

MARCH NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the latest edition of the Police and Crime Commissioners' Treasurers Society newsletter, produced by the Technical Support Team.

The newsletter provides details of major announcements and consultations relevant to police finance, as well as a summary of recent news stories affecting police and local government.

Further news articles of relevance to members, Finance Update Reports presented at PACCTS meetings and member briefings detailing funding developments and announcements can be found on the [PACCTS website](#).

For further information please follow the links provided or contact the Technical Support Team via the details at the bottom of each page.

Please click on the appropriate heading to be taken straight to the relevant part of the newsletter.

- [Announcements](#)
- [Consultations](#)
- [Publications](#)
- [News Articles](#)
 - [Economy and Public Finance](#)
 - [Recruitment and Retention](#)
 - [Police Finances](#)
 - [Police Demand](#)
 - [Police General](#)
 - [Technology](#)
 - [Prisons](#)

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Budget 2021

On 3 March the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak, made his Spring 2021 Budget announcement in the House of Commons. Full details of the Budget announcement can be found on the Home Office [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) pages.

The Budget sets out the next phase of the government's response to COVID, providing additional support for people, public services and businesses most affected by the pandemic with a funding package worth £65 billion distributed across 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The Budget confirms the continuation of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (CJRS) in its current form until the end of September 2021, further income support for the self-employed and continued welfare support. The government have said that measures in the Budget, particularly the CJRS extension, will provide further support to the labour market and the wider economy. Furthermore, the OBR now expect the peak in unemployment to be 340,000 lower than that assumed in their November forecast.

Headlines

- An additional £19m funding for tackling domestic abuse. This will include £15 million in 2021-22, distributed across England and Wales to increase funding for programmes working with offenders to reduce the risk of abuse continuing, as well as £4 million between 2021-22 and 2022-23 to trial a network of 'Respite Rooms' across England.
- COVID-19 support package for this year and next are said to total £65bn taking the total amount spent on the pandemic to £407bn.
- The government has also announced an additional £3bn for next year to support the NHS in England recover from the impact of COVID-19. This is in addition to approximately £18bn of COVID-19 support in 2020-21.

CSR

At the time of Budget 2020 it was expected that the government would conduct a three-year Comprehensive Spending Review in 2020, covering up to 2024-15. However, this was delayed due to COVID-19 with the government opting for a one-year 'rollover' SR2020.

The Government now plans to conduct a Spending Review later this year to set future departmental resource and capital budgets as well as devolved administrations' block grants. At the time of writing, details on the 2021 Spending Review have not yet been given and will be set out "*in due course*".

Budget Survey

The Technical Support Team circulated the Budget Survey for 2021-22 on 25 February. The budget survey covers many of the same topics as last year with a little more detail for changes in budgets. This should give a better understanding about how and why budgets have changed from the previous year. Analysis will begin once we have received a response from each force. Should you have any technical questions, please contact the team.

Update

As of 19 March, we have had 28 responses. It is imperative we get as close to a full data set as possible if the data is to be useful. Please get your responses in as soon as is possible.

Safer Streets Fund 2021-22 – Round 2

The 2020-21 Safer Streets Fund was introduced as a manifesto commitment designed to deliver well evidenced crime prevention activity. So far, the scheme has provided funding to 35 PCCs to invest in a range physical situational crime prevention measures such as alleygating, CCTV, street lighting and home security across 52 high crime areas in England and Wales.

Round two of the Safer Streets Fund will provide a further £20 million to PCCs and Local Authorities in England and Wales in 2021-22. The Home Office Safer Streets Fund 2021-22 is now open for applications, with a deadline of 25th March 2021. Once allocations have been distributed, the funds should be spent no later than March 2022.

Bidders are asked to work with partners to design and deliver local crime prevention plans in hotspot areas with the outcome of reducing neighbourhood crimes through situational prevention. The objectives of the fund are to:

- *“Continue to build evidence about the impact of targeted investment in situational prevention in high crime areas to strengthen the case for future investment, both at a local and national level.*
- *Grow local capability to undertake data driven problem solving and capture evidence and practical learning about how best to implement situational interventions to prevent crime.”*

Bids will be evaluated by the Home Office and will be expected to meet a defined pass mark, that requires providing satisfactory information in each of the primary/secondary/tertiary competitions that have been submitted by each force.

The key criteria for eligibility are:

- That areas have a defined, but not necessarily adjoined geography.
- That the intervention area is a suitable size to enable effective targeting.
- That the areas are persistently and disproportionately affected by one or more neighbourhood crime types.

Update

On 16 March it was [reported](#) that the government will be doubling the Safer Streets fund to £45m in order to provide better lighting and CCTV following the death of Sarah Everard.

 GOV Website: [Guidance](#)

Audit Deadlines 2020-21 and 2021-22

The Government plans to amend the current legislation for the final accounting deadlines for principal councils, police and fire bodies. The regulations will amend the draft and final accounts publication deadlines from 1 June and 31 July, to 1 August and 30 September for the next two accounting years (2020-21 and 2021-22). The regulations also include a new requirement for all local bodies to post a notice on their website if they fail to publish their draft accounts by 1 August 2021. The Accounts and Audit (amendment) Regulations 2021 (SI no 2021/263) will come into force on 31 March 2021.

PUBLICATIONS

Emergency Services Network - Deep Dive Event

Published: 09 March 2021

On 23 March, from 9.30 to 11.30am, the APCC will be holding a 'Deep Dive' workshop for PCCs via teams to look at the new Full Business Case for the Emergency Services Mobile Communication Programme (ESMCP) and to consider the future for the Emergency Services Network (ESN).

ESMCP aims to replace the legacy Airwave communication system, currently used by police and other emergency services, with a new dedicated 4G mobile Emergency Services Network.

This 'Deep Dive' workshop is an opportunity for PCCs to familiarise themselves with the workings of the current programme, update on the new Full Business Case and consider the implications for local policing and budgets over the next few years as ESN is finally rolled-out across policing before Airwave is finally switched off.

If you are interested in attending, please contact Libby Avery at libby.avery@apccs.police.uk

The Government's approach to elections and referendums during COVID-19

Published: 26 February 2021

Due to COVID-19, the government postponed local elections that were due to take place in May 2020 for a year. [Guidance](#) has been published concerning elections and referendums, which applies to the current period of national lockdown and for changes to be implemented from 8 March for England. Further guidance will be published for campaigning in Wales and Scotland.

On 5 February, the Government also outlined a [plan](#) to ensure the May 2021 elections are 'Covid-secure'. One commitment includes allowing voters to have a choice between in-person and absent voting. Postal and proxy voting will be supported, and proxy voting rules changed so that those affected by COVID-19 in the days before the poll can still vote.




Furthermore, the Government have also stated that from 8 March, people who are campaigning ahead of elections on 6 May will be allowed to deliver leaflets. This also applies to any further by-elections and local referendums being held for as long as COVID-19 related restrictions remain in place.

£35.5m to support young people at risk of involvement in serious violence

Published: 8 February 2021

On 8 February 2021, the Government announced £35.5 million to help Violence Reduction Units across the country tackle serious violence and prevent young people being drawn into it.

This funding has helped initiate work in in schools, communities, prisons, hospitals, Pupil Referral Units and police custody suites. The Government has also confirmed a further £2 million will be available via a Winter Contingency Fund package. This money is being delivered through Violence Reduction Units to local charities and social enterprises that support vulnerable young people at risk of involvement in violence through the lockdown period.

-  GOV Website: [News](#)
-  GOV Website: [Guidance](#)
-  GOV Website: [Delivery plan](#)

Police workforce statistics, England and Wales

Published: 28 January 2021

Last updated: 1 February 2021

On February 1, Home Office published the police workforce statistics containing information on police workers (officers and staff) in post as of 30 September 2020.

There were 216,155 workers (FTE) employed by the 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales on 30 September 2020, an increase of 11,341 (or 5.5%) compared with a year earlier, and of 5,402 (2.6%) since March 2020.

It has been [reported](#) in the media that there has been a 104% rise in resignations. Unfortunately, the September release does not include voluntary resignations statistics. Any statistics used in the media are from the year ending March 2020. Furthermore, these statistics are compared with 2011-12, the number over the past 5 years has been relatively steady, although an upward trend can be observed.

	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Voluntary resignations	1,968	2,035	1,995	2,175	2,363

 GOV Website: [Statistics](#)

CONSULTATIONS

OPEN

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Call for Evidence

Published: 10 December 2020

Reopened: 12 March 2021


Closing: 26 March 2021


The Government have re-opened the call for evidence for violence against women and girls. Following the murder of [Sarah Everard](#), there has been a significant interest from the public. The call for evidence is to understand more about the crimes that are committed, to better understand them and why they are perpetrated.

The Government would like responses to the call for evidence to outline some of the crime types that respondents believe come under the term 'violence against women and girls', and to describe the harms that they cause to victims and society.

Everyone aged 16 or over is welcome to contribute to the call for evidence. The call for evidence is looking for views from social care workers, law enforcement and those with expertise in working with victims. The Government are also welcoming additional submissions from academics and others who have interest and expertise in violence against women and girls.

All responses should be sent no later than 11:45pm on 26 March 2021.

 GOV Website: [Call for evidence](#)

 GOV Website: [Public Survey](#)

CLOSED RESPONSES

The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (General Levy) Regulations review 2020

Published: 16 December 2020



Closed: 27 January 2021

On 16 December, The Department for work and pensions released "The Occupational and Personal Pension Schemes (General Levy) Regulations review 2020" consultation. The general levy on occupational and personal pension schemes recovers the funding provided by the DWP in respect of the core activities of The Pensions Regulator, the activities of The Pensions Ombudsman and part of the activities of the Money and Pensions Service.

The Government sought views for changing the structure of the rates of the General Levy. The response documents why it is considered necessary to restructure and increase the levy rates, detailing the proposals brought forward.

The response made it clear that the Government has taken steps to "bolster" the pension protection regime to ensure that there can be confidence in pensions savings, leading to an increase in expenditure. The Government recognises how essential it is that the pension bodies receive sufficient funding in order to allow services to be maintained, although, there is still a requirement that costs remain under control and to take account of developments in the external environment. The response shows understanding towards the current environment, in which schemes are operating is very challenging, and has decided to *"freeze the 2021 to 2022 operating budgets of TPR and TPO at 2020 to 2021 levels. It has also been decided to reduce by 25% the core element of MaPS funding for 2021 to 2022 that will be chargeable to the levy"*

The Government full response can be found below along with the government's initial consultation.

-  GOV Website: [Response](#)
-  GOV Website: [Consultation](#)

NEWS ARTICLES

ECONOMY AND PUBLIC FINANCE

Reform urged for outdated council tax that hits poor hardest

The current council tax system is a "wealth tax" on poorer parts of Britain and is in urgent need of a comprehensive overhaul, according to a coalition of academics and thinktanks from across the political divide.

The crudity of the system means there are eight parliamentary constituencies in which the average household pays no more than 0.2% of their home's value in council tax. However, there are 41 constituencies in the north and Midlands in which the average household's council tax burden is 1% or higher.

-  Please access the news article [here](#)

'Now is not the time for tax rises', say MPs

Now is "not the time for tax rises" as they could undermine the UK's economic recovery from Covid - but they may be needed at a later date, MPs have said.

Ahead of the Budget announcement on Wednesday 3 March, a Treasury Committee report says public finances are on an "unsustainable long-term trajectory".

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#)

'Mean' strings attached to government support for ailing councils

Many capital projects are likely to be put on hold due to conditions on the "exceptional" support offered to struggling councils last week, finance experts have predicted.

The £96m promised by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government to Luton BC, Bexley LBC, Peterborough City Council and Eastbourne DC through capitalisation directions will enable these authorities to borrow government money normally only permitted for capital spending to ease pressure on their revenue budgets.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#)

UK economy suffered record annual slump in 2020

The UK economy shrank by a record 9.9% last year as coronavirus restrictions hit output, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) says.

The contraction in 2020 "was more than twice as much as the previous largest annual fall on record," said ONS deputy national statistician Jonathan Athow.

In December, the economy grew by 1.2%, after shrinking by 2.3% in November, as some restrictions eased.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#)

£15m 'uplift' for Covid-19 elections

In a delivery plan published, constitution minister Chloe Smith confirmed the additional funding, which comes on top of £16m for the police and crime commissioner elections which the government had previously committed to cover.

The government added that any additional election costs should be a "priority" for the £1.55bn Covid-19 funding allocated to councils for the next financial year.

Smith said: "This package of funding will support returning officers to secure venues and staffing and run Covid-19 secure elections.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#)


RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Entry requirements barrier to BAME recruitment, says Lincolnshire

Those wishing to join the police must hold a level 3 qualification (or higher) which is equivalent to two A Levels or possess a policing qualification.

Lincolnshire Police, like many other forces, is pushing to take advantage of the uplift to diversify its workforce.

"The difficulty we have with that when trying to recruit from migrant communities is we know from fact based research that the areas of the highest social deprivation, which are predominately along the east coast, including Boston and Spalding, people do not have the right level of qualification to apply to join police," said DI Lee St Quinton. "It's very difficult, that's a key barrier for us."

 Please access the news article [here](#)

Police told to boost BAME recruitment to be representative of population

More than a quarter of forces do not have a single black officer, with almost 40 per cent having one or fewer.

Police forces have been told to step up minority ethnic recruitment after a report showed it will take 90 years for them to be fully representative of the black and minority ethnic (BAME) population.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

POLICE FINANCES

Police to be given £30m extra funding pot to tackle violence hotspots

Police are set to be given an extra £30m to target violence hotspots to crack down on murders, knife crime and other serious offences.

The government funding pot will be made available to forces in parts of England and Wales which are "most affected by serious violence", according to the Home Office.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

£125 million allocated to councils to support domestic abuse victims and their children

Councils across England have been allocated £125 million funding to provide support for victims of domestic abuse and their children, Minister for Rough Sleeping and Housing Eddie Hughes announced today (12 February 2021).

The funding will help ensure victims and their children who need it are able to access life-saving support such as therapy, advocacy and counselling in safe accommodation, including refuges.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

Met Federation could seek compensation over COVID-19 cases

The Metropolitan Police Federation has revealed it is considering legal action against the government to compensate frontline officers who caught COVID-19 while on duty.

Met Federation Chair Ken Marsh told Police Oracle that court action is possible following the Health Secretary Matt Hancock announcing on live TV that frontline officers will not be getting the vaccine unless they are classed as vulnerable.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

Forces with most violent crime get extra £35.5m for VRU work

The Home Office announced the Violence Reduction Units (VRUs) at 18 forces in England and Wales are getting extra funding.

The forces, including the Met, West Midlands, Bedfordshire and Kent, are also sharing a £2m winter contingency fund package.

It is the third year that the forces have been given extra money for the units, bringing the total invested in them to more than £105m.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

POLICE DEMAND

Rise in child abuse online threatens to overwhelm UK police, officers warn

The vast, and growing, volume of child abuse material being created and shared online is threatening to overwhelm police efforts to tackle it, senior officers have told the Guardian.

And the situation is likely to worsen, National Crime Agency (NCA) child abuse lead Rob Jones warned, if social media sites such as Facebook press ahead with further encryption of messaging services.

Law enforcement against online child abuse in the UK was “the best in the world by some distance”, Jones said. “But we are arresting and dealing with more offenders than ever, the numbers are growing and growing, as are the number of children being safeguarded.”

 Please access the news article [here](#).

More than 213,000 children in England at risk of serious violence

More than 213,000 children in England aged 11 to 17 are at risk of being “dragged into serious violence”, according to research from crime and justice consultancy Crest Advisory.

Almost 40 per cent of those at risk live in ten local authorities, with proportionately more in Middlesbrough, Manchester and northeast Lincolnshire than anywhere else.

The findings are contained in a report, Violence and Vulnerability, published on Friday (February 5), which also highlights an innovative way of mapping connections between young people who may be involved in violence.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

Knife crime surge prompts fears of 'eruption' of violence after lockdown is lifted

Knife crime surged by 25 per cent after the first lockdown, official figures show, prompting warnings there could be an “eruption” of violence once the current Covid- 19 restrictions are lifted.

The number of knife offences increased by 25 per cent to 12,120 offences in July to September 2020 when compared with the previous quarter, despite a year-on-year decrease of three per cent, according to crime data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

 Please access the news article [here](#).

POLICE GENERAL

Safer Streets fund doubled to £45m in wake of Sarah Everard death

The Safer Streets fund, which provides neighbourhood measures such as better lighting and CCTV, is to be doubled to £45 million as part of a series of "immediate steps" to improve security and "give assurance" to women and girls in the wake of Sarah Everard's death.

Following a meeting of the Government's Crime and Justice Taskforce, Downing Street said undercover police could also be sent to clubs, bars and popular nightspots to relay intelligence about predatory or suspicious offenders to uniformed officers, in pilots of so-called Project Vigilant, rolled out across the country.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

Sunak's Budget focuses on growth – but little mention of public services

A new £12bn national infrastructure bank was announced by chancellor Rishi Sunak in a Budget billed as being pro-business but offering little for public services.

Mr Sunak announced a series of measures to help the national economy bounce back, including £1bn for town deals, and the locations of eight freeports. He also announced a further business rates holiday, for which councils will be compensated.

There was also extra support for towns, with £1bn for 45 new town deals, and the National Infrastructure Fund being asked to produce a report on how infrastructure can best support economic prosperity and quality of life in towns, focusing on transport and digital infrastructure in particular.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

Boris Johnson plans advertising campaign to turn middle class off weekend cocaine

Boris Johnson is planning a public information campaign to crack down on middle-class drug use by making snorting cocaine as socially unacceptable as drink-driving, The Times has learnt.

A government PR blitz will use billboards, posters and television and radio adverts in an attempt to change people's attitudes to recreational drugs. They will carry graphic details to highlight how wealthy cocaine users are helping to fuel Britain's growing epidemic of violent crime and gang warfare.

The prime minister wants to imitate previous government public awareness campaigns that successfully changed attitudes, such as the "THINK!" adverts combating drink-driving and promoting road safety.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

"Disgusting" figures show 97% of police accused of racism face no action

Shocking discrepancies in the way police forces deal with allegations of racism by their staff are laid bare after a Mirror investigation.

New data shows that thousands of police officers and staff have been investigated in England and Wales over the past five years, but only a fraction faced disciplinary action.

And huge gaps are evident between individual forces - with one upholding nearly half of complaints while 12 others did not uphold a single one.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

County lines drug gangs exploit middle class children of busy working parents

Middle-class youngsters are being groomed to work for county lines drugs gangs that exploit the "emotional neglect" of parents working long hours, according to a report.

The gangs are targeting "children from affluent backgrounds" as well as girls, young women and university students via social media, experts told researchers at Nottingham University.

Dealers have adapted to lockdown measures by posing as delivery drivers and are enrolling at universities for the sole purpose of supplying drugs to students, the interim Policing County Lines: Impact of Covid-19 report found.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

JUSTICE

Call for vulnerable victims to give video evidence amid courts backlog

Up to 10,000 vulnerable victims facing long delays for trials should be allowed to give evidence by video in an attempt to stop them falling out of the system, according to the victims' commissioner for England and Wales.

Dame Vera Baird warned of a collapse in confidence in the criminal justice system and an exodus of complainants if unprecedented trial delays were not urgently addressed.

She accused the government of not being sufficiently ambitious in its efforts to tackle a backlog of more than 50,000 criminal cases at crown courts in England and Wales.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

Activists win fight to declare throttling a crime

Abusers who throttle their partners will face five years in jail after ministers bowed to campaigners to include it in the government's Domestic Abuse Bill.

It will make non-fatal strangulation and suffocation a criminal offence amid concerns that many perpetrators receive lenient sentences because they are charged only with common assault.

Robert Buckland, the justice secretary, said that the bill would be expanded to make threats to disclose naked and intimate images with the intention to cause distress a criminal offence.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

Packs for domestic abuse victims delivered by Bedfordshire's PCC

Some victims of crime face having to wait until 2023 for justice due to court backlogs, it has emerged.

www.paccts.org.uk
technicalsupportteam@somerset.gov.uk

Lawyers said trials were already being scheduled for 2022 and the start of 2023 amid a backlog of crown court cases that has grown from 33,000 last year to 46,000 since hearings were suspended during the coronavirus lockdown.

It came as Max Hill, head of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), revealed that its load of "live" cases had risen from 100,000 in February to 179,000 since the pandemic began.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

TECHNOLOGY

Cappgemini wins £600 million contract with Met Police

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) has awarded a strategic IT infrastructure contract to services provider Cappgemini, with the aim of improving the user experience of its internal platforms. The contract is said to be worth £600 million and will run for five years, with the option to extend for an additional two years if needed.

The MPS is looking to improve its IT infrastructure services within the Pegasus Programme, a digital policing programme to procure new key IT suppliers for the police.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

Metropolitan Police scan 13,000 faces to catch one suspect

The country's biggest police force made only one arrest after scanning more than 13,000 people with facial recognition technology.

The biometric surveillance was wrong on seven of the eight occasions it picked out a face in the crowd to Metropolitan Police officers.

The Met and other forces have heralded facial recognition as a fantastic crime-fighting tool but privacy campaigners say that the intrusion is too great given the low success rate.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

Devon and Cornwall Police trialled high-tech cameras

Devon and Cornwall Police has become the first force in the world to install high-tech cameras in custody cells that monitor a detainee's movement, pulse and breathing.

The ground-breaking technology called Oxevision has been developed by a company called Oxehealth, a spin-off company formed from a partnership between Oxford University's Institute of Biomedical Engineering and Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

PRISONS

Drug dogs to detect new versions of Spice to stay one step ahead of criminals

Prison drug dogs are to be trained to sniff out new and emerging strands of the psychoactive substance known as Spice as part of the Government's comprehensive plan to tackle violence and disorder behind bars.

In the past year alone more than 100kg of illegal drugs, including Spice, have been detected by drug dogs in England and Wales. But the efforts of some suppliers to outwit detection by changing the chemical make-up of Spice makes it difficult for dogs to find.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

FIRE

Grenfell survivors in multimillion pound lawsuit

Survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire have launched a legal claim worth millions of pounds. The Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and Kensington and Chelsea LBC are among the organisations the lawsuit claimed 'contributed' to the disaster.

A personal injury claim on behalf of Grenfell residents and relatives was lodged at the High Court shortly before Christmas against 22 defendants.

 Please access the news article [here](#).