



FEBRUARY 2025 RISK HORIZON SCANNING

This document is an overview of the top news and current affairs articles from horizon scanning completed by the force Risk Team over the past month.

Should an article raise any issues or potential risks for the force, please complete the [Risk and Issue Submission Form](#).

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POLICING - CORE SERVICE & GENERAL



THIS MONTH'S THEMES:

- 1. POLICING - CORE SERVICE & GENERAL***
 - 2. OUTCOMES & SECURING JUSTICE***
 - 3. TECHNOLOGY, CYBERCRIME & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE***
 - 4. ORGANISED CRIME, GUNS & KNIFE CRIME***
 - 5. DOMESTIC ABUSE, VAWG, CHILD ABUSE & SEXUAL OFFENCES***
 - 6. TERRORISM & HATE CRIME***
 - 7. MISCONDUCT, AUDIT & SCRUTINY***
 - 8. RECRUITMENT, RETENTION & WELLBEING***
 - 9. FINANCE & BUDGETS***
- ONE IN FIVE COPS BARRED FROM 999 RESPONSES AS THEY AREN'T TRAINED TO DRIVE POLICE CARS**

ONE in five cops cannot respond to 999 calls as they have never been trained to drive a police car, we can reveal.

Around 2,800 duty officers and 80 on traffic are barred from using lights, sirens and breaking speed limits.

Some 450 gun cops are trapped in the backlog, which it is claimed could take nearly two decades to clear.

"It's a catastrophe waiting to happen."

Police Scotland has around 16,400 officers, with new recruits required to possess a full manual driving licence as part of the application process.

They are banned from emergency responses until they complete an in-house motoring course.

Traffic and armed response teams must complete advanced four-week training to drive a fleet of 150 high-performance motors, including Audis, BMWs and Volvos.

[Scottish Sun Article](#)

- **UNPACKING THE STRUCTURAL ISSUES IN POLICING: UNCOMFORTABLE KNOWLEDGE**

Scarlett Haig talks to Mark Fenton-O'Creevy, Professor of Organisational Behaviour and Chair of the Advisory Group for the Centre of Policing Research and Learning at the Open University Business School. Mark shares his research for a recent article in Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice, "Uncomfortable knowledge, the production of ignorance, and the trustworthiness of UK policing". Mark asks how organisations that employ many good people can fail to challenge persistent and egregious misbehaviour to the extent that it threatens their legitimacy in the public eye.

Takeaways

- Structural issues in policing create conditions for ignorance.
- Disconnections across the rank structure hinder communication.
- Policing lacks training in constructive dissent and intelligent disobedience.
- Short-term focus can damage long-term operational capability.
- There are major gaps in strategic planning and implementation in policing.
- Inward focus limits learning from outside policing.

- Addressing systemic problems is crucial for effective change.
- Emotional support is necessary for grappling with uncomfortable knowledge.
- Courage is required to confront uncomfortable truths in policing.
- Good people in policing deserve a better organisational environment.

[Policing TV](#)

- **SHOPLIFTING EPIDEMIC SHOWS IT IS TIME TO POLICE THE STREETS INSTEAD OF POLICING THOUGHTS**

England has gone from being a nation of shopkeepers to a nation of shoplifters with barely an eyebrow being raised.

While police find the time to investigate nine-year-old children for playground name-calling, organised crime gangs are clearing shelves without an officer even bothering to turn up to speak to the victims.

In the time it takes you to read this piece, 115 thefts will have been carried out.

A new report by the British Retail Consortium found there are 55,000 incidents a day, a 22% increase and a record high.

But it said six in ten retailers view the police response as poor and almost all said one of their main reasons for not reporting a crime is there is no point as nothing will happen if they do.

It gets worse. In the last year, 45,000 violent incidents were recorded, with a weapon used in 25,000 of them, a 180% increase on the previous year.

Serious abuse of staff has gone up by 60% to 696,000 incidents.

Only a third of the violent and abusive cases were reported to police because there was a “lack of expectation that it would make any difference”.

Police turned up to just one in ten reports and only 2% secured a conviction

[The Express Article](#)

- **RETHINK POLICING OR BRACE FOR MORE DISORDER**

The first issue is money. There's not enough of it. We spend 50 per cent less per head on police in London than Sydney and New York. Health and education spending has been protected by Labour but not law and order.

Officer numbers will fall again. In the capital those officers' time is being eroded by the new phenomenon of weekly protests and huge gatherings. Half a million hours were used up by these in 2022-23, every one of them taking an officer away from dealing with actual crime.

The second is the insane mismatch between what we expect of the police in 2025 and their archaic organisation. Last autumn the Met commissioner, Mark Rowley, highlighted the key issue: police forces are running on a model largely unchanged since the 1960s.

No government has funded the police to keep up with the technology or the skills they need to tackle this, so they can't. Far from being on the cutting edge of tech, police are so behind it that when Rowley arrived at the Met in 2022 he provided each officer, for the first time, with a mobile and a laptop.

The third is morale. Understaffed and overloaded, officers who survived the initial Tory cuts have been quitting. The cumulative result is alarming inexperience: a third of the Met have served for less than four years.

The force can't meet its recruitment targets. Officers have become so nervous of sanction or public criticism for trying to do their jobs that stop and search numbers halved from 2022 to 2023, and a third of those authorised to use tasers have surrendered that right. Many police officers are now too scared to police.

Avoidance and penny-pinching will lead us nowhere but further distrust and disorder.

[The Times Article](#)

- **THE CONTROVERSIAL POLICE SYSTEM THAT HELPS DECIDE IF YOUR CASE IS WORTH INVESTIGATING**

Every year in the UK, more than 45 million calls are made to the police, reporting everything from violent attacks to disputes between neighbours and cats stuck up trees. The response each one gets is governed by internal policies that aim to decide which incidents are an emergency and which ones can be dealt with more slowly, or, in some cases, not at all. Some people will be waiting minutes, others days. And some will never hear back from, let alone see, a police officer.

Underpinning this triage process is "Thrive", a decision-making framework developed by police chiefs a decade ago.

Supporters of the system say it is a necessary means of managing the “scarce resources” at forces’ disposal. But critics argue it effectively deprioritises swathes of the most common crimes, meaning they will never be fully investigated.

Just 7 per cent of crimes recorded in England and Wales resulted in a charge in the year to March 2024, official figures show, and 41 per cent of police investigations were closed without a suspect being identified.

“Police forces are operationally independent and there are many different factors which will be taken into account when responding to crime. The local response will be determined by operational priorities, resourcing, geography and the prevalence of certain crime types which may differ across the country.”

Naturally, a focus on one type of crime can lead to other crimes being neglected.

For police officers, so-called volume crimes like burglary, shoplifting and phone snatches are run-of-the-mill, but to traumatised victims they do not feel like mere statistics – and it is little consolation to know they have been de-prioritised because of other demands. “Crimes like phone thefts are something police handle every day, so it’s no big deal to them and they understand why they can’t do anything, but the victims who they’re speaking with don’t,” Dr Ashby says.

[Telegraph Article](#)

- **POLICE SHOULD NOT PRIORITISE ONLINE HATE SAY PUBLIC**

The vast majority of the public believes police should not prioritise the investigation of online hate crimes, a poll has found.

Only 7 per cent of adults said it was one of the top three issues that officers in Britain should focus on, according to the survey of 2,000 people for Policy Exchange, a think tank.

Murder, violent crime, rape and sexual assault made the top three in up to two-thirds of those polled, followed by burglary, robbery, terrorism and drug dealing.

The investigation of historic crimes was considered to be a leading priority among just 1 per cent of respondents. Only 3 per cent picked shoplifting, while 5 per cent chose vandalism and graffiti.

The survey’s central finding was that every demographic group, regardless of their age, sex, ethnicity, economic grouping or political persuasion, wanted the police to take a tougher approach to crime.

[The Telegraph Article](#)

- **THE POLICE ARE RUINING THEIR REPUTATION**

The British free speech crisis has shown the British state at its worst: authoritarian, capricious, and unfair. It is ultimately eroding the public's trust in the fairness of the law and, with it, the rule of law itself...The crisis has also exposed the worst aspects of policing and the police. Far from enforcing the laws of the land fairly and transparently, there is a growing perception among the public that the police are failing to carry out their duties, prioritising the wrong sorts of crimes.

Since then, it has been reported that West Midlands Police have renewed their persecution of Isabel Vaughan-Spruce, a Christian activist, for the supposed crime of silent prayer within 150 metres of an abortion facility. Vaughan-Spruce had been prosecuted by West Midlands Police before. She was acquitted in 2023 of breaching a Public Space Protection Order, and even won a £13,000 payout from the police who settled a claim that they had violated her human rights.

On 10th February, new footage was published of a West Midlands Police officer — decked out in the modern police high-vis uniform — informing Vaughan-Spruce that her mere presence within a “buffer zone” around an abortion clinic constitutes “harassment, alarm and distress”. This is despite her previous acquittal and the Crown Prosecution Service issuing guidance in 2024 that silent prayer did not necessarily amount to a crime under the laws around protest outside abortion clinics

While senior police officers and commissioners frequently complain about constrained budgets when it comes to collapsing investigations into thefts and burglaries, public trust in the police and the rule of law is corroded by decisions to deploy significant resources to prosecute speech crime, including counter-terrorism officers.

[The Critic Article](#)

- **CHILD CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION AND CUCKOOING TO BECOME CRIMINAL OFFENCES**

Legislation will be brought forward to ban cuckooing, a highly exploitative practice where criminals seize control of a vulnerable person's home without consent to conduct illegal activities such as drug dealing.

Another new offence will be created against adults who use a child to commit criminal activity.

Current estimates show that approximately 14,500 children were identified as at risk or involved in child criminal exploitation (CCE) in 2023/24, although this is likely an underestimate as many exploited children will not be known to authorities, the Home Office says.

However, under current legislation, only a small number of individuals have been charged for using children in criminal activity.

[Police Professional Article](#)

- **TRANS POLICE OFFICERS SET TO BE ALLOWED TO STRIP SEARCH WOMEN**

Campaigners condemn 'serious breach of the fundamental rights of female detainees' - Police have revived plans to allow transgender officers to strip-search women.

Proposed guidance for the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the representative body for senior police officers, states that male staff identifying as female should be able to intimately search women, as long as they have a gender recognition certificate.

Women's rights organisations said the guidance represented a "serious breach of the fundamental rights of female detainees", and warned that senior police officers had "forgotten about women, in their pursuit of ideology".

It has now emerged that the council's "diversity, equality and inclusion co-ordination committee" has agreed that transgender males with a certificate should be able to search female detainees. These proposals will be considered next month by the full NPCC before becoming official policy.

The policy states that if a detainee objects to being searched by a trans officer, they may be substituted with a different officer. But it adds: "Consideration should also be given to the manner in which the detainee objects to the search and any prejudicial language should be dealt with positively."

While the guidance considers at length the welfare of trans detainees and officers, it does not specifically consider the impact on female detainees of being searched by a biologically male officer.

[The Telegraph Article](#)

- **NEW POWERS PLANNED TO SEARCH HOMES FOR STOLEN PHONES**

Police will be given new powers to search homes without a warrant for stolen mobile phones under major legislation which targets theft, street crime and anti-social behaviour.

The Crime and Policing Bill is at the heart of what the government calls its "Safer Streets mission" and ministers want it to become law by the end of the year.

Home Secretary Yvette Cooper told the BBC the bill would address an "epidemic of street theft", including a rise in phone and bag snatching and shoplifting, and introduce new "Respect Orders" with restrictions similar to Anti-Social Behaviour Orders (Asbos).

But they come amid questions over whether police have the funding to make the government's plan work.

Under the bill, police would gain the power to enter and search a property without a court warrant for a stolen mobile phone or other items that have been electronically tracked, such as laptops or Bluetooth-tagged bikes.

The power would mean that victims of mobile phone thefts who track their device while it is in the hands of a criminal could call on police to recover it quickly.

"Labour's funding settlement next year for police forces leaves them £118m short after accounting for salary rises, inflation and the national insurance hike – putting 1,800 police officers at risk.

"Police forces are warning that this will get worse this year due to Labour's inadequate funding settlement."

[BBC News Article](#)

- **ELECTRONIC DEVICES USED IN VEHICLE THEFTS TO BE BANNED**

Sophisticated electronic devices used by criminals in 40 per cent of vehicle thefts in England and Wales, including 'signal jammers', will be banned under new laws.

Police officers and the courts will be given new powers to target criminals who steal vehicles using these devices and the organised groups that manufacture and supply them.

Previously, prosecution for handling these devices was only possible if it could be proved by police that they had been used to commit a specific crime.

Under these new laws, anyone who is found in possession of one, or to have imported, made, adapted or distributed them, could receive a maximum penalty of five years' imprisonment and an unlimited fine.

[Police Professional Article](#)

- **UK DRUGS CRISIS EXPOSED AS POLICE TO RAMP UP TESTING FOR MORE SUBSTANCES UPON ARREST**

The Home Office on Monday confirmed plans to allow officers to test for class B and class C substances when they arrest offenders. Tens of thousands of criminals could be tested for class B drugs such as cannabis, under sweeping new changes.

Currently, they are only allowed to check for cocaine, heroin or other types of opiates.

And rapists, violent thugs and those caught committing anti-social behaviour could be tested for narcotics, under an expansion of the number of offences where officers can test for drugs.

It comes amid growing concerns over the links between crime and illegal substances. The Daily Express revealed drugs were linked to more than half of murders for a shocking fifth year in a row.

[The Express Article](#)

- **E-SCOOTERS BLAMED FOR BIG JUMP IN CHILDREN CAUGHT IN UK DRIVING WITHOUT INSURANCE**

Electric scooters have been blamed for a surge in the number of children being penalised for driving without insurance.

Since the start of 2020 almost 800 children aged between 13 and 16 have been given an IN10 endorsement – the code used by the police for “using a vehicle uninsured against third party risks” – according to data obtained by a road safety charity.

While in 2020 there were no recorded cases, by 2024 the number had risen to 375 a year.

E-scooters are in a legal limbo in the UK. They are illegal on pavements and other public land, and must be insured if used on the road , but it is not possible to buy cover for a privately owned one.

The data, which came from a freedom of information request to the licensing agency DVLA, also showed that the number of drivers between 17 and 24 penalised for not having insurance jumped from 532 in 2020 to a peak of 20,026 in 2023, dropping back to 13,556 last year.

[The Guardian Article](#)

- **OVER 50 NEW LAWS TO BE UNVEILED TODAY IN BIGGEST CRIME SHAKE-UP IN DECADES**

More than 50 new crime-fighting laws will be unveiled - including a new power for cops to raid homes without warrants if technology shows there are stolen items, such as phones, inside. The long-awaited Crime and Policing Bill will also include a clampdown on shoplifting and the creation of new ASBO-style Respect Orders.

The Bill will also include new laws targeting gangs who recruit children, slapping them with up to 10 years behind bars for exploitation. It will give police the power to seize and destroy dangerous blades found on private property. It will also allow vehicles - including off-road bikes and e-scooters - to be taken by officers without first giving a warning.

New laws presented to MPs today will also allow police to act faster to tackle thefts of phones and items with geotechnology tracing. Warrantless powers mean cops can raid buildings where electronic mapping shows there are stolen goods.

Elsewhere the Bill, when passed, will make it illegal to take or record intimate images or videos without a person's consent. A loophole which allows sex offenders to change their name will be closed.

Probation services will also have greater powers to carry out polygraph tests on sex offenders and terrorists.

[The Mirror Article](#)

- **SMALL THINGS MATTER**

According to the public, police are failing to deliver a 'minimum standard of service', says Professor Adam Crawford.

The UK Government has doubled the additional funding for neighbourhood policing in England and Wales to £200 million. This is to support its commitment to putting 13,000 new police officers on the streets.

High-profile cases and scandals have eroded trust in police in the UK. According to some metrics, it is at its lowest level in 20 years. But the key to repairing it could be through neighbourhood policing. After all, this is where most people's interactions with police happen.

Interestingly, people were more concerned with how policing is conducted, the quality of the treatment people receive, and the relationship between the police and the communities they serve, than with particular outcomes.

The three areas that our respondents thought were most important to the minimum standard were:

- Response – the way police respond to calls for service, follow up and address crime;
- Behaviour and treatment – the ways officers and the police as an organisation treat individuals and communities; and
- Presence and engagement of police in neighbourhoods.

We then conducted a nationally representative survey of 1,484 respondents across Britain, and found that they viewed police to be failing across all three areas. Less than 30 per cent of people were confident that police are open and transparent with the decisions they make, prioritise the crimes most affecting the respondents' community, and provide adequate follow-up after a crime has been committed. While a majority of our respondents had confidence that police would treat people with respect, less than half thought that police were good role models, or that they built good relationships with the community or with young people. However, the public still retained significant trust in the idea of "the police" as a whole – which gives me and my colleagues hope that things can improve.

[Police Professional Article](#)

- **UNLESS THE LAW IS ENFORCED A VIGILANTE FUTURE BECKONS**

A broader revival in vigilantism is visible across the West. In Britain and Australia, self-appointed groups of paedophile hunters have long filmed "busts" after entrapping predators online. In Hall Green, Birmingham, a group of fathers are organising to "police" the area where 12-year-old Leo Ross was stabbed to death last month, vowing to make "citizens' arrests" if necessary.

Last November, an asylum hotel abruptly opened in Warwick, with nearby residents given less than 24 hours notice of the sudden influx of 360 migrants. Following reports of men loitering around a nearby school, concerned locals began organising community patrols.

Such things are no doubt happening elsewhere, and will continue. The Government, [despite promising to end migrant hotel use](#), has just extended their contracts for another four years.

At the "milder" end of the crime spectrum, we see middle-class vigilantes chasing after their stolen bikes in the face of police inaction. The phenomenon is visible too in the surge in

personal CCTV and private security in shops. A fifth of households now have some form of doorstep security, like a video doorbell.

We have a fatal combination of front-line incompetence, particularly on so-called “minor crimes” where most people experience policing, accompanied by obvious discrepancies in law enforcement.

We may be heading towards vigilantism with echoes of Northern Irish sectarianism; with an extreme breakdown in trust, communities begin policing themselves.

[The Telegraph Article](#)

- **ALMOST HALF OF POLICE FORCES RECORD SPEEDS OF MORE THAN 90 MPH ON 30 MPH ROADS**

Nearly half the police forces across the country have recorded drivers speeding more than three times the limit on 30mph roads, new data has revealed. A total of 48 per cent of forces found drivers going more than three times the 30mph limit, while 90 per cent had clocked people driving at 60mph.

Government data shows speed is the biggest factor reported in fatal road collisions – it is a factor in 58 per cent of fatalities and in 43 per cent of road collisions of all severities. Speed contributed to 888 fatalities and 39,882 collisions of all severities in 2023.

[The Independent Article](#)

- **SHOCKING SCALE OF PHONE THEFTS REVEALED AS POLICE BATTLE SURGE IN E-BIKE MOBILE SNATCHERS**

Masked phone-snatching gangs using 70mph e-bikes are fuelling a surge in mobile thefts with more than 225 stolen on average every day across the UK

Data obtained through Freedom of Information requests shows there were at least 83,900 phone theft offences recorded in the 12 months to July last year – almost double the 45,800 five years previously.

At the epicentre of the crime wave is London, where thefts more than doubled to 65,600 last year over the five-year period.

Police told *The Independent* they are facing a running battle with powerful criminal gangs sending e-bike bandits into busy pedestrian areas to snatch £1,500 mobiles from unsuspecting victims.

Chairing a summit on smartphone theft, Ms Cooper also said targeted police action would be stepped up and called on tech companies including Apple, Google and Samsung to improve mobile device security measures.

[The Independent Article](#)

- **FURY AS 'WORRYING' LABOUR LAW GIVES POLICE ACCESS TO 50M PEOPLE'S DATA**

Labour's new crime laws will make every driver's personal information available to the police.

Officers will be able to access the data held by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) on 50 million motorists under the new Crime and Policing Bill.

Motorists' names, addresses, date of birth, photographs, endorsements, convictions and relevant medical information that may affect their ability to drive, will all be available to cops. There are concerns that facial images could then be cross-referenced using facial recognition software with other databases.

"More than 50 million Britons hold driving licences in order to travel and have not given permission for the Government to turn our photos into mugshots. The Bill allows the Government to grant police officers extraordinary powers to identify and track anyone with a driving licence, at the click of a button. Not only would this be an unprecedented breach of privacy, but would also put innocent citizens at risk of misidentifications and injustice.

With powers to ban face masks at protests and the introduction of new categories of warrantless searches, this Bill is stacked with worrying new powers.

"Privacy safeguards are urgently needed, and the Government must abandon any plans to subvert our driving licences into a vast police database."

[The Express Article](#)

OUTCOMES & SECURING JUSTICE



- **IF THE POLICE DON'T FOLLOW UP YOUR 999 CALL, THIS COULD BE WHY.**

The "Thrive" decision-making model, used by call-handlers, was designed to prioritise high-risk incidents. However, it has resulted in many lower-level crimes, including theft and vandalism, being deprioritised, leading to growing public dissatisfaction. Victims report frustration as these crimes often receive no follow-up or investigative action, contributing to an overall decline in confidence in policing.

[Telegraph Article](#)

- **USE TECHNOLOGY CAREFULLY NOT PUNITIVELY**

Given the dire circumstances of the present penal crisis in England and Wales, last autumn's announcement of a short, sharp Sentencing Review by the new Labour government was inevitable.

Suspiciously, given the Review's aspiration to reduce pressure on prison places by means of tough alternative sentences and new, "earlier" forms of early release - the Probation Service, whose preserve this has traditionally been, is not within its remit. Rather, the Review is looking for new technological means of creating "prisons outside prisons" (as its press release put it) and "community-based custody" (as I heard one Ministry of Justice official describe it).

The Recommendation is still, in my view, over-enthusiastic about the efficiency gains that AI will bestow on Probation Services, but it at least places limits on the legitimate and proportional uses of digital tools on offender supervision, and it not afraid to mention the term "rehabilitation" – or probation – approvingly. It contains a slender hope – missing in the Sentencing Review – that punitiveness should not rule and that Probation Services, however much they adapt in the age of AI, are worth preserving.

- **'AMONGST THE TRUSTED' HOW PRIVATE POLICE CHAT GROUPS BLUR AND BREACH ETHICAL LINES**

VANCOUVER — In August 2021, a Toronto drug case took a dramatic turn when a prosecutor made what the judge called a “highly unusual” request, asking the court to throw out evidence by a key police witness.

It came after defence lawyers had grilled Toronto Police Service Const. Ryan Kotzer over “disparaging comments about black people” in an unofficial 51 Division police chat group.

The troubling content of the unofficial Toronto Police Service 51 Division chat groups has been emerging in social media leaks for years.

But it’s never previously been reported how the conversations were used to try to impeach the credibility of police witnesses in at least two cases.

It’s an example of how courts and police forces are being forced to grapple with the consequences of private chat groups among officers. Such chat groups raise legal and ethical questions, blurring lines between public and private behaviour, while revealing — and potentially obscuring — racism, sexism and other misconduct among officers.

It was clear, the judge ruled, that Kotzer’s evidence against two 20-year-olds accused of possessing fentanyl and a loaded handgun was compromised. The case then collapsed, never making it to trial.

[Fraser Valley Today Article](#)

- **PACKED PRISONS ON 'BRINK OF COLLAPSE' GOVERNMENT REPORT FINDS**

Knee-jerk and ill-considered attempts by ministers to show that they are tough on crime has left Britain’s prisons on the “brink of collapse”, a major government report has concluded.

The Independent Sentencing Review found that, despite an overall decrease in incidents of crime since the mid-Nineties, the number of people locked up in England and Wales has grown by more than 10 per cent in the past 25 years.

The report blamed successive governments for increasing the severity of sentences, which has led to prison terms increasing by 40 per cent since 1993, when the average custodial sentence length for indictable offences was 16 months. It is now 22.5 months.

It added that this has not had a deterrent effect, with 37.2 per cent of those leaving prison likely to be caught reoffending, and the highest rate of reoffending is after people serve sentences shorter than 12 months (56.9 per cent). Previous analysis found that community orders or suspended sentences were more effective at cutting reoffending.

[The Times Article](#)

- **SURGE IN DRUG-DRIVING SAMPLES SPARKS FEARS OF BUDGET PRESSURES**

A spike in drug-driving samples has sparked fears from forensics chiefs about the volume being submitted for analysis, and what impact this could have on policing budgets.

Figures within Scottish Police Authority (SPA) meeting notes show that Police Scotland's forensic services were asked to analyse 958 samples between October and December 2024.

This figure was 148 more than the highest forecast of 810 samples for the same period – a rise of around 18 percent.

Of the total, 352 samples were submitted for analysis in October, 312 in November and 294 in December – despite the “agreed capacity” being 250 per month, “stretching to 270 when required”.

It said the higher demand was being sustained by “additional outsourcing” but this put “pressures” on budgets as it was above the spending forecast.

The report added that the force could be faced with an additional £1million in cost if demand remained at the same level.

There was a risk that it may outstrip the UK's “outsourcing capacity” leading to a risk of “time barring” of cases, the report also said.

[Police Oracle Article](#)

- **TOO MANY PCC PARTNERSHIP MEETINGS BECOME TALKING SHOPS APCC SURVEY SHOWS**

While PCCs play a crucial role in promoting partnership working in local force areas with the aim of reducing crime, a major survey of this work shows that officials spend too much time talking in different meetings with the same people with little achieved because they become ‘talking shops.’

[Towards better local partnerships systems in England and Wales](#) published today by the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) looked at the effectiveness of this work to reduce crime and make communities safer. Based on surveys and 'deep dives' of PCCs and regional mayors, it found evidence of duplication of effort with too many meetings which overlap.

The report says one of the most consistent messages from the focus groups was summed up by one contributor who commented, "I spend a lot of my time sitting in different rooms with the same people, talking about the same things, but with a different heading on the agendas and papers in front of us."

Over two thirds of respondents agreed that 'too many partnership meetings that should be driving work are talking shops'.

The sheer number of partnership meetings in many areas mean that they might not be attended by people with sufficient seniority to make decisions and/or with the expertise or experience to bring to discussions.

[Police Oracle Article](#)

TECHNOLOGY, CYBER CRIME & ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE



- **POLICING AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE**

This report by The Police Foundation examines the current and potential future applications of AI in UK policing. It identifies eight challenges to the widespread adoption of AI and offers recommendations for policymakers and police leaders to harness AI's benefits while maintaining public trust and safeguarding rights.

police-foundation.org.uk

- **POLICE FORCE'S USE OF AI FOR VICTIM STATEMENTS SPARKS FURY AND FEARS OF A SLIPPERY SLOPE**

An ex-detective says a force's use of AI to transcribe interviews sets police on a dangerous path.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has trialled the use of the Anathem Digital Assistant, which company founder Ina Hanniger says allows officers to focus more on asking the best questions. She added: "They can achieve the best evidence, knowing that [the system] will capture everything and produce multiple documents at the same time." ADA also helps guide officers through proper protocol. It can generate documentation, for a witness statement or interview notes.

But former Metropolitan Police detective Peter Bleksley found the ADA pilot ominous.

He said: "This feels like a slippery slope. I am not keen on this as policing is not an exact science. It's about human beings and intuition. I have serious concerns. I hear so often that people simply don't see police officers on the streets. The idea of artificial intelligence creeping in to replace some of their duties is a real problem, I believe."

A rape victim also spoke out about the prospect of AI doing police work. The woman, from Dartford, Kent, said: "How could you trust it was taking down what has been said? You disclose the most personal and sensitive information to police on a basis of trust. If there's some AI transcribing and recording it, that would put me off."

[The Mirror Article](#)

- **AUTOMATED RACISM - HOW POLICE DATA AND ALGORITHMS CODE DISCRIMINATION INTO POLICING**

Almost three-quarters of UK police forces are using data-based and data-driven systems to attempt to predict, profile, and assess the risk of crime or criminalised behaviour occurring in the future. The use of such approaches is influencing decisions in policing and the criminal legal system and people's access to essential services. The use of these so-called predictive policing tools in policing and the criminal legal system violates people's rights, including the right to a fair trial and the presumption of innocence, the right to privacy, the right to freedom of assembly and association, and the right to equality and non-discrimination. These systems are, in effect, a modern method of racial profiling, reinforcing racism and discrimination in policing. They also risk violations to people's economic, social and cultural rights, such as the right to social security

Their use is leading to the repeated targeting of more deprived areas, including areas with higher populations of Black and racialised people, and the targeting of individuals from

Black and racialised and more deprived backgrounds. There are strong parallels between the racism of police profiling in the 1970s and 1980s in the UK under 'Sus laws', and the use of predictive policing systems to profile people, communities, and neighbourhoods today. These data-based systems are the modern face of racial profiling

[Amnesty International Report](#)

- **CATASTROPHICALLY UNDER-RESOURCED - TOP OFFICER CITES POLICE CYBER CRIME CHALLENGES**

Police funding does not match the threat posed by cybercrime, a top UK officer has warned.

Speaking at Public Sector Cyber Scotland event in held in Edinburgh last week by *PublicTechnology* sister publication *Holyrood*, Tim Court, head of cyber operations at the National Crime Agency, told delegates policing authorities are not appropriately equipped to fight the growing rate of cyber offences.

Forces therefore need to try and recruit officers that are equipped to deal with all types of crime.

He said: "There is no more funding for the amount of crime that there is. So, we are catastrophically under-resourced. The only way you fix that is to make your workforce able to manage both. But to recruit somebody that is able to run down a high street, disarm and disengage a violent scenario, deal with a victim of an awful crime sensitively, and be good on the internet is quite demanding. But that's ultimately where this has to go because we are not going to have another 218,000 people to deal with the other 50% of crime that's emerged in our lifetime. There is no money."

Basil Manoussos, digital evidence and cybercrime expert witness, also told attendees of the event that the law had not "caught up" with technology, citing the Computing Misuse Act, which came into force three decades ago.

There have been various attempts to update the act to match current threats but these have failed to progress across scrutiny stages.

[Public Technology Article](#)

- **UK NEEDS UNIFIED REGULATION FOR FACIAL RECOGNITION: BIOMETRICS INSTITUTE**

The UK needs a clearer and consistent framework for governing facial recognition in public spaces as missteps in deploying the technology could erode public trust, the Biometrics Institute says in a new paper.

The UK's lack of a single law governing the technology is heightening the risk of rejecting facial recognition outright due to perceived risk, the organization says in a document titled *Members' Viewpoints: The Use of Facial Recognition in Policing*.

"Its potential to enhance security, improve efficiency, and address societal issues is undeniable," says Isabelle Moeller, CEO of the Biometrics Institute. "However, it is crucial that the deployment of FRT and live facial recognition (LFR) is guided by a strong ethical framework, robust regulatory oversight, and a commitment to transparency and accountability."

Over the past year, the country has seen an increase in live and retrospective facial recognition deployments both by law enforcement and the private sector. The increase in the use of technology, however, has caused alarm among lawmakers, civil rights groups and citizens.

Another cause for concern has been law enforcement's approach to data. The UK's -biometrics commissioner has been warning that the police are still storing images of innocent people in its national database which may be used for facial recognition checks.

The Biometrics Institute has released a Good Practice Framework which serves as a risk management tool. The group is advocating for open and honest communication on facial recognition deployments, ethical principles, addressing the potential for bias and discrimination as well as robust data protection, oversight and accountability.

[Biometric Update Article](#)

- **UK GOVERNMENT DECLARES DEEPFAKES GREATEST CHALLENGE OF THE ONLINE AGE**

A new case study published by the UK government does not mince words, or numbers: "The rise in deepfakes generated by artificial intelligence (AI) has been scarily rapid – a projected eight million will be shared in 2025, up from 500,000 in 2023."

Yet fraud is a crime that can explode while still going relatively unnoticed. With deepfake fraud and other sneaky ways to subvert reality, that's the point. Generative AI has quickly and quietly made accessing the tools for sophisticated deepfake fraud cheaper and easier than ever.

As such, AI deepfake detection is becoming increasingly necessary.

Deepfakes, alas, are everywhere: new research from fraud prevention firm Trustpair shows that, in 2024, the use of generative AI-based deepfakes and deepaudio increased by 118 percent, and that 90 percent of U.S. companies experienced cyber fraud

[Biometric Update Article](#)

- **EU ISSUES GUIDELINES CLARIFYING BANNED AI USES**

The EU has issued official guidelines on AI applications banned by the AI Act – including real-time biometric identification, social scoring and harmful manipulation.

The 135-page document was published on Tuesday by the European Commission to increase legal clarity for businesses and organizations for AI systems posing “unacceptable risks” to fundamental rights. And while the guidelines are non-binding, they contain legal explanations and practical examples that will help with compliance with the most comprehensive AI regulation in the world.

The ban on AI with “unacceptable risks” listed under Article 5 of the AI Act went into force on February 2nd. The AI Act, however, has left a number of carve-outs for law enforcement agencies and border control to use banned AI tools, including the use of live facial recognition in public spaces in cases of serious crimes such as terrorism.

While using the technology is still prohibited when it comes to identifying a shoplifter, police can seek authorization to use live facial recognition when it comes to a defined set of serious criminal offenses, according to the guidelines. The document also clarifies that police cannot deploy real-time facial recognition technologies in a broad, untargeted manner, for example locating potential criminals by setting up cameras during a busy festival in the city.

[Biometric Update Article](#)

ORGANISED CRIME, GUNS, VIOLENT CRIME & KNIFE CRIME



- **EXPLOITING THE VULNERABLE**

Organised crime groups exploit children and vulnerable adults to traffic drugs across regions. This has been particularly prevalent in the Midlands, with links to exploitation and violence.

[National Crime Agency Report](#)

- **REGULATION OF SALE AND DISTRIBUTION OF 3D PRINTING DEVICES NEEDED
WARNS CRIME EXPERT**

A senior lecturer in criminology at Birmingham City University who specialises in studying organised crime and gangs, warned there is an “upward trend” in 3D-printed weapons.

It comes as the Government recently announced plans to criminalise the possession of blueprints for 3D-printed guns as part of a new Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill – which had its second reading in Parliament on Monday (February 10).

“The UK prides itself on having some of the tightest and strictest gun control laws in the world. However, it has always faced firearms-related issues,” said Dr Mohammed Rahman.

“This concern is now growing as 3D-printed weapons are emerging at a steady pace, with cases across the country indicating an upward trend.”

These firearms and firearm components are manufactured using 3D printing technology. In the UK, they have emerged primarily through online networks, with law enforcement increasingly detecting them in criminal activities.

[Police Professional Article](#)

- **RACIAL DISPROPORTIONALITY IN VIOLENCE AFFECTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

A new report from the Youth Endowment fund explores Racial disproportionality in violence affecting children and young people and makes five key recommendations for the new Government. Violence obviously has devastating impacts on children and families. While children from all backgrounds can face violence, children from certain ethnic backgrounds are less safe.

The majority of children in the youth justice system, and involved in violence, are White. However, relative to their share of the population, some minority ethnic groups – and Black children in particular – are over-represented, while other groups – e.g. those from Asian backgrounds – are under-represented.

5 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Ensure stop and search is fair and 'intelligence-led'
2. Make Outcome 22 a positive outcome in the police outcomes framework
3. Monitor and improve access to psychological therapy
4. Deliver evidence-based support to children absent or excluded from school
5. Urgently reduce disproportionality and improve conditions in youth custody

[Police Oracle Article](#)

- **CHEMICALLY CONCEALED COCAINE: WHY GLOBAL LAW ENFORCEMENT CAN'T KEEP UP**

Recent arrests and seizures suggest that drug traffickers are increasingly switching to chemically concealed cocaine (CCC) to move tonnes of shipments around the world, successfully passing through ports and airports undetected

From April 2023 to March 2024, the UK Border Force seized 28 tonnes of cocaine, up 52% year on year.

Authorities have relied on well-established detection methods to intercept cocaine shipments: scanning shipping containers with X-ray scanners, and using manual inspections and sniffer dogs on suspicious packages.

But a rising trend in trans-Atlantic cocaine smuggling is changing the game. Tonnes of chemically concealed cocaine (CCC) are going past ports and airports undetected. CCC is not just hidden within objects – it is chemically bonded into materials like charcoal, textiles, or liquids, making it virtually undetectable.

The true scale of CCC in the UK and in Europe remains an unverified threat. But the frequency of interceptions is growing, suggesting that it has become a major modus operandi for Latin American drug traffickers.

The seizure of the cocaine-laced charcoal strongly suggests that the receiving organisation possessed the facilities and chemical know-how to extract the CCC safely and transform it into a powdered, sellable form, without losing too much of it in the process.

Perhaps the biggest issue isn't just how CCC evades detection, but how little law enforcement actually knows about it. Only three of the ports had specific protocols for handling CCC seizures, and there was little to no data on how common these seizures were. Worse, many port officials I had spoken to had never heard of it and said this was a matter

for customs. Some port officials redirected inquiries to different agencies, exposing widespread disorganisation and fragmentation of intelligence.

[Policing Insight Article](#)

- **CRIMINAL GANGS RUINING ENVIRONMENT SAYS WATCHDOG**

Organised criminal groups are targeting the waste industry and "wreaking havoc" on the environment, according to the Environment Agency (EA).

Government figures suggest illegal waste tipping costs the country £1bn a year.

In the South East, a number of sites have sprung up in recent years where large scale tipping has taken place. Industry experts say this is not just fly-tipping, but "organised crime" where "networks of people" are illegally collecting and dumping waste.

"Many of these criminals have international connections, using the waste industry to launder money and fuel other illegal activities," said Phil Davies, head of the Joint Unit for Waste Crime at the EA.

[BBC News Article](#)

- **VIOLENT OFFENDERS FACE BAN ON OWNING KNIVES**

Violent offenders face being banned from owning knives under plans to be considered by the Home Secretary.

Offenders with a propensity for knife possession or violence would be designated a "prohibited" person under the proposed crackdown drawn up by police.

They would be banned by law from buying certain types of knives or applying to be a registered knife seller.

Police would also have extra powers to search the person or their property for weapons.

Any "prohibited" person would be barred from purchasing certain types of knives and it would be an offence to buy knives on their behalf.

[The Telegraph Article](#)

- **THERE HAS NEVER BEEN A MORE DANGEROUS TIME TO TAKE DRUGS: THE RISING GLOBAL THREAT OF NITAZENES AND SYNTHETIC OPIOIDS**

The rapid growth in the global use of new synthetic opioids (NSOs) including fentanyl and nitazenes prompted the UK's National Crime Agency to warn last year that "there has never been a more dangerous time to take [illegal] drugs"

at least 27 fatalities linked to nitazenes that year in the UK. Since then, nitazenes – otherwise known as 2-benzylbenzimidazole opioids – have become more prevalent in the UK's illegal drug supply, leading some experts to warn that they are a major new threat because of their extreme potency.

In June 2023, the UK's most recent outbreak of deaths linked to synthetic opioids emerged in the West Midlands when drug dealers used nitazenes to fortify low-purity heroin. By August, there were 21 nitazene-related fatalities in Birmingham alone. In some cases, dealers also added xylazine (colloquially known as "tranq"), a non-opioid sedative used by vets.

[Policing Insight Article](#)

DOMESTIC ABUSE, VAWG, CHILD ABUSE & SEXUAL OFFENCES



- **AI GENERATED SEX ABUSE IMAGES TARGETED WITH NEW LAWS**

Four new laws will tackle the threat of child sexual abuse images generated by artificial intelligence (AI), the government has announced.

The Home Office says the UK will be the first country in the world to make it illegal to possess, create or distribute AI tools designed to create child sexual abuse material (CSAM), with a punishment of up to five years in prison.

Possessing AI paedophile manuals - which teach people how to use AI for sexual abuse - will also be made illegal, and offenders will get up to three years in prison.

Other laws set to be introduced include making it an offence to run websites where paedophiles can share child sexual abuse content or provide advice on how to groom children. That would be punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) warns that more sexual abuse AI images of children are being produced, with them becoming more prevalent on the open web.

The charity's latest data shows reports of AI-generated CSAM have risen 380% with 245 confirmed reports in 2024 compared with 51 in 2023. Each report can contain thousands of images.

In research last year it found that over a one-month period, 3,512 AI child sexual abuse and exploitation images were discovered on one dark website.

[BBC News Article](#)

- **GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS VAWG HAVE NOT IMPROVED OUTCOMES FOR VICTIMS**

A new report released on Friday (January 31) by the National Audit Office (NAO) reveals that despite this and the previous government's initiatives, there has been no significant improvement in outcomes for victims of violence against women and girls (VAWG).

The report highlights that the Home Office has made little progress in developing measures to prevent VAWG and deliver long-term societal change. This was a key commitment in the VAWG Strategy and Domestic Abuse Plan.

More than one in four women are estimated to be victims of sexual assault or attempted assault in their lifetime, and one in 12 women are victims of VAWG each year, although the actual number is likely to be much higher.

The National Police Chiefs' Council reported that, in 2022/23, 20 per cent of all police-recorded crime was related to VAWG.

"For us the biggest concern around the previous strategy, as identified by the NAO, is that the Government does not know how well it is doing in tackling VAWG. There is no consistent definition of VAWG across government and policing, nor a robust framework for monitoring and evaluating that is grounded in what works.

[Police Professional Article](#)

- **COERCIVE CONTROL TO BE PUT ON PAR WITH OTHER TYPES OF DOMESTIC ABUSE IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

Coercive control is to be put on a par with other forms of domestic abuse in England and Wales with police and other enforcement agencies working together to tackle it.

From Monday, offenders serving a sentence of at least 12 months for controlling or coercive behaviour will be automatically managed under multi-agency public protection arrangements (Mappa).

This means the police, the probation service and other agencies will be legally required to share with one another information about offenders that suggests they are a risk to others, such as their former partners or members of the public.

[The Guardian Article](#)

- **AROUND 830000 CHILDREN FACE EXTORTION AND IMAGE ABUSE CHARITY PREDICTS**

Around 830,000 children are facing daily abuse, including unwanted image sharing and extortion, new research has predicted.

Today marks Safer Internet Day, and a report produced by the Childlight Global Child Safety Institute has estimated that more than 800,000 child across the globe are impacted annually.

With over 300 million on the planet, which works out at about 10 cases of abuse every second.

But while it is prevalent in every country it is measured and it continues to grow, it is preventable, not inevitable.

[Police Oracle Article](#)

- **JUDGEMENT ON VETTING-BASED DISMISSAL HIGHLIGHTS LACK OF UNDERSTANDING SAYS WOMENS AID**

Sophie Francis-Cansfield, Head of Policy at Women's Aid, said this week's High Court ruling which found the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) vetting dismissal scheme unlawful, highlights the "continued lack of understanding around the nature of domestic abuse and sexual misconduct by police officers".

She said: “This decision has been made despite evidence showing time and time again that there are profound issues in police vetting processes, which have allowed dangerous perpetrators to join police ranks and exploit their powerful positions for abuse.

“Forces need to be able to take action against those who are accused of misconduct, including violence against women and girls, and are no longer fit to keep their vetted status.”

[Police Professional Article](#)

- **REVENGE PORN ABUSERS ALLOWED TO KEEP DEVICES WITH EXPLICIT IMAGES**

Perpetrators of revenge porn offences are being allowed to keep explicit images of their victims on their devices, after a failure by prosecutors to obtain orders requiring their deletion.

Of 98 cases concluded in the magistrates courts in England and Wales in the past six months, just three resulted in a deprivation order.

[The Guardian Article](#)

- **UK RAPE VICTIMS ARE WAITING TOO LONG FOR COURT CASES SAYS TOP LAWYERS**

Changes must be made to the way court cases are prioritised, barristers and victims’ advocates have said, with some trials already being scheduled into 2028.

The existing system means judges must schedule trials for defendants who are held in custody within six months of arrest unless a legal application is made, regardless of the severity of their alleged offence, while those on bail have no set time limit. This means victims of serious crimes including rape face years-long waits for trials, while less serious crimes are bumped ahead in the queue.

There is a record backlog of court cases in the UK. About 73,000 trials were unheard at the end of September, according to Ministry of Justice figures.

[The Guardian Article](#)

- **OVER 100 CHILD SEX ABUSE IMAGE CRIMES ARE BEING RECORDED BY POLICE EVERYDAY SHOCKING RESEARCH REVEALS**

MORE than 100 child sex abuse image crimes are being recorded by police every day, research shows.

There were 38,685 incidents logged by forces in England and Wales in the past year, according to Home Office data.

NSPCC research found half of all offences took place on Snapchat, with 11 per cent on Instagram, seven per cent on Facebook and six per cent on WhatsApp.

Charities including the NSPCC and Barnardo's have today written to Home Secretary Yvette Cooper and Tech Secretary Peter Kyle demanding tougher action on the worst kinds of online abuse.

[The Sun Article](#)

- **IOPC CALLS FOR BETTER RECORDING, VETTING AND TRAINING IN POLICE PERPETRATED DOMESTIC ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS**

A lack of knowledge among frontline officers of different forms of domestic abuse and the complex nature of coercive and controlling behaviour means not all incidents of (PPDA) are recorded, a new report has found.

As a result, many victim-survivors still have a poor experience when reporting offences to police, despite a raft of new initiatives and measures being put in place.

And victim-survivors who themselves work for the police continue to face “a unique set of barriers to reporting their abuse... and need to see real change in their everyday experiences, removing the fear of repercussions at work and instilling confidence in the response,”

“Police forces need to demonstrate to their staff that victim-survivors can have confidence in reporting PPDA and that the culture within forces is supportive,” continues the report, published by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

While praising progress that has been made in recent years, the report warns that “more needs to be done to improve the victim-survivor experience when reporting”.

It calls for improvements in training and vetting processes in a bid to help victim-survivors have confidence in a supportive system when reporting offending behaviour which, in turn, boosts public trust in the service.

[Policing Insight Article](#)

- **THE RISE OF ONLINE CULT COMMUNITIES DEDICATED TO EXTREMELY VIOLENT CHILD ABUSE**

The phenomenon of violent online exploitation, specifically pressuring young people to join cult communities, has grown significantly in recent years. The emergence of a variety of groups leveraging digital platforms which normalise acts of extreme cruelty, extort victims and radicalise individuals into performing acts of violent extremism, poses a serious threat to public safety. These online groups are interconnected, forming a network that recruits offenders and victims on a global scale. The content shared by individuals belonging to these groups is extremely violent, ranging from gore and animal cruelty, to child sexual exploitation material (CSAM) and depictions of murder. The dissemination of extreme content serves as a vessel to desensitise vulnerable people, with the purpose of breaking societal norms and normalising violence to corrupt minors and groom them towards future violence. These criminal or violent extremist groups compete against each other to share the most violent content. They operate similarly to certain cults in which charismatic leaders use deception and manipulation to render their followers obedient and dependent on the cult. Their main targets are minors and vulnerable youth, who are identified and groomed on mainstream online platforms, and manipulated through psychological coercion. Through this coercion, the perpetrators enforce compliance and maintain control over the victims. Online extortion group members employ a range of tactics to perpetrate their criminal activities.

[Europol Article](#)

TERRORISM & HATE CRIME



- **THE UK TERROR THREAT: LOW-TECH ATTACKS ARE LIKELY TO BE THE WAY FORWARD**

Terrorism in the UK has evolved significantly since the days where the predominant threat came from across the water in Northern Ireland; since 9/11 the landscape has shifted towards Islamic terrorism with an emerging right-wing element.

According to the report, Islamic terrorism now accounts for approximately 75% of MI5's counter-terrorism caseload, with the remaining 25% taken up by extreme right-wing groups.

While there is a threat from Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP), which Pool Re estimate have the intent to conduct indiscriminate mass casualty attacks in the UK, the days of sophisticated attacks such as 7/7 or 9/11 are unlikely to be repeated.

Instead it is highly likely that any Islamist inspired attack conducted in the UK would be carried out by 'lone wolf' terrorists who would only have the capability to conduct a low-sophistication attack.

The report notes that it is "almost certain" that extreme right-wing terrorism will remain "a significant terrorism threat to the UK". The threat from the far right has continued to evolve away from structured groups and proscribed organisations, such as National Action, to a more disparate online threat, which will make it more difficult to combat.

While the world is growing ever more digitally reliant, and cybercrime is becoming an increasingly relevant part of our lives, Pool Re assess that a cyber attack against UK infrastructure for terrorism purposes is highly unlikely.

However, the report does point to a realistic possibility that the growth of artificial intelligence could be exploited for terrorist purposes in the medium term, stating that it is also likely actors would have the intent to create firearms and weaponry using 3D printing.

[Policing Insight Article](#)

- **HOME OFFICE REVIEW OF SOUTHPORT KILLER CONTAINS KEY INACCURACIES**

The 'rapid learning review' commissioned to examine the systemic failings that led to the attacks is itself prone to contradictions and discrepancies. Its "rapid learning review" of Prevent, the counterterrorism programme, claimed that Axel Rudakubana was on the police's radar six months before officers actually came into contact with him.

The review concluded that officers had "prematurely" dismissed the threat he posed on each of the three occasions he was flagged to the programme between December 2019 and April 2021.

It also found that the police might have missed chances to stop the Southport attacker because of spelling mistakes. Prevent officers misspelt Rudakubana's name on his second and third referrals, which may have led to the premature closure of his case because officers were not able to see his previous referrals on the system.

The Home Office is preparing to publish its rapid learning review on Wednesday of the murder of Sir David Amess, whose killer, Ali Harbi Ali, was also flagged to Prevent before the attack.

It is expected to reveal similar failures to those in the Rudakubana case, including record-keeping errors that led to a breakdown in communication between Prevent officers and the police, and to conclude that inquiries into Ali were dropped prematurely.

[The Times Article](#)

- **TPIMS ARE UNDER-USED SAYS FORMER MET COMMISSIONER**

Lord Hogan-Howe, who was commissioner from 2011 to 2017, has said that Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures (Tpims) are under-used which "does us no good" and "seriously needs looking at".

A Tpm notice can involve intrusive measures such as an enforced curfew, tagging, living away from an address or area, and restrictions on overseas travel, with any breach treated as a criminal offence.

It is used by security services against people either involved in terrorism or who present a threat, but cannot be prosecuted or deported. However, the measures have been used very sparingly as a last resort.

Between 2011 and December 2020, only 24 individuals were served with a Tpm notice and as of last February, just two were in force. Speaking at Westminster, Lord Hogan-Howe noted the measures were effective but expensive.

He said: “Over time, the security services have suppressed the number of people under Tpins because, having served them, they have to follow these people, as do the police.”

Lord Hogan-Howe added: “This situation seriously needs looking at, because we now complain that the police and others did not look at these people to prevent them committing the awful crimes we have heard about today.

[Police Oracle Article](#)

MISCONDUCT, AUDIT & SCRUTINY



- **SEXUAL MISCONDUCT CLAIMS AGAINST POLICE SOAR**

Sexual misconduct allegations against police officers rose by more than two-thirds last year, Government data show.

The number of allegations relating to sexual conduct – including sexual assault and harassment – against officers increased to 819 in 2024, up 67 per cent from the 491 recorded in 2023.

The 819 cases ranged from complaints made through standard police systems to the most severe “recordable conduct matters”, where they had an “adverse” effect on a member of the public or resulted in death or serious injury.

The most serious recordable conduct incidents for police officers jumped by 84 per cent last year from 246 to 452, the steepest rise of any category.

Prof Layla Skinns, of the Criminology and Criminal Justice Department at the University of Sheffield, told Politics Home: “The increase in allegations of sexual misconduct over the last year shows that, rightly, there is growing police attention on such matters.

“However, more needs to be done to address the institutional sexism and misogyny highlighted by Casey, that underpins it, and to address the ‘rotten barrels’, not just the ‘rotten apples’.

[The Telegraph Article](#)

- **DELAY IN SACKING POLICE OFFICER UNACCEPTABLE**

A police officer's sacking four years after a misconduct investigation is an "unacceptable delay" which requires a change to legislation, the Police Ombudsman's Office has said.

The officer who was under investigation was on restricted duties and full pay throughout the period.

The investigation had been completed within a year, but disciplinary action had to await the outcome of court proceedings, which took three years.

The Ombudsman's Office said a fast-track procedure should be introduced to enable dismissals without any "undue delay".

[BBC News Article](#)

- **MET WRONGLY SACKED 'ABUSIVE' OFFICERS AFTER SARAH EVERARD CASE**

Policing 'in a hopeless position' after High Court ruling means force may have to reinstate hundreds removed from duty

The Metropolitan Police could be forced to reinstate hundreds of officers accused of sexual and domestic abuse after a judgment at the High Court.

Sgt Lino Di Maria won a legal challenge against the force over its “unlawful” decision to strip him of his warrant card after he was accused of sexual assault.

The decision came after Sir Mark Rowley, the Met commissioner, ordered the re-vetting of serving police officers and staff following public outrage over the violent, sexual crimes of Wayne Couzens and David Carrick.

There are about 300 individuals who are having their vetting reviewed under Operation Assure, 107 of whom have been dismissed.

Met sources have suggested the ruling could leave the force with a bill of £50 million if it has to reinstate and pay officers who have had their vetting clearance removed.

[The Telegraph Article](#)

WELLBEING, RETENTION & RECRUITMENT



- **BETTER PAY CRUCIAL TO RECRUITING MORE OFFICERS SAY POLICE CHIEFS**

Police chiefs have released a joint statement calling for an increase in officer pay across all ranks, adding that officers do not currently believe their reward package is fair.

The statement by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC), the Chief Police Officers' Staff Association (CPOSA) and the Police Superintendents' Association (PSA) to the Chairs of the PRRB and SSRB is in response to the 2025 submissions on police officer pay and conditions in England & Wales.

As a result of a below expectations rewards package and increased demand, officer morale is low, the statement continues.

Each organisation's recommendations include a pay uplift (NPCC recommendation of 3.8% and PSA and CPOSA of 4.8%), and uplifts in a number of allowances, many of which have not been reviewed for a considerable time.

Given that there is an estimated shortfall of 12,000 officers and significant financial instability, forces cannot absorb any additional cost without an impact on the public and risks for the delivery against the Safer Streets Mission, say police chiefs. These changes together will help with the recruitment and retention of officers and in turn support the Government's Safer Streets Mission, Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and its focus on reducing knife crime, anti-social behaviour and violence against women and girls.

[Emergency Services Times Article](#)

- **MET POLICE HIRED 1000 OFFICERS WITHOUT CHECKING REFERENCES**

London's police force has been hit by a fresh recruitment scandal after it emerged it hired more than 1,000 officers without obtaining references before they started work.

Many of the new recruits are believed to have been employed following the 2021 kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by Wayne Couzens, an officer in the Metropolitan Police's elite parliamentary and diplomatic protection squad.

The recruits would have been vetted to unearth significant red flags, such as previous convictions or family links to crime, before being hired. However, official guidelines also require forces to obtain character references from previous employers or educational institutions going back three years. Such checks are routine procedure in most other professions before an employee starts work.

Although some references were obtained retrospectively after a new recruit had joined the Met, policing sources say that in many cases they were never chased up.

[The Times Article](#)

- **CHIEF INSPECTOR DR. YVONNE TAYLOR DISCUSSES THE IMPACT OF SHIFT WORK ON SLEEP**

Chief Inspector Dr. Yvonne Taylor discusses her research on the effects of night shifts on sleep quality and the implications for police officers driving home after shifts. She also highlights her work with Oscar Kilo, a UK-based officer welfare service, aimed at addressing sleep and fatigue issues within the police force. The discussion concludes with insights into ongoing projects related to sleep research and the importance of understanding shift patterns for officer wellbeing.

Takeaways

- Police officers working night shifts lose about two hours of sleep.
- Daytime sleep quality is significantly poorer than nighttime sleep.
- Shift work can lead to impaired driving due to fatigue.
- Oscar Kilo provides resources for officer wellbeing.
- Understanding sleep patterns is crucial for police safety.
- Fatigue management is essential for public safety.
- Research highlights the need for better shift patterns.
- Collaboration with universities enhances research efforts.
- Ongoing projects aim to develop tools for managing sleepiness.
- Maintaining connections with welfare teams is vital for progress.

[PolicingTV Article](#)

- **SILENT STRUGGLES: THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT OF TRAUMA AND ITS ROLE IN DECISION-MAKING AND MISCONDUCT IN UK POLICING**

Every day, police officers endure experiences that most people can't even imagine – violence, tragedy, and life-or-death emotionally fuelled decisions – but what happens when the weight of that trauma becomes too much to bear?

Traumatic stress is highly prevalent in policing and has a serious impact on officer's mental health and emotional health. However, its role in police decision-making and misconduct behaviour is not well understood.

Officers are expected to be experts in emotion regulation, including masking authentic emotions, in order to preserve social order and serve the public with professionalism and empathy. Police officers tend to use maladaptive coping strategies such as dissociation and emotional suppression, in an attempt to regulate their emotions, which officers say they find helpful in the short term. However, psychological research shows these coping tactics have longer term detrimental impacts such as burnout, cognitive dissonance, and diminished quality of life.

Research into how mental ill-health and stress may influence police misconduct is lacking. Researchers are only just beginning to suggest that to reduce misconduct, organisations must focus on officer stress reduction and recognise the importance of helping officers process trauma.

In the presence of high public criticism, police leaders are motivated to reduce misconduct and decrease officer mental ill-health; however, this requires cultural change. If police organisations better understood why officers engage in misconduct, they could make more informed policy decisions and offer therapeutic tools rather than punitive measures alone for misconduct.

A trauma-informed approach to misconduct will aid retention and recruitment in policing, which has been a well-known dilemma in policing over the past couple of years. Officers who feel supported with their mental health are more likely to remain in force, and likewise for people wanting to join policing.

[Policing Insight Article](#)

- **THE FALLACY OF WORK-LIFE BALANCE: WHY WORK-LIFE INTEGRATION IS THE REAL SOLUTION**

For decades, achieving “work-life balance” in policing has been a widely accepted goal, almost as if it were the Holy Grail of professional success. This concept suggests that we equally distribute our time and energy between work and personal life, arriving at a point where both aspects exist in perfect harmony. But what if this concept is not only unrealistic but also harmful?

In reality, work-life balance implies a fixed equilibrium where police work and personal life are two opposing forces to be equally satisfied. Life, however, is far more dynamic than that. The better approach is not balancing work and life as separate entities but integrating them

as complementary aspects of one's existence. Work-life integration allows us to shift our focus based on the season of life and our specific role in policing. We are embracing both spheres as interconnected rather than mutually exclusive. As Jenny put it, "There is no balance".

In law enforcement, work-life integration is essential, as the demands of the job vary greatly depending on assignments, shifts and unforeseen incidents. Law enforcement officers must continually adapt to changing workloads and integrate their roles with personal life. There is no perfect balance, and anyone trying to create a perfect balance is left disappointed and stressed out.

These examples demonstrate how the nature of policing requires adaptability. Officers may face periods of high demand when their personal lives take a step back, but integration helps them find ways to reconnect and reprioritize once the demand lessens. This dynamic approach fosters resilience, assisting officers in reducing the stress and anxiety associated with strictly balancing work and personal life.

[Blue Line Article](#)

- **MOST INSPECTORS WANT ROSTERED SHIFTS WITHIN POLICE REGULATIONS DUE TO UNPAID WORKING**

The vast majority of inspectors are in favour of a rostered shift pattern because many are working up to 40 unpaid hours every month according to Fed survey.

Almost a quarter of inspectors are working up to an extra 40 hours a month, mostly unpaid according to the Police Federation.

Its Inspecting Ranks Survey revealed during a four-week period, 67 per cent of respondents reported working an extra 0-20 hours above 40 hours per week (or above their agreed part time hours), while 23 per cent work an extra 21-40 hours.

Just 30 per cent reported being paid for working over their agreed part time hours, and only 54 per cent report that these hours count towards their pension.

A vast majority of respondents (93 per cent) feel members in inspecting ranks working full time should be entitled to a rostered shift pattern within Police Regulations.

- 60 per cent of respondents are dissatisfied with their basic pay, with dissatisfaction higher among chief inspectors (70 per cent) than inspectors (57 per cent).
- 81 per cent of respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their allowances, with dissatisfaction highest in roles like Road Policing (87 per cent) and Investigations (85 per cent).

- 80 per cent of respondents prefer a choice between financial compensation or a rest day in lieu for having to work on a rest day; only 16 per cent preferred financial compensation only.
- 85 per cent of respondents disagreed with the lack of additional payment for working on public holidays, with a higher proportion of disagreement amongst roles such as the Central Communications Unit (91 per cent) and Custody (90 per cent).
- 65 per cent of respondents disagreed with not receiving extra pay when required to work in another force area (i.e. mutual aid), with highest disagreement seen in roles like Operational Support (75 per cent) and Neighbourhood Policing (72 per cent).

[Police Oracle Article](#)

FINANCE & BUDGETS



• EXTRA MONEY A TINY PERCENTAGE OF WHAT IS NEEDED POLICE CHIEF WARNS

A police chief has warned his force may have to cut 400 officers and staff after the Government's announcement of an extra £100 million for neighbourhood policing was branded a "tiny percentage" of what they needed.

Lincolnshire Police Chief Constable Paul Gibson said a £14 million funding gap for 2025/6 is still forecast after a first assessment of the final settlement set out on Friday.

The Government confirmed it will invest an extra £100 million into neighbourhood policing, adding to £100 million announced in December for England and Wales to put 13,000 more police officers on the streets by 2029.

Policing minister Dame Diana Johnson said she was "not pretending" that police forces were not facing funding challenges, and decisions would need to be made locally on how many officers to have.

[The Independent Article](#)

- **LABOUR CAUGHT IN NEW CRISIS OVER £118M POLICE FUNDING GAP ALLOWING CRIMINALS TO RUN RIOT**

Criminals will “operate with increasing impunity” because of Labour’s police funding crisis, critics have warned.

Police chiefs warned on Friday that a £100 million funding boost is a “tiny percentage” of what they need.

Shadow Home Secretary Chris Philp warned “law and order is taking a back seat to trade union handouts” under Labour.

He added that fewer officers will be patrolling Britain’s streets because of Rachel Reeves’s national insurance “tax grab”.

Mr Philp said: "The warning lights are flashing across our police forces, as Labour have failed to stump up the funding needed to stop massive cuts to frontline services.

"Our police services face a £118 million shortfall, which puts over 1800 police jobs at risk.

[The Express Article](#)

- **POLICING MINISTER ACKNOWLEDGES 'CHALLENGING' CUTS FOR FORCES IN ENGLAND AND WALES**

Policing Minister Diana Johnson has acknowledged significant financial challenges facing police forces, including potential workforce reductions in areas like Essex and Lincolnshire. Despite additional government funding, a provisional 3.5% increase falls short of the required £1.3 billion, potentially leading to further cuts.

[theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com)

If you have any questions or would like any support from the Risk Team, please contact us as SD_Risk@westmidlands.police.uk and a member of the team will be in touch.