

Committee of Public Accounts

Increasing police productivity

Sixty-third Report of Session 2024–26

HC 1239

Committee of Public Accounts

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Summary

Police forces in England and Wales are facing increasing financial pressures as well as more complex demand and higher expectations. The scale of this challenge means that it is more important than ever that the Home Office provides effective leadership in supporting police forces to improve their efficiency and productivity. Its previous 'light touch' oversight and efficiency programmes have not led to lasting improvements across police forces. The new White Paper on police reform presents an opportunity that cannot be wasted. The Home Office must learn from its past attempts and address the fundamental barriers to improving productivity.

The Home Office is taking a more active role in overseeing the police, but it still does not have the data to fully understand the financial resilience or performance of police forces. It has not quantified the impact of changing demands on policing and is relying on a hopelessly outdated formula to allocate funding, despite repeated calls from this Committee and its predecessors to reform its approach. Further, the focus on maintaining police officer numbers, and ringfencing funding to achieve this, imposes constraints on chief constables' ability to manage their workforces flexibly so they can adapt to evolving pressures and transform their operations.

The Home Office has identified potential efficiency savings of £354 million by 2028–29. However, it acknowledges that achieving these is risky, with some aspects requiring legislative changes, and it is still developing its plans. More than half of the savings are expected to come from procurement efficiencies, but territorial police forces are operationally independent and, to-date, the Home Office has not successfully mandated that they use national procurement frameworks, standardise requirements or share services.

There is significant scope to improve the productivity of front-line policing but the roll-out and adoption of new technologies and working practices across forces has been slow. While the College of Policing has identified hundreds of examples of good practice, a combination of fragmented leadership, haphazard funding arrangements and a lack of standardisation hinders the adoption of potentially transformative technologies at a national scale. As it implements planned police reforms, there is an opportunity for the Home Office to strengthen the leadership of policing and establish the necessary funding, accountability and oversight arrangements to support police forces to become more productive and deliver on the government's ambitions.

Conclusions and recommendations

- 1. The Home Office does not have sufficient data on the financial resilience or performance of police forces.** In 2015, the previous Public Accounts Committee concluded that Home Office's 'hands-off' approach to monitoring police forces had limited its ability to ensure value for money. In 2024–25, police forces drew down £276 million from their reserves and funded 60% of their capital programmes from borrowing. We are concerned that the Home Office still does not have the data it needs to understand the extent of the financial risks facing police forces and the consequences of this on the vital services they provide. The Home Office is adopting a stronger central role and strengthening its oversight; for example by establishing a Police Standards and Performance Improvement Directorate and developing a new performance dashboard. In 2025, it also attempted to analyse the financial resilience of police forces, although did not identify the root causes of financial problems. However, the data on police performance is scattered across different bodies and police forces, can be out-of-date and the Home Office has yet to establish measures of the productivity of police forces. Publishing data on police performance will make forces more accountable, and the Home Office and College of Policing accepted the value of greater transparency.

RECOMMENDATION

By July 2026, the Home Office should write to us setting out the key metrics it will use to measure the financial resilience, productivity and performance of police forces. In doing so, it should set out how it will support greater transparency and strengthen accountability by publishing data on the performance of police forces.

- 2. The Home Office does not understand how wider policy changes affect the demand on police resources.** Police forces face growing demands as they take on additional responsibilities and tackle increasing volumes of more complex crimes, for example, the number of fraud crimes, sexual offences, and stalking and harassment offences, which require specialist expertise, has increased from 768,000 in 2014–15 (18% of police recorded crime) to 2.1 million in 2024–25 (32%). Despite this, the Home Office and policing do not fully understand the implications of changing demands.

Reforms to the criminal justice system, such as the sentencing review and probation reforms, will affect the demands on policing. The Home Office has improved its working arrangements with the Ministry of Justice but, seven months after the sentencing review, it has still not quantified the impact of reforms on police. The Home Office has not established similar collaborative working arrangements with other departments, or local government, to ensure impacts of policy changes on policing are properly considered.

RECOMMENDATION

In its Treasury Minute response, the Home Office should set out the arrangements it has established—across departments, local government and policing stakeholders—to identify and quantify the impact of policy changes affecting policing.

- 3. Police forces have limited flexibility to recruit people with the skills they need.** Since the Police Uplift Programme was established in 2019, the government has ringfenced funding on the condition that forces maintain officer numbers, allocating £270 million to forces in 2025–26 via the officer maintenance grant. It has also provided £200 million to deliver an additional 3,000 personnel into neighbourhood policing roles. Consequently, police forces have responded to financial pressures by reducing the number of civilian staff and using police officers in staff roles. Police forces have also found it difficult to recruit and retain specialist staff, which restricts their ability to implement new technologies and respond to the changing nature of crime. Stakeholders have also highlighted that the current workforce mix, skills gaps and poor workforce well-being result in lost capacity and undermine productivity.

RECOMMENDATION

The Home Office should work with the National Police Chiefs' Council to assess the implications of the existing focus on maintaining police officer numbers, including identifying the impact on personnel and the operational efficiency of forces. Within six months, the Home Office should write to the Committee with the results of this assessment, including the options to improve workforce flexibility and the potential benefits for policing.

- 4. The Home Office has not established how it will achieve the planned savings in its police efficiency and collaboration programme.** The Home Office has identified £354 million of potential savings over the period to 2028–29 but recognises that achieving this is high risk. As at November 2025, the Home Office had not established how it would fund its savings programme and some initiatives will require legislative change. The Home Office believes it will achieve the planned savings by 2028–29

but was unable to explain to us the practical steps needed to achieve lasting changes in working practices across all police forces. The lack of standardisation across police forces is inefficient and represents poor value for money, with the Home Office expecting to achieve half of the savings from commercial efficiencies. However, it has not yet established the scope for standardisation and how it will engage police forces to achieve change. The Home Secretary has powers to mandate forces and/or specify requirements but these have rarely been used, with the Home Office saying it needs to be confident that mandating would be beneficial for police forces. Without the right data and monitoring systems, it will be difficult for the Home Office to track and assess what progress is being made and how savings are being achieved.

RECOMMENDATION

In its Treasury Minute response, the Home Office should set out by when it expects to achieve its planned efficiency savings. In doing so, it should:

- a. provide details on how it will achieve savings, including the areas in which it is seeking standardisation, which forces are using procurement frameworks, and the areas in which it is planning to mandate greater consistency across policing; and
- b. set out how it will ensure that claimed savings meet HM Treasury requirements.

5. **It is taking too long to identify and scale-up innovative practices and roll-out new technologies to improve police productivity.** There are many examples of police forces exploiting innovative technologies—including audio-visual multimedia redaction, live facial recognition and enhanced video response—but scaling these across all 43 police forces has been slow. The Home Office is implementing some of the changes from the 2023 Policing Productivity Review but has reduced funding to support the roll-out of new technologies from £105 million in 2024–25 to £50 million in 2025–26. As around 80% of police funding is committed to staff pay costs, police forces have limited flexibility to invest in new technologies and have been forced to increase their borrowing to fund their capital programmes. The College of Policing acknowledged that the large number of bodies involved in the roll-out of innovative practices, including identifying and scaling innovations with the greatest potential, was not the most effective way of operating. There is also scope to improve police productivity by streamlining processes. The College of Policing has developed a diagnostic tool to help police forces identify opportunities, in areas such as burglary, but its launch has been delayed.

RECOMMENDATION

The Home Office should provide the Committee with an update in six months on the steps it has taken to speed up the adoption of new technologies and support police forces to improve their productivity. This should include setting out:

- a. the digital technologies with the greatest potential and how it is supporting their wider adoption;
- b. how it will support the College of Policing to identify innovations with the greatest potential;
- c. how it will simplify the arrangements for approving and rolling-out new technologies; and
- d. the results of using the new diagnostic tool to assess the scope for productivity improvements from streamlining police processes, including the potential benefits identified and plans for securing these.

In addition, the Home Office should:

- e. require each police force to develop a business case, quantifying how much resource is required and over what period, to adequately update their IT systems;
- f. work with the National Centre of Policing to develop a roadmap for upgrading the IT infrastructure across and within all police forces to enable interoperability, improve their resilience and ability to collaborate more effectively;
- g. identify and prioritise key legacy systems and provide the resources to enable them to be upgraded and consolidated across police forces;
- h. provide dedicated resources, based on the above work, to enable the upgrade of IT infrastructure and systems across and within all police forces according to the roadmap.

6. **The outdated and piecemeal approach to funding police forces is frustrating efforts to secure long-term productivity improvements.**

In November 2025, the Home Office was still working to develop an affordable plan to increase the number of personnel in neighbourhood policing roles by 13,000 by 2029. The government provided £200 million in 2025–26 to recruit 3,000 additional personnel but forces do not know what funding will be provided from 2026–27 onwards. The Home Office is still using the out-dated police funding formula, which our predecessor Committee recommended be reformed in 2015. The formula was revised

in 2013 but subsequent demographic changes and regional variations in precept funding have created increasing financial pressures in some forces, with Bedfordshire Police and Warwickshire Police, for example, seeing government funding per capita fall by nearly 12% since 2015. We were also concerned that funding allocations did not reflect the needs of rural forces. Since 2023–24, the Home Office has provided £123 million of emergency funding to help some forces manage pressures. The new White Paper will be an important step in setting out the Home Office’s vision for policing reform. It offers the opportunity to clarify the leadership role the Home Office will play and how forces will be held to account following the abolition of police and crime commissioners.

RECOMMENDATION

After the publication of the White Paper on police reforms, the Home Office should write to the Committee setting out how the new accountability arrangements will support it in leading the policing system to improve its productivity and deliver government’s policy commitments. In doing so, it should:

- a. set out in detail the new governance arrangements that will replace police and crime commissioners in those areas where there is no regional mayor; and
- b. explain how it will revise existing funding arrangements to provide police forces with an equitable and stable basis from which to manage their finances.

1 Understanding police demands and performance

Introduction

1. On the basis of a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General, we took evidence from the Home Office and College of Policing on how they are supporting policing to improve efficiency and productivity, and help meet the government’s policing commitments.¹
2. The role of the police is to maintain public safety and order, prevent crime and uphold the law. While the Home Office has overall responsibility for police forces, individual forces are operationally independent. The Home Office allocates the majority of police funding and maintains a system of local accountability, including intervening if chief constables or police and crime commissioners fail to carry out their duties.²
3. The government is implementing the ‘Safer Streets’ mission, aiming to halve knife crime and violence against women and girls over the next decade and increase public confidence in the police. To achieve this, it has introduced the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, which aims to increase the number of police officers, police community support officers and special constables working in neighbourhood policing roles by 13,000 by 2029. The government also intends to deliver a programme of police reform and plans to publish a white paper early in 2026.³
4. Policing received total funding of £19.9 billion in 2025–26. The government expects total police funding to increase by an average of 1.7% per year in real terms over 2025–26 to 2028–29. The Labour Party manifesto set out how the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee would be paid for by tackling waste through a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme.⁴

1 C&AG’s Report, [Police productivity](#), Session 2024–26, HC 1380, 3 November 2025

2 C&AG’s Report, para 1

3 C&AG’s Report, para 2

4 C&AG’s Report, para 3

5. We also received written submissions from sources including police forces, academics and researchers, and sector representatives. The written evidence is available to read on the inquiry page of the Committee’s website.⁵ Particular issues and concerns drawn to our attention included:
- inefficiencies and inequities with the current funding model, with calls for reforms to incentivise long-term productivity over short-term savings, and for greater capital funding;
 - the need for forces to be able to manage their workforce flexibly, allowing them to put the most suitable person in a job and fill skills gaps;
 - inefficiencies from decentralised procurement, HR and technology functions, undermined by the lack of strong central decision making and overlapping remits across policing bodies;
 - police forces facing rising demands, including from the amendment to the Dangerous Dogs Act and increased costs of firearms licencing. Firearms licencing fees have increased, based in part on the average cost to forces, but given the variance in performance between forces, the fees cannot cover the costs for all;⁶ and from productivity being undermined by insufficient investment in technology which, alongside fragmented IT systems, is preventing fast roll-out and adoption of tested innovations.

Understanding police performance

6. Police forces have responded to financial pressures by drawing on their financial reserves and increasing their borrowing. In 2024–25, police forces drew down a total of £276 million of financial reserves and funded 60% of their capital programmes from borrowing. This is expected to continue, with police reserves expected to fall by £500 million (35%) and capital financing increasing from 2% to 3% of net revenue spending by 2027–28.⁷ We were concerned that police forces were borrowing significant amounts compared to their net revenue and the impact of these pressures on their frontline performance.⁸

5 Committee of Public Accounts, [Increasing police productivity Written evidence](#)

6 [Firearms licensing fees: Impact assessment, 15 January 2025](#)

7 C&AG’s Report, para 1.12

8 Q 7

7. We asked the Home Office whether it has the data it needs to understand the financial risks facing police forces and the impact that this has on police productivity.⁹ The Home Office said there are multiple datasets scattered across bodies in the policing system, including police forces. It told us that a single dataset would better enable data sharing, with forces currently sharing data through manual returns, which is slow, resource intensive and means data can be weeks or months old.¹⁰ HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) collects data—including on the efficiency of forces—as part of its inspections. It publishes some of this data, but the Home Office told us it does not share all the data it holds.¹¹ The Home Office said it is getting more detailed data and expects data quality to improve as part of its data reforms.¹²
8. In 2015, our predecessor Committee concluded that the Home Office’s “hands off” approach to monitoring police forces had limited its ability to ensure value for money.¹³ The Home Office told us it is now adopting a stronger central role and has established a Police Standards and Performance Improvements Directorate. As part of this, it will introduce a new police performance framework and performance dashboard to improve its understanding of what is happening in forces and hold them to account.¹⁴ The Home Office told us that it is also investing in better understanding the financial pressures facing police forces.¹⁵ In 2025, it analysed the financial resilience of forces, although did not assess the root causes of financial pressures or impacts on operational decisions.¹⁶ The Home Office told us that that it needs to do more work to understand the specific context of individual forces.¹⁷
9. Written evidence from Leapwise raised the importance of having a measure of police productivity to assess and reward police forces. It noted that the absence of such a measure has meant that the current decline in police productivity is hidden.¹⁸ The Home Office told us that it has not yet agreed a measure of police productivity or what metrics it will use to track this, due to difficulties measuring policing outputs. It is working with the ONS and police forces to determine how to measure police outputs.¹⁹

9 Qq 14, 18-19

10 Qq 19-20

11 Q 10

12 Qq 13, 20

13 Committee of Public Accounts, [Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales](#), First Report of Session 2015–16, HC 288, 9 September 2015

14 Q 121; C&AG’s Report, para 1.3

15 Q 12

16 C&AG’s Report, para 1.17

17 Q 12

18 Leapwise ([IPPO013](#))

19 Qq 80, 84

10. We asked the Home Office about its plans for publishing data on the performance of police forces. Written evidence from The Productivity Institute highlighted that ‘public trust’ is an important productivity outcome.²⁰ The College of Policing agreed that the antidote to public mistrust is transparency and openness.²¹ The Home Office accepted that transparency can drive behaviour change and said its police performance framework will be published, although it did not yet know which particular datasets it would publish, or when, as this is a decision for ministers.²²

The changing demands on policing

11. Police forces are facing growing demands. This includes an increase in the number of crimes which require more specialist resources to investigate; for example, fraud crimes, sexual offences, and stalking and harassment offences increased from 768,000 cases in 2014–15 (18% of police recorded crime) to 2.1 million cases in 2024–25 (32%).²³ Police forces have also absorbed additional responsibilities, such as the XL Bully dog amendment to the Dangerous Dogs Act, and there have been increases in the time that police officers spend in training in response to new regulations.²⁴ In its written submission, West Midlands Police commented that the new XL Bully dog policy will cost the force an additional £400,000 in the coming year.²⁵
12. In his written submission, Sir Stephen House highlighted how policing productivity must be considered in the context of an effective end-to-end process.²⁶ We asked the Home Office how it is working with other departments to understand how policy decisions might affect policing. The Home Office told us it works closely with the Ministry of Justice to understand the impact of sentencing reforms and probation reforms on policing. The two departments recognise the need for a system-wide view to avoid one part of the criminal justice system passing responsibility and costs to another part. They use publicly available criminal justice system data dashboards to track how the courts and wider justice system, policing and prosecution work together. The Home Office also told us it sits on an operational implementation group—including the National Police Chiefs’ Council, HM Courts and Tribunals Service and HM Prison and Probation Service—to understand the implications of policy changes.²⁷

20 The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester ([IPPO009](#))

21 Qq 22,25

22 Qq 25, 31-32, 108

23 C&AG’s Report, Figure 4

24 C&AG’s Report, para 1.10

25 West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner ([IPPO006](#))

26 Sir Stephen House QPM ([IPPO008](#))

27 Qq 55-57

However, seven months after the publication of the independent sentencing review, the Home Office had not fully costed the impact of the sentencing reforms on policing.²⁸

13. The Home Office acknowledged that further work is required with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC), the Department for Education and Department for Work and Pensions to understand the whole system join-up and ensure the impact of policy changes on policing is properly considered.²⁹ It told us it works with the DHSC to implement the Right Care Right Person Initiative, which aims to reduce the demands on policing from responding to incidents connected to mental ill-health by redirecting this demand to qualified professionals. The College of Policing told us the programme has been implemented by 36 forces and, in evidence received from the College after the session, highlighted that full national adoption could lead to savings of £19 million.³⁰ The Home Office recognised that it must also work closely with DHSC on issues such as illegal drugs, as helping people overcome addiction will lead to fewer people entering the policing system and re-offending. The Home Office told us it is working with DHSC but this work has been at a preliminary stage for some time.³¹

Police workforce

14. Since the Police Uplift Programme was established in 2019, the government has ringfenced funding to increase and maintain police officer numbers. In 2025–26, the government allocated £270 million to police forces through the officer maintenance grant, which forces are only eligible for if they meet their officer number targets.³² Most recently, in 2025–26, the government allocated £200 million to fund 3,000 additional personnel in neighbourhood policing roles.³³
15. A number of stakeholders identified that the officer maintenance grant has led to police forces increasingly using officers in staff roles (that do not require a warranted police officer) – an expensive and inefficient practice.³⁴ In written evidence, Leapwise estimated that this practice is costing policing at least £55 million a year.³⁵ We were concerned that this approach to funding police officers may be incentivising practices that deliver poor value for money. The Home Office acknowledged that successive governments

28 Q 60

29 Q 59

30 [Letter from the College of Policing, 8 December 2025](#)

31 Q 59

32 C&AG's Report, para 1.6; Q 52

33 Q 34

34 Sir Stephen House QPM ([IPPO008](#)); City of London Police [IPPO010](#); Leapwise ([IPPO013](#))

35 Leapwise ([IPPO013](#))

have chosen to incentivise police forces to recruit officers through grant arrangements.³⁶ We asked the Home Office whether it understood how skewed the deployment of police officers in staff roles is. It told us that it is for chief constables to decide the balance of police staff and officers, but it is seeking better quality data about how forces are using officers. However, the Home Office said that it had made £75 million available in 2025–26 for forces to spend on resourcing, whether on staff or on police community support officers and officers.³⁷

16. Police forces face difficulties recruiting and retaining staff with specialist skills, including IT staff, inhibiting their ability to deploy new technology. The Home Office told us that part of the challenge is that all 43 forces are seeking to recruit individuals with highly specialist skills, putting them in competition with each other as well as the private sector. It said that it wants to create a smaller, central team of IT experts with specialist skills that forces can draw on to work with local IT staff.³⁸
17. Police forces must also invest in the skills of their workforce to be able to respond to the changing nature of crime. Evidence submitted by ADS Group Ltd stated that, according to a 2025 Police Foundation report, half of police officers surveyed didn't believe they had adequate skills to investigate fraud.³⁹ The Home Office also told us the proposed National Centre of Policing will work closely with police forces to build the market for specialist skills.⁴⁰ In written evidence, ADS Group Ltd also recommended a more flexible approach, for example, secondments or analyst pathways into police forces to tap into complex specialist skills.⁴¹
18. Written evidence from Leapwise, Sir Stephen House and the City of London Police all highlighted how an inflexible workforce model can undermine police productivity.⁴² Leapwise highlighted how poor workforce wellbeing is reducing workforce capacity, identifying that the proportion of police officers on long-term sick leave has increased from 1.5% in March 2021 to 2.2% in 2025, with a 47% increase in officers sick for more than 28 days. This equates to 3,165 officers off-duty for considerable periods, with a cost of approximately £52 million to £92 million a year for policing.⁴³

36 Qq 33, 52

37 Q 51

38 Qq 124, 127

39 ADS Group Ltd ([IPPO002](#))

40 Q 123

41 ADS Group Ltd ([IPPO002](#))

42 Sir Stephen House QPM ([IPPO008](#)); City of London Police ([IPPO010](#)); Leapwise ([IPPO013](#))

43 Leapwise ([IPPO013](#))

2 Improving police efficiency and productivity

Implementing the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme

19. The Labour Party manifesto set out that the Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee would be paid for by tackling waste through a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme.⁴⁴ The Home Office has identified efficiency savings of £354 million over the period 2025–26 to 2028–29.⁴⁵ We sought reassurances that the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme will be more effective than previous attempts to drive efficiency savings across police forces, which were based on forces finding savings from their annual budget allocations.⁴⁶ The Home Office told us this was a more ambitious programme in which it is seeking to work more closely with police forces and stakeholders. It was confident that that it would achieve the savings by 2028–29 but acknowledged that some deliverables are high risk. For example, some initiatives require legislative change and, at November 2025, it had not established the funding necessary to deliver the programme.⁴⁷
20. The Home Office told us that about that half of the planned £354 million of savings will come from commercial savings, such as national purchasing, with the remainder from cost recovery and improved productivity.⁴⁸ We asked whether there has been any investigation into policing’s purchases of basic services, noting the previous Committee’s work on similar issues in the national health service.⁴⁹ In written evidence, stakeholders also identified the inefficiency of police forces running separate procurement exercises.⁵⁰ The Home Office said it is using national purchasing frameworks and seeking to standardise specifications for some equipment, including laptops and vehicles.

44 C&AG’s Report, para 3

45 Q 40

46 Q 70

47 Qq 45, 70; C&AG’s Report, para 2.8

48 Q 70

49 Q 75

50 The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester ([IPPO009](#)); Leapwise ([IPPO013](#))

It is also working with the Crown Commercial Service on energy purchasing, with 39 forces signed up. However, the Home Office acknowledged that there is no standardisation across the 43 police forces and that it does not know exactly who is doing what. It said it will need up to two years to gather data on the scope for standardisation, the level of variation across forces and whether it was better to purchase nationally, while recognising the benefits of competition between suppliers.⁵¹

- 21.** We sought reassurances that the Home Office was considering simplifying police systems, such as those used in human resources. The Home Office recognised police forces use many different systems and it is a highly fragmented picture. It told us that it is trialling standardisation in “some areas”.⁵² It has included shared services as part of the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme and is seeking to put as much as possible into a new central organisation.⁵³ The Home Office acknowledged the scope to do more and said it is working with police chiefs to identify priority areas, although there was no firm plan and it was unable to provide any detail on a timeline.⁵⁴
- 22.** We asked the Home Office whether BlueLight Commercial had been a success. The Home Office said it has made some progress changing the behaviours and culture of police forces to generate savings, but it had not been used to the extent that was intended.⁵⁵ BlueLight Commercial manages 300 contracts on behalf of policing but forces are under no obligation to engage and not all are using the services it offers.⁵⁶ The Home Office told us it had increased its oversight and scrutiny of BlueLight Commercial and is analysing which forces are using procurement frameworks. As part of the forthcoming police reforms, it will consider what BlueLight Commercial is providing and whether to use the Home Secretary’s powers to mandate police forces to use BlueLight Commercial’s services. The Home Office acknowledged that it would need confidence in the value of what BlueLight Commercial is offering if it is going to adopt an approach that is stronger than ‘persuasion’.⁵⁷
- 23.** We asked whether the Home Office had the data needed to monitor progress towards its planned savings of £354 million by 2028–29.⁵⁸ The Home Office said it is important to get the right data to hold police

51 Qq 75-77, 95, 96, 103-106, 111
52 Q 51
53 Qq 71, 73
54 Qq 73-74
55 Qq 98-99, 109-110
56 Q 110; C&AG’s Report, para 2.4
57 Qq 99-102, 109-110
58 Q 41

forces to account, as this drives innovation and delivers savings.⁵⁹ It has established a programme board to monitor progress on the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme.⁶⁰ The College of Policing told us it is seeking to encourage greater consistency in measurement across forces. It has issued guidance on benefits realisation and is testing a measurement framework in five forces.⁶¹

Improving police productivity

- 24.** There are many examples of police forces exploiting innovative technologies, including audio-visual multimedia redaction, live facial recognition and enhanced video response.⁶² These technologies can help to improve police productivity and performance. For example, the College of Policing estimated that scaling the use of enhanced video response could save up to £25 million and the Metropolitan Police reported that it had made over 1,300 arrests due to live facial recognition since January 2024.⁶³ In its written evidence, the City of London Police highlighted its productivity gains from using an auto-redaction tool in preparing case files for the Crown Prosecution Service.⁶⁴
- 25.** Despite these opportunities, scaling innovation and new technologies across the 43 police forces in England and Wales has been slow. The Home Office and College of Policing acknowledged the lack of speed and told us that scale-up was the biggest barrier.⁶⁵ We asked about the mechanisms needed to scale innovation.⁶⁶ In supplementary evidence received after our evidence session, the College of Policing highlighted that its Centre for Police Productivity is dedicated to identifying innovation and supporting forces to implement new initiatives. It has identified and sifted 1,400 innovations, putting 120 of these with the greatest potential into a ‘promising practice’ bank.⁶⁷ The College of Policing also highlighted that it is aware of 90 initiatives using AI in 29 forces, and told us it evaluates between eight and 12 initiatives a year, seeking to fast-track them to policing.⁶⁸ The College acknowledged that it needed to do more but said that its funding had fallen (from 0.4% of all police funding in 2012–13 to 0.2% in 2025–26) and that it does not

59 Q 120

60 Q 41

61 Qq 84-85

62 C&AG’s Report, Examples 1-3

63 Qq 79, 112

64 City of London Police ([IPPO010](#))

65 Q 119; C&AG’s Report, para 3.9

66 Qq 120, 130

67 [Letter from the College of Policing](#), 8 December 2025

68 Qq 112, 119

have sufficient gravity to drive some of these initiatives.⁶⁹ It also pointed to the number of bodies involved in rolling-out new measures—a “crowded landscape”—which is not the most efficient or effective way of delivering national services.⁷⁰

- 26.** We asked if police forces had sufficient funding to improve their IT systems,⁷¹ particularly given the financial pressures they are facing, which has led them to increase borrowing to fund capital programmes.⁷² Forces also spend around 80% of their funding on officer and staff pay, which means they have limited flexibility to make capital investments, support transformation or invest in new technology.⁷³ The Home Office reduced funding for programmes to improve productivity and roll-out new technologies, from £105 million in 2024–25 to £50 million in 2025–26.⁷⁴ It told us that funding is constrained, and it does not determine how much money goes into innovation. Within these constraints, the Home Office said it is seeking to focus on initiatives that could deliver the best outcomes, pointing to its funding for facial recognition technology.⁷⁵
- 27.** We asked what progress the Home Office has made implementing the recommendations of the 2023 Policing Productivity Review, which identified the potential to save 38 million hours of police time over five years. The Home Office said it had taken a number of initiatives forward, such as the establishment of the Centre for Police Productivity, and others would be taken forward as part of the Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme or police reforms.⁷⁶ The College of Policing has also developed a diagnostic tool which will allow police forces to examine their processes for tackling burglary, robbery and shoplifting. The College is testing the tool with nine forces and hopes to make this available to all forces by April 2026, after previously expecting to launch this in December 2025.⁷⁷

Implementing the White Paper on police reform

- 28.** We asked how the government’s commitment to put 13,000 extra personnel into neighbourhood policing roles by 2029 will be funded. The government provided £200 million in 2025–26 to recruit 3,000 additional neighbourhood

69 Q 115

70 Q 130

71 Q 67

72 Q 7; C&AG’s Report, para 1.12

73 C&AG’s Report, para 1.9

74 Q 78; C&AG’s Report, para 2.15 and 3.20

75 Qq 79, 118

76 Q 112

77 Qq 22, 114; C&AG’s Report, para 2.14

policing personnel (police officers and police community support officers) and the Home Office told us it is confident that forces will achieve this.⁷⁸ However, forces do not yet know what funding will be provided from 2026–27 onwards and, in November 2025, the Home Office was still working to develop an affordable plan to deliver the government’s commitment. The Home Office said it was managing the neighbourhood policing grant on an annual basis and will announce arrangements for future years before the end of 2025, as part of the provisional police funding settlement.⁷⁹

- 29.** In its 2015 report on the financial sustainability of police forces, our predecessor Committee recommended that a new police funding formula be introduced in 2016–17.⁸⁰ In our evidence session, we asked whether changing demographics meant the out-of-date formula had led to a structural funding gap.⁸¹ We were also concerned about the impact on rural police forces.⁸² Demographic changes have meant some forces, such as Bedfordshire and Warwickshire, have seen government funding per capita fall by nearly 12% since 2015.⁸³ The Home Office has provided £123 million of additional support to five forces to help them respond to financial pressures since 2023–24.⁸⁴ It told us that it is willing to speak to forces about local pressures, is scrutinising forces’ financial plans to work out where additional funding might be needed and uses the special grant system to respond to local pressures. The Home Office also highlighted that the funding formula is just one element of police funding and that it expects to look at the arrangements as part of the police reforms.⁸⁵
- 30.** The Home Office said that it expects the police reform White Paper to start having an impact from 2026–27.⁸⁶ As part of this, the Home Office said that it will work out implementation plans to establish new arrangements following the abolition of the role of police and crime commissioners.⁸⁷ The Home Office told us it is also reversing its previous light-touch approach and plans to establish a National Centre of Policing. In doing so, the Home Office will consider how to hold police forces to account and the system of accountability that is needed.⁸⁸

78 Qq 33-36

79 Q 33; C&AG’s Report, para 1.9

80 Committee of Public Accounts, [Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales](#), First Report of Session 2015–16, HC 288, 9 September 2015

81 Qq 12, 61, 63

82 Qq 66, 67

83 C&AG’s Report, para 1.9

84 Qq 7, 8; C&AG’s Report, para 1.13

85 Qq 62, 64, 65

86 Q 29

87 Qq 42-45

88 Qq 121, 123

Formal minutes

Thursday 22 January 2026

Members present

Sir Geoffrey Clifton-Brown

Mr Clive Betts

Anna Dixon

Sarah Green

Lloyd Hatton

Rupert Lowe

Catherine McKinnell

Tris Osborne

Increasing Police Productivity

Draft Report (*Increasing Police Productivity*) proposed by the Chair, brought up and read.

Ordered, That the draft Report be read a second time, paragraph by paragraph.

Paragraphs 1 to 30 read and agreed to.

Summary agreed to.

Conclusions and recommendations agreed to.

Resolved, That the Report be the Sixty-third Report of the Committee to the House.

Ordered, That the Chair make the Report to the House.

Ordered, That embargoed copies of the Report be made available (Standing Order No. 134).

Adjournment

Adjourned till Monday 26 January at 3.00p.m.

Witnesses

The following witnesses gave evidence. Transcripts can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Monday 24 November 2025

Dame Antonia Romeo DCB, Permanent Secretary, Home Office;
Richard Clarke, Director General of the Public Safety Group, Home Office;
Bethan Page-Jones, Director of Strategy, Capability and Resources Directorate, Home Office; **Sir Andy Marsh QPM**, Chief Executive, College of Policing; **James Bottomley**, Head of the Centre for Police Productivity, College of Policing

[Q1-130](#)

Published written evidence

The following written evidence was received and can be viewed on the [inquiry publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

IPP numbers are generated by the evidence processing system and so may not be complete.

1	ADS Group Ltd.	IPP0002
2	Al-Mayyahi, Fatimah; Edward, Emilie; Hadley, Lilly Mae; and Mortimer, Bailey	IPP0007
3	Buziuk, Hleb (Independent policy researcher and human-rights advocate, FairGo CIC)	IPP0004
4	City of London Police	IPP0010
5	Cook, Mr Nigel D	IPP0011
6	Feldman, Mr Simon	IPP0014
7	Giulietti, Professor Corrado (Professor of Economics, University of Southampton); McConnell, Dr Brendon (Senior Lecturer in Economics, City St George's, University of London); and Zenou Professor Yves (Professor of Economics, Monash University)	IPP0012
8	Leapwise	IPP0013
9	PACCTS	IPP0001
10	Sir Stephen House QPM	IPP0008
11	Sheffield Hallam University	IPP0003
12	The Productivity Institute, University of Manchester	IPP0009
13	Warner, Mr Paul	IPP0005
14	West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner	IPP0006

List of Reports from the Committee during the current Parliament

All publications from the Committee are available on the [publications page](#) of the Committee's website.

Session 2024–26

Number	Title	Reference
62nd	Faulty energy efficiency installations	HC 1229
61st	Financial sustainability of children's care homes	HC 1233
60th	DWP follow-up: Autumn 2025	HC 1447
59th	Ministry of Justice follow-up: Autumn 2025	HC 1240
58th	Government services: Identifying costs	HC 1421
57th	Government services: Generating income	HC 890
56th	BBC Accounts and Trust Statement 2024–25	HC 1230
55th	Reducing NHS waiting times for elective care	HC 820
54th	Afghanistan Response Route	HC 1391
53rd	Cost of maintaining the FCDO's overseas estate	HC 884
52nd	Resilience to threats from animal disease	HC 885
51st	The UK's F-35 stealth fighter capability	HC 1232
50th	Local bus services in England	HC 892
49th	Administration of the Civil Service Pension Scheme	HC 888
48th	Smarter delivery of public services	HC 889
47th	First Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts	HC 1300
46th	Improving local areas through developer funding	HC 886
45th	Improving family court services for children	HC 883
44th	Governance and decision-making on major projects	HC 642
43rd	MoD's oversight of Reserve Forces' and Cadets' Associations	HC 893
42nd	Water sector regulation	HC 824

Number	Title	Reference
41st	UK Research and Innovation	HC 826
40th	Collecting the right tax from wealthy individuals	HC 827
39th	Government's use of private finance for infrastructure	HC 821
38th	Increasing teacher numbers: Secondary and further education	HC 825
37th	Immigration: Skilled worker visas	HC 819
36th	Jobcentres	HC 823
35th	Introducing T Levels	HC 822
34th	Department for Business and Trade Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24	HC 818
33rd	Supporting the UK's priority industry sectors	HC 1070
32nd	The Future of the Equipment Plan	HC 716
31st	Local Government Financial Sustainability	HC 647
30th	Antimicrobial resistance: addressing the risks	HC 646
29th	Condition of Government property	HC 641
28th	Decommissioning Sellafield	HC 363
27th	Government's relationship with digital technology suppliers	HC 640
26th	Tackling Violence against Women and Girls	HC 644
25th	DHSC Annual Report and Accounts 2023-24	HC 639
24th	Government cyber resilience	HC 643
23rd	The cost of the tax system	HC 645
22nd	Government's support for biomass	HC 715
21st	Fixing NHS Dentistry	HC 648
20th	DCMS management of COVID-19 loans	HC 364
19th	Energy Bills Support	HC 511
18th	Use of AI in Government	HC 356
17th	The Remediation of Dangerous Cladding	HC 362
16th	Whole of Government Accounts 2022-23	HC 367
15th	Prison estate capacity	HC 366
14th	Public charge points for electric vehicles	HC 512
13th	Improving educational outcomes for disadvantaged children	HC 365
12th	Crown Court backlogs	HC 348
11th	Excess votes 2023-24	HC 719
10th	HS2: Update following the Northern leg cancellation	HC 357
9th	Tax evasion in the retail sector	HC 355

Number	Title	Reference
8th	Carbon Capture, Usage and Storage	HC 351
7th	Asylum accommodation: Home Office acquisition of former HMP Northeye	HC 361
6th	DWP Customer Service and Accounts 2023-24	HC 354
5th	NHS financial sustainability	HC 350
4th	Tackling homelessness	HC 352
3rd	HMRC Customer Service and Accounts	HC 347
2nd	Condition and maintenance of Local Roads in England	HC 349
1st	Support for children and young people with special educational needs	HC 353