

Emergency Services News Briefing

March 2024



Contents

Police	3
Fire	8
References	11



In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, with a particular focus on the challenges and pressures faced by the police and policing conduct, as well as a new fire and rescue data management framework.

Police

Outcome following independent investigations report 2022/23

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its independent investigations report for 2022/23. There were 312 investigations undertaken by the IOPC, of which 116 conduct matters involved 232 police officers and staff. Of the 116 completed investigations relating to conduct, 48 were also criminal investigations, leading to 33 referrals to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). There were also 87 misconduct proceedings in the year, of which 70 were proven cases. A total of 18 officers or staff faced criminal proceedings, with 11 either pleading guilty or at trial were found to be guilty.

Police must apply safeguards and improve scrutiny to minimise harm when using stop and search

HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) has published a report to reduce harm in the use of stop and search powers, and to improve understanding of their effectiveness. The Criminal Justice Alliance raised a super-complaint highlighting concerns over the damage caused by 'suspicion-less' section 60 stop and searches and the insufficient oversight of all stop and search powers. Following a joint investigation into these concerns, HMICFRS, the College of Policing (CoP) and the IOPC revealed that police forces must improve how they clarify and assess their use of section 60. The [report](#) makes 10 recommendations, including that chief constables ensure that:

- officers are aware of and adhere to their duty to protect children who are stopped and searched;
- forces communicate openly and effectively with communities regarding the use of section 60 stop and search powers; and
- briefings on section 60 operations 'are recorded and are subject to scrutiny.'



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your organisation compare to the findings within the investigation report and are learnings being disseminated?



Questions for committee's consideration

- What steps have been taken to complete the recommendations within the report?



Update on activism and impartiality in policing inspection

HMICFRS has published a letter outlining the initial findings of its inspection into activism and impartiality in policing. Key findings so far include:

- all 43 police forces 'recognise their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010' but equality impact assessments are not always complete or consistent;
- there were 'wide-ranging inconsistencies' in how forces approached non-crime hate incidents (NCHIs) with not all forces inspected having developed processes in response to the NCHI Code of Practice on Recording and Retention of Personal Data and the CoP's hate crime authorised professional practice (APP);
- in the majority of forces a 'culture of risk aversion' was observed in respect of recording NCHIs; and
- whilst police staff networks have evolved, the inspectorate found inconsistency in their 'accountability and governance arrangements.'

The inspections are still underway and more detailed outcomes is to be revealed in the final report expected to be published in March 2024.

New Code of Ethics for policing

The CoP has published a new Code of Ethics that outlines the professional behaviours expected from officers, staff, and volunteers. The Code is based on evidence and first-hand experience, with the goal of supporting everyone working in policing. The changes include mapping the nine principles from the 2014 Code of Ethics into three principles: courage; respect and empathy; and public service. The national decision model has also been updated to reflect the changes in the Code of Ethics. The new Code of Ethics works alongside the [Code of Practice for Ethical Policing](#).

Police to get funding boost to cut crime and keep the public safe

A proposed funding package of up to £922m for 2024/25 for police in England and Wales has been published by the Home Office. The funding aims to support the police to reduce crime in communities and tackle anti-social behaviour. Where police and crime commissioners use the precept flexibility, the funding 'represents a 30.7% rise in cash terms compared to 2019-20.' Funding is to be used for priority projects such as Violence Reduction Units (VRU's) which have engaged 215,000 young people. VRU's coupled with Grip hotspot policing have managed to avert an estimated 136,000 instances of violent crime.

The government's key priorities for 2024/25 are:

- maintaining the police officer uplift programme, recruiting 20,000 additional officers;
- deliver opportunities for technology to drive innovative improvement; and
- improve police visibility on the streets to combat crime and make communities feel safe in their neighbourhood.

The Home Office states that 'in total, £92 million will be available for hotspot policing and other work to tackle anti-social behaviour and serious violence'. The provisional funding begins a period of consultation, which will be discussed in Parliament before the next fiscal year.



Questions for committee's consideration

- How is the new Code of Ethics being embedded within your organisation?



The Angiolini Inquiry Part 1 Report

The Angiolini Inquiry, investigating how Wayne Couzens, an off-duty Metropolitan police officer was able to abduct, rape and murder Sarah Everard, has published its Part 1 report. The report provides a comprehensive assessment into Couzens' conduct, behaviour, and performance leading up to conviction. It also examines missed opportunities related to vetting and decision-making. The report contains 16 recommendations aimed at preventing the abuse of power by those holding the office of constable, emphasising the need for robust vetting standards, effective supervision, intelligence management, and continuous review to prevent and address such misconduct.



Questions for committee's consideration

- When was the last independent audit of vetting at your Force

Policing Productivity Review

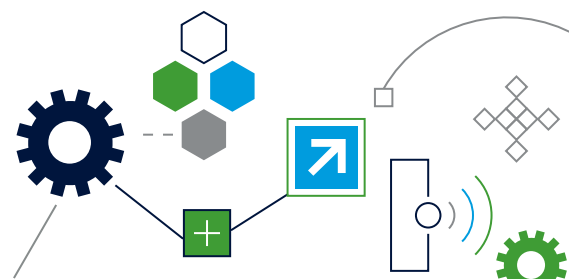
The Home Office has released the Policing Productivity Review. The National Police Chiefs' Council was tasked with conducting this independent review to assess police productivity and provide recommendations for improving efficiency. The Home Office will work with the police and other government departments to consider the recommendations before issuing a full response. Some of the recommendations made in the review were:

- the Policing Productivity team and the national police lead for mental health should report on the progress made in implementing the mental health related recommendations to ministers every six months;
- to ensure productivity gains persist, the Policing Productivity Team and the national police lead for crime data integrity should report progress to ministers every six months;
- the government should review the guidance and practice of the case file submission process used by the police to make it more time-efficient and productive;
- the government should introduce an exemption to the Data Protection Act to improve collaboration and sharing of materials between police and the CPS; and
- conduct further work to examine other barriers to police productivity in key areas such as missing persons and police custody operations.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Are you aware of the Productivity Review and have any steps been taken based on the initial recommendations?





Crime outcomes year to September 2023

The Home office has released statistics from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) highlights approximately 8.5 million offences were recorded in the year ending September 2023. Although this figure does not represent a significant statistical shift from the previous year, it continues a long-term decline in total crime, which has been particularly pronounced since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Total crime is 17% lower than it was in March 2020.

Key findings include:

- fraud saw a decrease of 13%, with significant reductions in advance fee fraud (33%) and other types of fraud (40%);
- computer misuse saw an increase of 30%, largely due to a 36% surge in unauthorised access to personal information;
- criminal damage fell by 21%, including a substantial 30% decrease in damage to vehicles;
- there was a 9% decrease in homicides, with the number of offences falling to 591 from 651 in the previous year; and
- police-recorded robbery offences saw a 12% increase, rising to 79,091 offences from 70,792 offences in the year ending September 2022. This figure is still 12% lower than the count in March 2020, which stood at 90,187 offences.

Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Analysis

The National Police Chiefs Council has released a report, from the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) which sets out publicly for the first-time details of reported Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) crimes across England and Wales. The study looked at data from 42 police forces in England and Wales and highlights a consistent increase in CSAE reported to the police.

Key findings include:

- there was a 7.6% increase in offences reported in 2022 when compared to 2021, up to 107,000, nearly quadruple the amount from 10 years ago;
- around '75% of CSAE offences related to sexual offences committed directly against children', with around 25% relating to online offences of indecent images of children;
- 52% of CSAE cases involved reports of 'children offending against other children with 14 being the most common age', an increasing and alarming trend that encompasses various types of offenses; and
- 'the number of recorded incidents of online sexual abuse continues to grow, accounting for at least 32% of CSAE.'



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your Force compare to the crime statistics nationally?



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your Force compare to the crime statistics for Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) crimes?



New officer training to better assist those in crisis

The National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) has announced that officers and staff will have access to new online training and guidance to help them understand 'when and how best to apply' Right Care Right Person to ensure vulnerable people receive the specialist health support required.

The training, released on 19 December 2023, forms part of the wider national toolkit launched earlier in the year by the NPCC and the CoP. It is designed to support police forces in applying the 'Right Care, Right Person' approach to decide if the police are the best-suited body to handle health-related service calls.

Assistant Chief Constable Jenny Gilmer, NPCC's Lead for Right Care Right Person, said 'ultimately, this is about ensuring vulnerable individuals in our communities receive the specialist care they need, and it is encouraging to see this at the centre of local delivery.'

Challenges faced by police demand urgent attention and reform

The Police Federation of England and Wales (PFEW) has raised significant concerns regarding the wellbeing of individuals within the policing workforce, emphasising the demanding and stressful nature of the profession. Research conducted by Oscar Kilo, published in the [National police wellbeing survey 2023 insights](#) report revealed that even though individuals have a high level of 'professional commitment', police officers face substantial hurdles including occupational violence, verbal intimidation, and encounters with distressing situations. Shift work and workload are also leading to burn out and contribute to the declining mental wellbeing of the policing workforce.

Key findings include:

- 69% and 28.9% of officers claimed to be experiencing 'high levels' or 'very high' levels of fatigue, respectively;
- there is some dissatisfaction with pay and an increase in financial worries; and
- there is low morale amongst officers and therefore, an increase in staff intentions to quit.



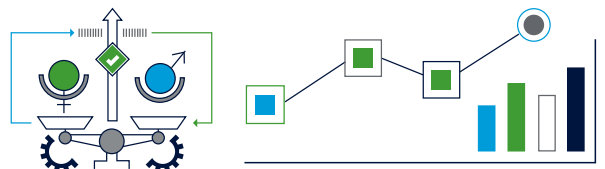
Questions for committee's consideration

- Is the Force aware of this training and what steps have been taken to implement it?
- Do you have a target set for this training and how compliant are you?



Questions for committee's consideration

- What steps are you taking to ensure the wellbeing of your workforce?



Fire

Fire and rescue incident statistics

The Home office has released the fire and rescue incident statistics for the year ending September 2023. The statistics focus on incidents and fires attended by fire and rescue services (FRSs), fire-related fatalities, casualties from those fires and response times.

Key findings include:

- FRSs attended 143,625 fires, marking a 23% decrease from the previous 2022 year, and an 18% decrease from 10 years ago;
- out of these incidents, 278 resulted in fire-related fatalities, a slight increase of 1.8% compared to the previous year's 273 fatalities;
- there were 62,558 primary fires and 78,584 secondary fires, representing decreases of 7.2% and 32% respectively, compared to the previous year. The average response times to these fires also decreased; and
- 18,664 flooding incidents were attended by the FRSs, a significant increase of 30% from the previous year and 13% more compared to five years ago.



Questions for committee's consideration

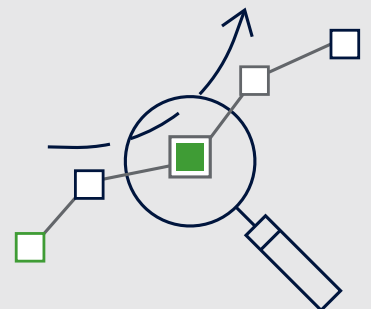
- How does your organisation compare to the national statistics?

The government's response to the fire reform white paper and consultation

The government has released its response statement to the 'Reforming Our Fire and Rescue Service' white paper and consultation. The white paper outlined the government's vision for fire reform, focusing on people, enhancing systems, increasing flexibility and culture, with an aim to empower fire professionals to better serve their communities. The Minister of State for Crime, Policing and Fire, Chris Philp, has detailed how the consultation feedback has helped shape the next steps for a package of reforms focusing on 'the areas that have the biggest impact for the public and fire professionals.'

The Minister has confirmed:

- the introduction of a professional College of Fire & Rescue which aims to enhance standards and leadership;
- fire chiefs are to have operational independence;
- to improve integrity and culture across fire and rescue services training will be improved, recruitment practices are to be more transparent, and there are plans for a statutory code of ethics for employees; and
- the National Joint Council has been tasked to review the pay negotiation mechanism.





New Data Management Framework

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) has launched a new framework to support FRSs with their data management. Their Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) Hub developed the Data Management Framework (DMF) to ensure compliance with good data management practice and related legal obligations. This supports the Data Management Fire Standard introduced last year, which was developed through discussions with subject matter experts from the fire and rescue service sector. Data is a crucial asset for FRSs. It supports activity across all areas of the service, as well as being key in decision making. Good effective data management is vital to maximise potential and aid effective community improvements.

Andy Hopkinson, Chair of the NFCC DDaT Committee, said 'the launch of the recent Data Management Fire Standard, now followed by the Data Management Framework, will help fire and rescue services to enhance their professionalism and data capabilities, delivering improved consistency across the sector.'

All NFCC staff will be invited to attend one of two NFCC online implementation workshops. The NFCC have also published additional support guidance to help.

Consultation on Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard

The Fire Standards Board launched a consultation on the Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard. A further consultation on the Procurement and Asset Management Fire Standard is also expected to be published soon. Responses to the consultations will help shape the final version of the Fire Standards before they undergo an external quality assurance process and are published. The Fire Standards Board invited feedback from stakeholders in the sector. The consultation on the Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard closed on 18 December 2023.



Questions for committee's consideration

- What steps are being undertaken to implement the Data Management Framework?





New guidance on reformed off-payroll working rules



HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) has released [new guidance on the reformed off-payroll working rules](#) (IR35). The guidance is designed to help organisations and employers understand what HMRC considers to be good practice.

Organisations are advised to benchmark their off-payroll working systems, processes, and controls against these standards. Though extensive (14 parts), the guidance should also be considered in conjunction with other resources such as the HMRC Employment Status Manual and HMRC's Check Employment Status for Tax (CEST). Part 13 of the guidance suggests organisations should carry out regular audits. These audits should examine the processes from start to finish and can be conducted internally or externally.

If you require any assistance, please contact:

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References



[Outcome following independent investigations report 2022/23](#)



[Police must apply safeguards and improve scrutiny to minimise harm when using stop and search](#)



[Update on activism and impartiality in policing inspection](#)



[Police to get funding boost to cut crime and keep the public safe](#)



[New Code of Ethics for policing](#)



[The Angiolini Inquiry](#)



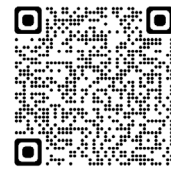
[Policing Productivity Review](#)



[Crime outcomes year to September 2023](#)



[Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Analysis](#)



[New officer training to better assist those in crisis](#)



[Challenges faced by police demand urgent attention and reform](#)



[Fire and rescue incident statistics](#)



[The government's response to the fire reform white paper and consultation](#)



[New Data Management Framework](#)



[Consultation on Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard](#)



Further information

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