England and Wales political scrutiny of police forces is shared between individuals, local councils and the UK Parliament. Individuals elect their PCC, thus making the PCC directly accountable to their constituents. Local Councillors sit on **Police and Crime Panels (PCPs)** which provide formal scrutiny their local PCC. In the House of Commons, the **Home Affairs Select Committee** scrutinise the work of the Home Office.

In Scotland and Northern Ireland, the equivalent of a PCC (the SPA and the NIPB respectively) are not directly elected. Instead they are appointed by Ministers and are therefore accountable to their national executive. In the Scottish Parliament the Justice Committee scrutinises how the Safer Communities Directorate leads policing policy and administration. In Northern Ireland (when the Northern Ireland Assembly is sitting) this scrutiny function would be undertaken by the Committee for Justice.

3.1 Inspections

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is responsible for inspecting police forces in England and Wales. HMICFRS conducts individual inspections of each police force. In

addition to their regular inspections they conduct specialist inspections on particular aspects of policing which consider the national picture.

PEEL assessment

HMICFRS use the [PEEL assessment](#) to conduct most of its inspections, including the inspection of each police force.

The assessment criteria inspects each force on three main criteria, known as 'pillars':

- **Effectiveness:** an assessment of how well forces are preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour; tackling serious and organised crime; and protecting victims and those who are vulnerable.
- **Efficiency:** an assessment of how well forces are making use of their resources to meet expectations and public priorities. Forces are also assessed on how they plan and invest for the future.
- **Legitimacy:** an assessment of how staff and officers are viewed by the public. Staff and officers should behave fairly, ethically and within the law. Forces are also assessed on how they identify and resolve issues relating to fair and respectful treatment.¹⁶²

HMICFRS uses a standardise [question set](#) to assess each force against each pillar. Forces can receive one of four marks for each pillar: 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate'. HMICFRS also identify 'areas for improvement' and 'causes for concern'. 'Causes for concern' are accompanied by one or more recommendations designed to help the force address that concern.¹⁶³

State of Policing 2018

HMICFRS published its latest annual [State of Policing](#) report in July 2019. This assessment covered the period between April 2018 and March 2019. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by the police and how they are striving to meet them. The Inspectorate made 'four principle points', which highlight their growing concern about the ability for the police to meet its current challenges:

- 1 **Most forces are performing well, despite many new policing challenges.** Police forces work with bravery and integrity and deal with the many demands they face, some of which are increasing in scale and complexity.
- 2 **The wider criminal justice system is dysfunctional and defective.** In particular, the system lets down children and other vulnerable people. Many vulnerable people become trapped in a cycle of offending, conviction, punishment, release and re-offending. Generally, there is not enough emphasis on prevention and early intervention to break the cycle.
- 3 **There is a mismatch between police funding and public expectations.** The police funding arrangements are flawed in two respects: they do not take enough account of the unique circumstances of each force; and funding is provided on too

¹⁶² HMICFRS, [How we inspect](#), [last accessed 3/06/19]

¹⁶³ Ibid

short-term a basis. But, above all, there is a widening gap between the needs of the public and the police’s capacity and capability to meet them.

- 4 **There needs to be reform of national, regional and local arrangements.** In too many respects, the current 43 force structure acts as barriers to the exchange of intelligence, to co-operation, and to true efficiency and effectiveness. There is a pressing need to develop an effective and efficient single system of law enforcement, with clear local, regional and national components. The case for reform driven by the Home Office to deliver this change is becoming increasingly strong.

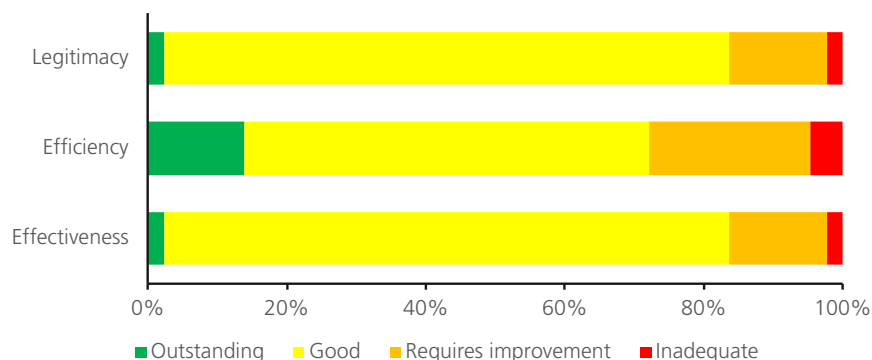
PEEL assessments 2018/19

Police forces have generally received ‘good scores’ from the Inspectorate in 2018/19.¹⁶⁴ A score of ‘good’ indicates that HMICFRS believe the force is meeting expectations. However, on each of the three pillars there is a growing divergence on performance, most notably on ‘efficiency’.

A notable high performing force is [Durham Constabulary](#). Durham is the only force to receive two scores of ‘outstanding’ (for effectiveness and efficiency).¹⁶⁵ [Cleveland Police](#) is the only force to receive scores of ‘inadequate’ on all three inspection pillars.

PEEL assesment scores

All police forces in England and Wales



Source: HMICFRS, [PEEL assessments 2018/19](#) [last accessed 7 February 2020]

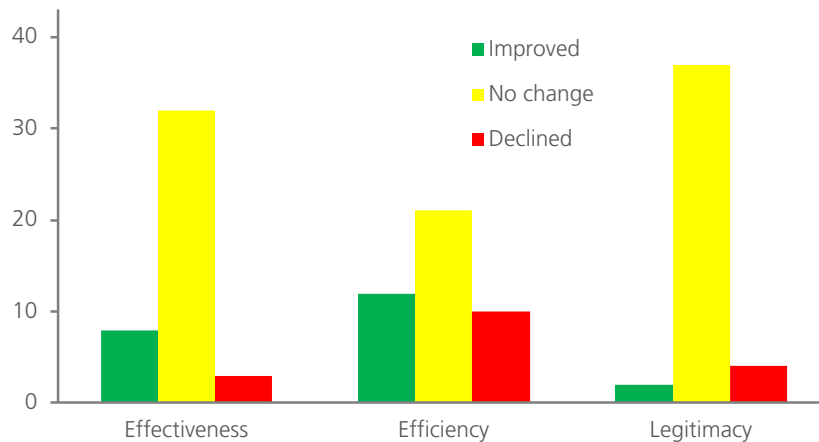
Note: Not all forces are inspected annually on each pillar. The marks in the tables above represent the latest scores.

¹⁶⁴ From 2018/19 HMICFRS have adopted a ‘risk based’ approach which means well performing forces are not inspected against every pillar every year. Scores here reflect the latest available inspection.

¹⁶⁵ HMICFRS, [PEEL Assessment Durham 2018/19](#) [last accessed 3/06/19]

PEEL assesment scores change on 2017/18

All police forces in England and Wales



Source: HMICFRS, [PEEL spotlight report Diverging under pressure An overview of 2018/19 PEEL inspections](#), p6-7

Note: Not all forces are inspected annually on each pillar. The marks in the tables above represent the latest scores.

Forces have generally improved their 'effectiveness' over the last inspection year with the inspectorate particularly praising forces improvements supporting vulnerable people. However, HMICFRS highlighted concerns about¹⁶⁶:

- **The way crimes are investigated.** The inspectorate raised concerns that crimes are not always investigated by those with the appropriate skills. They were also concerned that investigations are sometimes poorly supervised.
- **How police handle and analyse digital evidence.** In particular, the length of time it takes the police to analyse digital evidence provided by victims.
- **How victims perceive the criminal justice process.** The inspectorate said that there is a "limited understanding as to why so many victims are losing faith in the criminal justice system". 22.6% of investigations were closed because the victim did not support them in 2018/19; an increase from 20% the year before.
- **The capacity of neighbourhood policing teams.**

HMICFRS note that forces are showing the "greatest divergence in their efficiency". The inspectorate found that "forces that don't understand their current demand have difficulties meeting it".¹⁶⁷

3.2 Police and Crime Panels

Police and Crime Panels (PCPs) provide scrutiny of PCCs. They also investigate complaints made against PCCs. PCPs were designed in a 'select committee' model, as used in the House of Commons to

¹⁶⁶ HMICFRS, [PEEL spotlight report Diverging under pressure An overview of 2018/19 PEEL inspections](#), p12-14

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, p15

scrutinise the work of government departments. Though, practically there are many differences between select committees and PCPs.¹⁶⁸

[Sections 28 -30](#) and [schedule 6](#) of the *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011* provide the legislative framework for Police and Crime Panels. Many of the decisions about how a PCP will operate are determined by its membership. However, the legislation does set out some rules and provides PCPs with some specific powers.

The Local Government Association (LGA) provided [detailed guidance](#) to local authorities on PCPs when the *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011* was passed. This guidance was designed to help local government officials set up their PCPs. In 2017 the LGA published [updated guidance](#) to local authorities. This guidance aims to incorporate the experience of PCPs across the England and Wales and identified some 'best practice'.

Membership

PCPs are composed of members of the local authorities in the relevant police force area. Size and composition of a PCP is different depending on the geography of the police force area it serves:

- Each PCP has two 'co-opted members' who are not from a specific local authority.
- PCPs then have at least ten further members drawn from the relevant local authorities in the police force area.
- Police force areas with more than ten constituent local authorities have at least one member from each local authority.

The composition of a PCPs should ensure a fair representation of each local authority in a police force area. The individuals who sit on the PCP, once the composition is agreed, is largely up to the local authorities themselves. If an agreement about the composition of a PCP cannot be met the Home Secretary nominates members to the PCP.

Leadership

PCPs are led by one of the local authorities in the police force area. The decision of which authority will lead the PCP is for the relevant parties to decide. However, it is likely that the County Council that aligns with the police force area (if there is one) or the largest unitary council will be chosen to lead the PCP.¹⁶⁹

The individual who chairs the PCP does not necessarily need to be from the lead authority. There are no specific provisions on who should chair a PCP. The individuals involved should agree together how this person is selected. They might, for example, choose to rotate the chairmanship amongst their membership.

Functions

PCPs perform several specific functions to carry out their scrutiny role of PCCs. PCPs:

¹⁶⁸ Local Government Association, [Good practice for police and crime panels: Guidance document](#), p5

¹⁶⁹ Local Government Association, [Police and crime panels: Guidance on role and composition](#), paragraph 5.3

- Contribute to the development of the PCCs 'police and crime plan'.
- Take evidence from senior police officers and others at key meetings throughout the year.
- Review the proposed council tax precept decision of the PCC.
- Review the proposed appointments of PCCs. Including a proposed appointment of the Chief Constable of the police force and senior members of the PCCs office.
- Publish reports or recommendations to the PCC on their work.¹⁷⁰

To support these scrutiny function, PCPs have powers to request that their PCC appear before them or respond to them in writing.¹⁷¹

PCPs have a limited power to suspend their PCC. They can suspend PCC if it "appears to them" that they have been charged with an imprisonable offence.¹⁷²

Complaints

PCPs also hear complaints made against PCCs. The [Policing Bodies \(Complaints and Misconduct\) Regulations 2012](#) sets out how complaints and conduct matter about a PCC should be handled. The Home Office has issued [guidance](#) to accompany the regulations.

PCPs must ensure that complaints are recorded and handled appropriately. Complaints are normally dealt with by one of two ways: either by informal resolution or through a formal investigation. PCPs can choose to delegate the initial handling of complaints to the PCC's chief executive (or another body).

¹⁷⁰ [Section 28](#), *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011*

¹⁷¹ [Section 29](#), *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011*

¹⁷² [Section 30](#), *Police and Social Responsibility Act 2011*

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