

# PEEL 2023–25

## Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service

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# Overall summary

## Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good the Metropolitan Police Service is in nine areas of policing. We make graded judgments in eight of these nine as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Police powers and public treatment	Preventing crime	Investigating crime
			Responding to the public	Managing offenders
			Protecting vulnerable people	
			Developing a positive workplace	
			Leadership and force management	

We also inspected how effective a service the Metropolitan Police Service gives to victims of crime. We don't make a graded judgment for this area.

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

We also assess the force's performance in a range of other areas and we report on these separately. We make graded judgments for some of these areas.

### Data in this report

For more information, please [view this report on our website](#) and select the 'About the data' section.

## PEEL 2023–2025

In 2014, we introduced our police efficiency, effectiveness and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach.

We have moved to a more [intelligence](#)-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. Forces are assessed against the characteristics of good performance, set out in the [PEEL Assessment Framework 2023–2025](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to [causes of concern](#) and [areas for improvement](#).

It isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections. This is because we have increased our focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public, and in some cases we have changed the aspects of policing we inspect.

## Terminology in this report

Our reports contain references to, among other things, 'national' definitions, priorities, policies, systems, responsibilities and processes.

In some instances, 'national' means applying to England or Wales, or England and Wales. In others, it means applying to England, Wales and Scotland, or the whole of the United Kingdom.

## HM Inspector's summary

Since [our last inspection in 2022](#), the Metropolitan Police Service has been in our enhanced monitoring process, [Engage](#). This gives it greater access to assistance from us, the [College of Policing](#), the Home Office and other law enforcement agencies to make the required improvements.

During this period, the force has appointed a new commissioner and deputy commissioner, and published a strategic plan called '[A New Met for London](#)', which is aimed at transforming the force.

To achieve this organisational-wide transformation, the force is implementing and reviewing a series of significant change programmes. These are in key areas such as culture and leadership, strategic workforce planning, public protection and neighbourhood policing.

The size and scale of the transformation being carried out is significant. This is well understood by the force, and it was evident in this inspection that many changes have already been made. However, we found that these haven't yet translated into consistent and sustained improvements in certain key areas. A lot more work remains to be done.

Consequently, I have serious concerns about how the force is currently investigating crime and managing offenders and suspects.

I also have concerns about how the force is preventing and reducing crime and providing victims with an effective service.

During our last PEEL inspection, we identified the force's poor performance in relation to call handling for 999 and the [101](#) non-emergency number as an area for improvement. This was one of the reasons for the force entering enhanced monitoring. In this inspection, we found significant and sustained improvements in both 999 and 101 call handling.

Most of these calls are now answered quickly and I commend the force for making these improvements.

The force still has more work to do to make sure it consistently assesses the level of risk for all calls when considering the appropriate response. The force is aware of this and is taking action to address it.

In our victim service assessment, we found significant issues in the standards of investigation, victim care and investigation management. I also have concerns about how work is allocated, as some offences involving [vulnerable people](#) aren't being investigated by suitably trained investigators.

The force needs to improve the quality and supervision of its investigations to achieve better outcomes for more victims. I know that the force is aware of these issues and has plans to improve both.

Since our last inspection, the force hasn't met its goal of reducing the number of outstanding suspects. However, it has improved oversight and access to data in relation to managing offenders and suspects.

We also found that the force is inconsistent in its management of sex offenders. Some teams have a backlog of visits and [risk assessments](#).

In relation to offences involving indecent images of [children](#), I am pleased with the force's use of safer schools officers to investigate offences between children. This avoids criminalising children wherever possible, and we saw examples of this working well.

Undoubtedly, the force faces unique challenges in policing the capital city, which place additional strain on the force and its leadership. These include managing protests, state visits and royal occasions, and both national and international sporting events.

The force has a higher level of recorded incidents per 100,000 population, compared with the England and Wales average. It also receives a higher number of emergency 999 calls per 1,000 population.

The force has an inexperienced workforce, including both investigators and their supervisors. Continued recruitment challenges are preventing the force from having the number of [officers](#) it needs.

At the time of this inspection, the commissioner and his senior team had been in post for approximately 18 months. The 'A New Met for London' plan is rightly ambitious and intends to transform much of how the force operates. This plan, if successful, has the potential to mitigate many of the concerns I raise in this report.

However, some of the key strategic decisions and changes that have already been made, haven't yet translated into consistent improvements that we could see when we visited local stations and departments across the force.

It is evident, both from this inspection and from our support for the force via the Engage process, that this plan is still the way in which the force intends to implement these improvements. It is also clear that the force still has a strong strategic commitment to achieving them.

Given the size and scale of the changes being carried out, the transformation of the force is still very much a work in progress. A lot more still needs to be done to implement and establish these changes across the whole organisation.

In view of these findings, I have been, and will remain, in regular contact with the commissioner and his team.

My report sets out the more detailed findings of this inspection.



**Lee Freeman**

HM Inspector of Constabulary

## **Leadership**

Using the [College of Policing's leadership standards](#) as a framework, in this section we set out the most important findings relating to the force's leadership at all levels.

The Metropolitan Police Service is aware that it needs to improve its governance processes and structures, and the capacity and capability of much of its leadership.

The commissioner and his team of [chief officers](#) use digital media, video messages and live-streamed events to communicate with the workforce and increase their visibility. However, for other senior leaders, we were told that their communication with and visibility to frontline officers is generally poor. We found that there are leaders at all levels who don't understand some elements of their role. And we found that some areas of the force aren't managed effectively.

The force has redesigned its governance processes at the most senior levels. This allows decisions to be scrutinised effectively and shows a clear intent to make improvements. In some areas of the force, however, governance processes and performance management are either ineffective or non-existent. This means that leaders are making decisions that affect the effectiveness of operational policing, and the force's overall performance, without sufficient scrutiny or oversight.

Members of the force's leadership have to contend with several competing challenges. These include large-scale transformation, political and public scrutiny, and high operational demands. But they don't always work collaboratively or scrutinise existing programmes thoroughly enough to tackle these problems. In effect, many of the force's leaders are working in isolation, rather than considering the wider impact of their decisions on the force's performance and resources.

We found that the force's culture makes some officers and [staff](#) reluctant to speak out about poor behaviour. There is more work to do to make sure that officers and staff trust leadership to take the right action to tackle this.

We found that the workforce knows which behaviours are unacceptable, and that they must report them when they see them. But many officers and staff are unclear about the good values and behaviours the force wants them to aspire to, and how they can achieve them.

The force is committed to developing leadership at all levels. Support is available to officers and staff entering leadership for the first time, particularly for people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The force plans for all leaders to receive regular leadership training over the next few years. A new appraisal process, focused on regular conversations between officers and staff and their managers, is improving how officers and staff are developed and their performance is managed.

More detail on the Metropolitan Police Service's leadership is included in the main body of the report.

## Reducing crime assessment

The reducing crime assessment sets out what the Metropolitan Police Service is doing to reduce crime and how effective this action is. This assessment doesn't include police recorded crime figures. This is because they can be affected by variations and changes in recording policy and practice, making it difficult to draw comparisons over time.



The force's current crime prevention activities don't have the direction and co-ordination they need to help reduce crime. The strategic policing plan 'A New Met for London' sets out the force's priorities, one of which is to prevent crime. But we found that not all officers understood how they contribute to those priorities.

The use of [stop and search powers](#) is monitored and analysed at force-level meetings. This helps the force to understand and improve its use of these powers. We found that the overwhelming majority of recorded grounds for stop and search were reasonable, and that the force's use of stop and search is both fair and effective. This helps the force to reduce crime.

The force focuses on responding to immediate demands. We found that the importance of crime prevention and problem-solving (identifying the root cause of crime and vulnerability) isn't yet widely understood outside [neighbourhood policing teams](#). The force encourages problem-solving, but in practice effective crime prevention activity is inconsistent. Officers and staff working outside neighbourhood policing don't see crime prevention or involving local communities as part of their role.

The force needs to improve its understanding of data so it can respond to emerging risk.

Many officers in neighbourhood policing teams are regularly removed from their core duties to help other frontline officers meet demand. The force needs to allow these teams to carry out more of their core duties, including targeted patrols and getting their local communities involved. These can have a positive effect on communities' trust and confidence in the police, especially for [hard-to-reach communities](#).

The force needs to improve its approach to tackling [antisocial behaviour](#), which can have a significant effect on victims, especially if the behaviour is prolonged. We found evidence that the force is missing opportunities to stop antisocial behaviour or reduce its effect. Senior leaders should increase the emphasis on preventing it.

The force has systems in place to monitor and pursue wanted persons and outstanding suspects. Progress in arresting outstanding suspects is scrutinised daily, but the number of people wanted by the force has increased since our last inspection. The force should improve the way it prioritises high-risk and [safeguarding](#) cases. This will help it reduce crime and the harm caused to victims.

More detail on what the Metropolitan Police Service is doing to reduce crime is included in the main body of the report.

# Providing a service to victims of crime

## Victim service assessment

This section describes our assessment of the service the Metropolitan Police Service provides to victims. This is from the point of reporting a crime and throughout the investigation. As part of this assessment, we reviewed 200 case files.

When the police close a case of a reported crime, they assign it an [outcome type](#). This describes the reason for closing it.

As part of the 200 cases reviewed, we looked at 20 that the force closed with the following outcomes:

- The police have cautioned an adult offender.
- A [community resolution](#) (with or without formal [restorative justice](#)) has been applied in accordance with College of Policing guidance.

Although our victim service assessment is ungraded, it influences graded judgments in the other areas we have inspected.

### **The force needs to improve how it identifies repeat and vulnerable victims in emergency and non-emergency calls**

When emergency and non-emergency calls are answered, a structured process is used to assess potential risk and vulnerability. However, this risk assessment is often made without access to all the information the force has about the caller. This means that the victim's circumstances may not be fully taken into account when considering the appropriate response.

Call handlers don't always give victims advice on how to prevent further crime or preserve evidence.

### **In most cases, the force responds promptly to calls for service**

On most occasions, the force does respond to calls for service appropriately. But sometimes it doesn't respond within the set timescales. And it doesn't always inform victims of delays, meaning that their expectations aren't always met. This may cause victims to lose confidence and disengage from the process.

## **The force doesn't always carry out effective investigations**

In the cases we reviewed, the force didn't always complete relevant and proportionate lines of enquiry. And it didn't supervise investigations well or regularly update victims. Victims are more likely to have confidence in a police investigation when they receive regular updates.

A thorough investigation increases the likelihood of perpetrators being identified and arrested, providing a positive outcome for the victim. In most cases, victim personal statements were taken, giving victims the opportunity to describe how that crime has affected their lives.

When victims withdrew support for an investigation, the force didn't always record the reasons for withdrawing and didn't always consider progressing the case without their support. This can be an important method of safeguarding the victim and preventing further offences from being committed. In some cases, the force didn't record whether it considered using orders designed to protect victims, such as [Domestic Violence Protection Notices](#) or [Domestic Violence Protection Orders](#).

The [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) requires forces to carry out a needs assessment at an early stage to determine whether victims need additional support. The force didn't always carry out this assessment or record the request for additional support.

## **The force doesn't always assign the right outcome type to an investigation or keep an auditable record of victims' wishes**

The force doesn't always close crimes with the appropriate outcome type, and the assigning of outcomes isn't supervised effectively. Victims' views were sought when deciding which outcome type to assign in 109 out of the 128 cases we reviewed. However, in some cases an auditable record of the victim's wishes (for example, a signed statement) hadn't been kept. The force did inform victims of which outcome code was assigned to the investigation.

# Police powers and treating the public fairly and respectfully

## Adequate

The Metropolitan Police Service is adequate at using police powers and treating people fairly and respectfully.

### Areas for improvement

#### **The force doesn't always record the ethnicity of the people stopped and searched by its officers**

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 280 stop and search records from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023. In 84 of these, the self-defined ethnicity of the subject of the search hadn't been recorded. Self-defined ethnicity is important for providing context and indicating whether there is disproportionality or bias among the officers. Disproportionality is when a certain group of people is affected by police action in a way that is substantially different from people not of that group, for example people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

There appears to be less disproportionality in the Metropolitan Police Service than on average across England and Wales. In London, Black and Black British people are 2.9 times more likely to be stopped and searched than White people, compared to 4.1 times more likely in England and Wales as a whole. People from other ethnic minority backgrounds are no more likely to be stopped and searched than White people.

However, the missing data about self-defined ethnicity affects our confidence in the force's disproportionality data. The force needs to improve the quality of its data to better understand whether it is using its powers fairly and proportionately.

## **The force needs to make sure its data is accurate and robust enough to understand the reasons for the disproportionate use of force**

In the year ending 31 March 2023, the force recorded 128,111 use of force incidents. This is a 11.1 percent decrease compared to the previous year. We would expect the number of times use of force is recorded to be greater than the number of arrests, so we estimate that the Metropolitan Police Service under-recorded use of force by around 15,000 incidents in the year ending 31 March 2023. This indicates that the force may not be recording all incidents where force is used. It needs to make sure it complies with the requirement from the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) to record all use of force.

The force has an intranet-based system to record use of force, but this doesn't notify supervisors when forms are submitted. It is the responsibility of individual officers to record their use of force. We were told that officers don't always complete use of force forms because they don't have time to do so, and nobody checks if they have or not. We found that supervisors don't check that forms have been submitted or that they are to the correct standard.

People from ethnic minority backgrounds account for 46.3 percent of the local population. We found that they account for 59.0 percent of use of force incidents and 41.9 percent of arrests in the Metropolitan Police Service area. This suggests that officers are using force disproportionately on people from ethnic minority backgrounds. The force needs to better understand the reasons for this.

## **Innovative practice**

### **Community scrutiny panels for stop and search and police encounters provide face-to-face feedback to officers to improve their interactions with the public**

The force consistently involves the community to scrutinise its use of stop and search and use of force. Each local area's [basic command unit](#) has a community monitoring group that looks at the use of stop and search. They also have a people encounter panel that looks at other interactions with the public, including the use of force. The groups are separate from each other and are chaired by a member of the public.

Each community monitoring group reviews a random sample of stop and search forms and the corresponding [body-worn video](#) footage, and provides structured feedback. Sometimes panel members provide this feedback directly to the officers involved. Officers we spoke to who had experienced this process described it as useful and told us that it helped them understand the effect the use of their powers has on the public.

Feedback and data from all the community monitoring groups is collected by the force's central stop and search team to identify trends and any organisational learning. Any themes are then included in the lesson plans for the annual refresher training. The force has introduced a confidence and legitimacy group to oversee these processes.

The people encounter panels have a wider remit and scrutinise all types of interactions between the police and public, including where force has been used by officers. They can request to review any incident involving the public and the police, including the body-worn video footage.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to police powers and treating people fairly and respectfully.

### **Officers understand and use stop and search powers fairly and appropriately**

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 280 stop and search records from 1 October 2022 to 30 September 2023. Based on this sample, we estimate that 94.6 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 2.6 percentage points) of all stop and searches carried out by the force during this period had reasonable grounds.

This is a statistically significant improvement compared to the findings from our previous review of records from 1 October 2020 to 30 September 2021, in which we found that 75.9 percent (with a confidence interval of +/- 5.1 percentage points) of stop and searches carried out by Metropolitan Police Service had reasonable grounds.

Of the records we reviewed for stop and searches on people who self-defined as being from an ethnic minority background, 109 out of 112 had reasonable grounds recorded.

The force has an established internal scrutiny process for stop and search. A central team [dip samples](#) stop and search forms and the associated body-worn video. And each day, a sergeant in each basic command unit (BCU) reviews all the stop and search records from the previous 24 hours. Compliance is monitored through the daily management meetings. Any issues with the forms are highlighted to the officer and any patterns are monitored and added to the training curriculum if appropriate.

### **The use of stop and search is falling but is still significantly higher than other forces**

In the year ending 31 March 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service carried out 19.8 stop and searches per 1,000 population. This is higher than expected compared to the average rate of stop and searches per 1,000 population for England and Wales (average of 8.6 per 1,000 population).

However, the rate of stop and searches carried out by the force is falling. The force has carried out research to try to understand why this is happening. They found that officers weren't confident in using the power.

In our inspection we also found that officers aren't confident in stopping and searching people on their own initiative. We were given several reasons for this:

- officers don't have time;
- they will have to deal with any resulting arrests and investigations; and
- they don't trust their organisation to support them if the subject of the search, or a bystander, makes a complaint.

The force needs to properly understand why the use of stop and search is falling and make sure officers are confident in its use.

### **The force needs to understand why it is finding fewer items linked to the reason for the stop and search than other forces**

In the year ending 31 March 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service had a linked [find rate](#) (how often the item being searched for is found) of 18.6 percent. This is lower than expected compared to the average linked find rate across forces in England and Wales of 24.6 percent. We found no explanation for this. The force needs to understand the reasons so it can improve outcomes and increase the trust of the community.

### **The force provides good stop and search training for new recruits and regular refresher training for all officers**

The force has a good training curriculum for the use of stop and search. There is an effective feedback process where the findings of community scrutiny panels and the dip sampling of records is used to adapt the training for the whole workforce. The force uses community volunteers to influence and test the effectiveness of the training. We spoke to some of the volunteers, and they felt that the force listened to their feedback and changed how the training was provided.

We found that BCUs provide additional support to less experienced officers in using stop and search powers. We saw examples of tutor teams providing training to new recruits using role-playing. Some BCUs used proactive team members who regularly use their powers to mentor those who use them infrequently or who need extra support to build their confidence.

### **The force is working to improve its use of stop and search**

The force is drafting a stop and search charter to set out how its officers should interact with the community while using this power. The force is consulting the community, particularly young people and people from ethnic minority groups, to produce the charter.

The force is also running a pilot in two BCUs called Precision Stop Search. It operates in areas where there is accurate data showing higher levels of violence and use of weapons. The force involves the community before deploying the tactic and works with them to mitigate the effect on the wider community. Officers receive bespoke training about the local area, relevant legislation and communication skills, and take part in role-playing with members of the community. The effect of the activity is assessed via surveys carried out with academic partners. The pilot has recently finished and the force is completing an evaluation of the outcomes.



# Preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability

Requires  
improvement

The Metropolitan Police Service requires improvement at prevention and deterrence.

## Areas for improvement

### **The force's systems, management processes and training need to support consistent, effective problem-solving**

The use of problem-solving is inconsistent across the force. Knowledge of problem-solving methods is low among neighbourhood policing teams. They often don't use a problem-solving model. When they do, they don't always properly record what work they have done. And supervisors aren't assessing the work that has been carried out.

The force recognises that it needs to make sure that structured problem-solving is used effectively and widely, so it can reduce harm and demand. But, at the time of our inspection, it had no policy for how and when to record problem-solving activities. Neighbourhood policing teams didn't have access to examples of good practice from elsewhere in the force to help them deal with emerging problems.

The force has recently made the College of Policing's online problem-solving training available to neighbourhood policing teams – the first training in this area for many years. The force told us that this training has been completed by 85 percent of neighbourhood officers and staff. However, feedback from officers and staff was that the training wasn't sufficient for their needs.

Nonetheless, we did see some examples of effective problem-solving. These were usually specific, large-scale initiatives or cases where a neighbourhood policing team or an individual had good knowledge of problem-solving and used it well. Some teams are working well with partners to solve community issues, for example using [Criminal Behaviour Orders](#) and closure orders to protect vulnerable people from exploitation by criminal gangs.

The force has acquired a new computer system, NEC Connect, which can be used to record problem-solving plans. It can also help officers to search for patterns in antisocial behaviour, crime and intelligence. The opportunities this provides will need to be supported by effective leadership, training, and performance management.

It is too early to assess the effect of the recent training or the Connect system on problem-solving.

### **The force needs to minimise the time that neighbourhood officers are diverted away from their main duties to cover excess demand in response teams**

Neighbourhood policing teams are responsible for problem-solving and getting local communities involved in crime prevention. But neighbourhood officers told us they couldn't spend enough time carrying out visible patrols, working with the public, or doing preventative and problem-solving work. This is because they were often diverted to other non-neighbourhood duties. This is known as abstraction. The force told us that the amount of time neighbourhood officers are abstracted has reduced significantly in the last year. But pre-planned abstraction is still high, at around 30 percent of their working time.

Senior leaders recognise the importance of neighbourhood policing and are actively working to reduce abstractions. Protests in the force area have created a high demand. Traditionally, response officers would be used to police these protests, and neighbourhood officers would be abstracted to backfill the response officers. The force is now using officers from teams throughout the force to police these protests. This means that abstractions of neighbourhood officers to backfill response officers has reduced.

We found that the abstraction of police officers in neighbourhood teams is carried out according to locally agreed criteria. They are used for work such as investigating a range of crimes, waiting with patients during mental health assessments, and responding to less urgent incidents. There is no policy for how these decisions are made, and no consistency across the force.

Abstracting neighbourhood officers from their core role has a negative effect on their work preventing crime and antisocial behaviour, meaning communities may not receive the service they require.

### **The force needs to improve how it involves the community in local decision-making**

The force holds a panel meeting in each ward area four times a year. In these meetings, the force and the community decide the neighbourhood policing activity for the following three months. The force told us that attendance at ward panels is generally very low, and it isn't using other methods to find out the views of the community to influence these decisions. A small number of people are therefore having a disproportionate influence over policing priorities.

There is no force-wide engagement strategy setting out how and when the community can get involved in local policing. As a result, engagement is inconsistent across the force. Neighbourhood superintendents were introduced in each borough about 12 months before our inspection to improve how the force works with the community. Despite this, we found limited evidence of borough-level communication plans. This means that communities, including seldom-heard communities, aren't always understood by local teams, and aren't consistently being involved in local policing activity or decisions affecting the community.

More positively, we found that neighbourhood officers and staff have good knowledge of their communities. But this isn't recorded in a consistent way, and therefore is lost when individuals move to new roles.

We also found some local initiatives to give communities a role in influencing police activity. These include early consultation on targeted policing operations to tackle knife crime and making the streets safer for women and girls. The force needs to make sure similar opportunities are available to all communities.

Some basic command units have dedicated engagement teams which focus on seldom-heard communities. These teams are also used to advise less experienced neighbourhood officers and staff and to carry out their own focused engagement activities.

## Innovative practice

### **The force is trialling the use of a mobile app to encourage young people at risk of offending to engage with the Divert scheme**

The [Divert scheme](#) is for young people caught in possession of small quantities of a controlled substance. It provides education courses and treatment pathways as an alternative to arrest, with the aim of preventing future offending. The force has been using this scheme since 2015.

The mobile app allows agencies that regularly interact with young people to easily direct them to the Divert scheme. Extending this scheme to frontline officers and to other organisations helps young people to access crime prevention opportunities before they enter the criminal justice system.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to prevention and deterrence.

### **The force is developing its neighbourhood policing to make its performance better and more consistent across all its policing areas**

Neighbourhood policing is a strategic priority for the force. It has a transformation programme to improve this, which includes changing its neighbourhood policing operating model. The programme has increased the number of senior officers in neighbourhood teams, and is in the process of creating teams that bring together all neighbourhood activities. This could make it easier to focus on what matters most to the community.

To support the transformation programme, the force will need better training for neighbourhood officers, stronger governance and better performance management. We will continue to assess the force's progress as it implements the programme.

The investment in 32 neighbourhood superintendents provides the force with the opportunity to strengthen external partnerships and to improve the management of performance within neighbourhood teams. However, some of the new superintendents are unclear about their role, and as a result there are inconsistencies between the BCUs.

The understanding of neighbourhood policing among officers from other teams is low. This, coupled with a culture of working in isolation, means that officers not in neighbourhood policing teams don't see community engagement or problem-solving as part of their role. The ambition of the 'A New Met for London' plan is to increase the trust and confidence of local communities in the police. To achieve this, the force needs to increase the value and status of neighbourhood policing to attract and retain officers in these roles.

## **The force doesn't have a crime prevention strategy**

The force told us that many neighbourhood officers have attended crime prevention training and use this to support victims of crime. The force has 'designing out crime' officers who are qualified to provide specialist security advice and guidance to reduce and prevent crime and antisocial behaviour in the built environment.

However, the force has no crime prevention strategy and, at the time of our inspection, no plan to develop one. We did find examples of effective crime prevention in all BCUs, including initiatives with partner agencies. For example, the force has been working with Redbridge Borough Council to reduce violence towards women and girls in the borough and improve their safety. But we found that few officers, even within neighbourhood policing teams, think that crime prevention is a key part of their role.

The effective implementation of a crime prevention strategy will increase officers' understanding of crime prevention, help the force focus on its priorities, and explain how every role in the force plays a part in preventing crime.

## **Antisocial behaviour isn't recorded consistently, and data isn't being used to understand the extent of risk contained within antisocial behaviour reports**

Forces must record crime and antisocial behaviour according to the [standards set by the Home Office](#). If an incident doesn't meet the threshold for being recorded as a crime, the force must still record it as an antisocial behaviour incident. This helps forces to understand the true levels of crime and antisocial behaviour affecting their communities.

In our [PEEL 2021/22 inspection of the force](#), we found that it wasn't accurately recording antisocial behaviour crime. In this inspection we found that antisocial behaviour is still not being recorded consistently.

When officers record antisocial behaviour incidents, they often don't identify and record crime that has been committed during the incident. We were told by neighbourhood supervisors that this is because it is the simplest way for officers to finalise an antisocial behaviour incident log, and they feel that there are no consequences for recording things incorrectly. Consequently, other neighbourhood officers and staff, who review all antisocial behaviour incidents, spend a proportion of their time identifying crimes within incidents to properly record them on the crime recording system. This isn't an appropriate or effective use of their time and reduces the time spent in their communities.

The force doesn't have the analytical capacity to examine data about antisocial behaviour. Neighbourhood officers are therefore responsible for identifying trends and issues in their areas. We found that the use of data by neighbourhood teams depended on the technical skills of individual officers and was therefore inconsistent between teams. This means that the risks associated with antisocial behaviour aren't fully understood by the force.

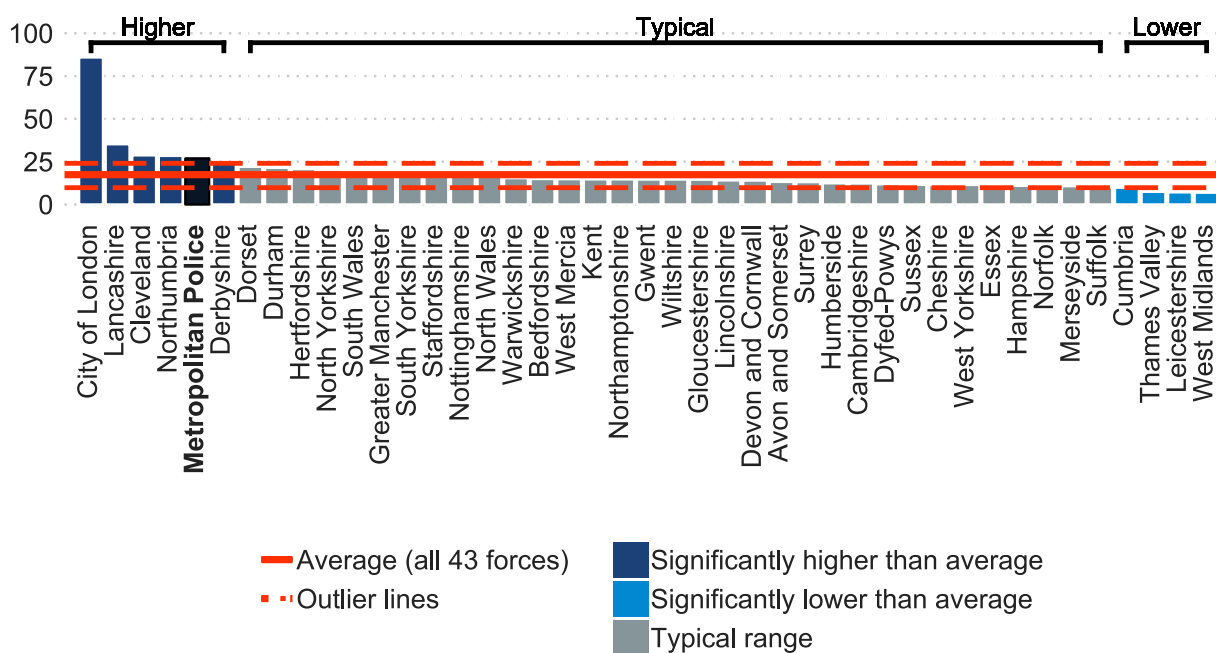
The force participates in local [community safety partnerships](#). It doesn't provide these with data analysis, but it does give them access to the antisocial behaviour crime data. We found that some community safety partnerships analyse the data themselves, which has led to joint prevention activity.

To help officers understand the issues in their areas, the force is recruiting more analysts and developing its use of data visualisation software Microsoft Power BI. It has also moved to a single system for recording antisocial behaviour (NEC Connect) – it previously used two separate systems. This should improve the quality of the data and make it easier to analyse issues relating to antisocial behaviour.

### The force needs to understand why it applies for fewer Antisocial Behaviour Orders than the England and Wales average

In the year ending 31 March 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service recorded 26.9 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population. This is higher than expected compared to the average across forces in England and Wales in the same time period (average of 17.4 recorded antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population).

**Figure 1: Number of recorded antisocial behaviour incidents (all categories) per 1,000 population across all forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2023**

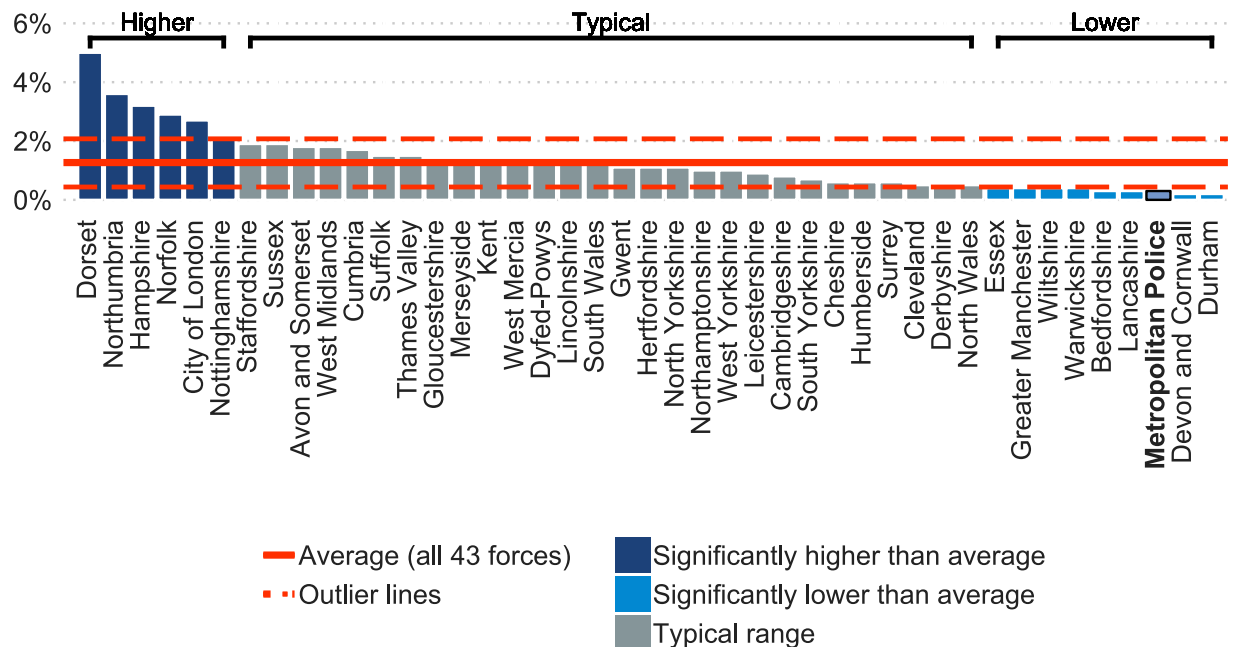


**Source: Data collection and analysis from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services**

In the same period, the force issued 783 Antisocial Behaviour Orders compared with a total of 237,940 antisocial behaviour incidents, giving a ratio of 0.3 percent orders per incident. This is lower than expected compared to the average ratio across forces in England and Wales, which is 1.3 percent.

Note: Antisocial Behaviour Orders include [Criminal Behaviour Orders](#), Community Protection Notices, Civil Injunctions, and Dispersal Powers (under section 34 of the [Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014](#)).

**Figure 2: Ratio of Antisocial Behaviour Orders issued to antisocial behaviour incidents recorded by forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2023**



**Source: Data collection and analysis from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services**

This means that the force is missing opportunities to use orders to reduce instances of antisocial behaviour.

**The force is trialling the use of a dedicated team to improve how it involves the community in activities and meets their needs**

The trust, confidence and engagement team in Lambeth provides advice and support to local neighbourhood officers on building relationships with the community. The force told us that officers are selected for the team because of their communication skills and existing relationships with the local communities. Their work includes identifying people who represent local groups and particular communities, and maintaining relationships with them. The team runs targeted activities to build positive relationships with seldom-heard communities and supports the community to develop activities for young people. Activities they have supported include a boxing club, Brazilian football, and online cooking activities with a local chef.

The team is also deployed to support [critical incidents](#). Their contacts and relationships can help to quell community unrest. Most notably they worked with the community to understand the impact of a police shooting.

The team is a valuable resource, but its members acknowledge that, as neighbourhood teams improve how they engage with their communities, there will be less need for a separate team. The leadership of the team told us that “success for us is that we are no longer needed”.



# Responding to the public

Requires  
improvement

The Metropolitan Police Service requires improvement at responding to the public.

## Area for improvement

### **The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its published attendance times**

Based on the cases we reviewed, the force was generally close to its published attendance times for incidents graded 'immediate' (officers should attend within 15 minutes). But, for incidents graded 'significant' (attendance within 60 minutes), the force often missed its target of 60 percent of incidents attended within the specified time.

In 98 of the 124 incidents of all types that we examined, the response was within the required attendance time. When response is outside the attendance time, this can lead to the force missing opportunities to safeguard victims or collect evidence.

The force should have the right oversight in place to improve how it responds to incidents. It needs to improve the way it prioritises its response to incidents, and how quickly it responds. If the force doesn't understand how good it is at both answering calls and then responding to incidents, it will find it more difficult to improve the service it provides.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force responds to the public.

## **The force has improved how it responds to calls for service**

In our PEEL 2021/22 inspection, we issued the force with a cause of concern. This is still in place and is being overseen via the enhanced monitoring process, Engage. The cause of concern states that:

The force needs to improve how it answers calls for service and how it identifies vulnerability at the first point of contact.

There were five recommendations linked to the cause of concern.

The force should:

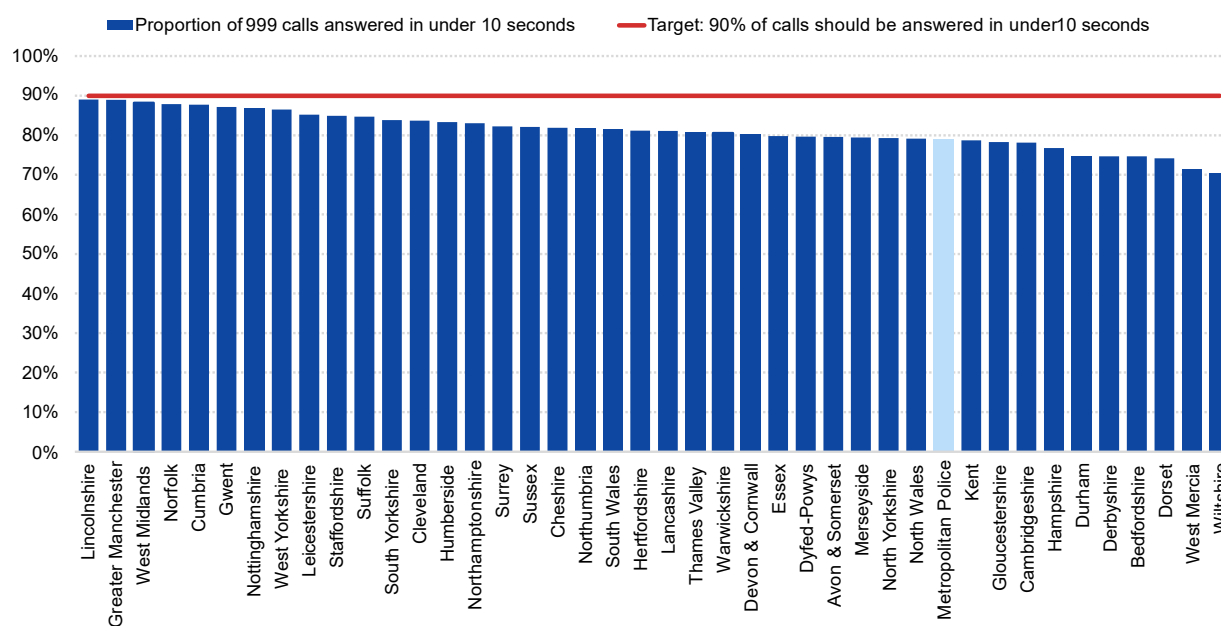
- improve the process for risk-assessing calls to identify vulnerability or risk;
- make sure that repeat callers are routinely identified;
- make sure that call takers give good advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention;
- make sure emergency calls made to the force are answered promptly; and
- make sure it can answer a larger proportion of non-emergency 101 calls so that caller attrition levels are reduced and kept as low as possible.

The force's improvement programme for the Met Contact Centre (MetCC) call handling department has been well managed and we have seen significant progress in this area. The improvement work has been integrated into its day-to-day work, and has a strong and sustainable performance framework and culture.

As part of our Engage activities, our inspectors regularly visit the MetCC, which consists of two separate functions, call handling and dispatch. We have seen significant improvements to the response both to 999 calls and to the 101 (non-urgent) service since the late summer of 2023. As a result, our recommendations from 2020/21 relating to 999 and 101 calls have been closed.

In the year ending 31 March 2024, the force received 265 calls to 999 per 1,000 population. This was higher than expected compared to other forces in England and Wales. In that period, the force answered 78.9 percent of its 999 calls within 10 seconds. This was below the expected standard for forces in England and Wales of 90 percent. However, this data shows that in February 2024 the force answered 94 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds.

**Figure 3: Proportion of 999 calls answered within 10 seconds by forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2024**



**Source:** [999 call answering times](#) from BT

Note: Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred from BT to a force, and the time taken by that force to answer the call.

The force told us that the attrition rate (the proportion of calls where the caller hangs up before the call is answered) for 101 calls has fallen from 57 percent in 2022 to 13.4 percent in February 2024. This is, at least in part, due to the introduction of a triage process. This quickly identifies calls that don't require police attention and redirects them to the appropriate service. This reduces the overall waiting time for calls that do require the service of the police.

The force needs to assure itself that the current levels of attrition can be maintained. And it should explore whether further improvements can be made, and if so, work hard to achieve them.

**The force needs to continue to improve how it identifies vulnerability at the first point of contact**

The force should make sure it routinely identifies callers (and other people connected to them) who are vulnerable. This assessment must be made using all the data the force holds about the individual and the location.

The MetCC dispatch team assigns incidents to specific officers or teams. If the incident doesn't require an officer to attend, but needs to be formally recorded as a crime, it is passed to the telephone and digital investigation unit (TDIU).

We found that call handlers start a risk assessment for all incidents using the [THRIVE+](#) model. This is an improvement since our last inspection. However, the call handlers still don't have access to all the force's systems that have data about callers and locations. This means they can only partially complete the risk assessment and identification of repeat callers, and are overly reliant on the information provided by the caller.

Call handlers are supposed to check a separate IT system for information about previous vulnerability. We reviewed a selection of calls where checks had been marked as complete and found that checks had been completed in only 2 of 26 calls. Within this sample, there were incidents involving repeat victims, [domestic abuse](#) and rape.

However, even when these checks are completed, they can only identify repeat calls from the same phone number or address. Calls by a repeat victim from a different number or location wouldn't be identified.

Under the current arrangements, the first opportunity for officers and staff to access all the force's data, and therefore complete a full THRIVE+ risk assessment, is in the dispatch department or TDIU. However, dispatch officers and staff aren't required to re-assess the risk in incidents transferred to them, and in the TDIU we found delays of up to 24 hours in re-assessing the risk.

The force recognises the need to remove all unnecessary delays in completing a full THRIVE+ assessment using all the information available to the force. TDIU officers and staff already complete the call handlers' initial risk assessments with the extra information available to them, and the force has introduced a similar process within dispatch. It is too early to assess the effectiveness of this change.

### **The force needs to improve how it provides callers with advice about crime prevention and scene preservation**

The force needs to improve the advice call handlers give to victims about crime prevention and crime scene preservation. Of the cases we examined, advice was given about crime prevention in only 28 out of 41 cases, and crime scene preservation in 11 out of 16 cases.

The force has a system that sends victims text messages with crime prevention and scene preservation advice. But call handlers should routinely make sure the caller has received and understood the text and, if necessary, provide advice over the phone. Providing good advice at the earliest opportunity can preserve evidence that could help secure a future prosecution.

## **The force has successfully introduced Right Care Right Person**

[Right Care Right Person](#) is a scheme to make sure people in mental health crisis are directed to the right people to care for them, avoiding the involvement of the police as a law enforcement body. It was first introduced by Humberside Police in collaboration with local healthcare providers.

The Metropolitan Police Service introduced Right Care Right Person at a time of significant change in the call handling department. It trained the call handlers and provided coaching and mentoring. It also worked with its partners, such as the London Ambulance Service, to make sure they had the capacity and capability to meet the needs of callers that were diverted to them. The processes for quality assuring the decisions made and escalating any conflicts worked well.

The force told us that the scheme has freed up 140,000 officer hours in its first four months of operation. It is too early to evaluate the effect on frontline policing or the community, but officers told us that they have more time to investigate crimes and proactively prevent crime.

## **The force needs to understand how each BCU is using its operations room to manage risk**

Each BCU has an operation room, whose principal role is to manage any immediate risk. However, we found that in practice their role varies across the BCUs. Operation rooms often pre-empt or change the decisions made in the MetCC about which officers should attend which incidents. This leads to confusion about who is responsible for the risk and at what point this responsibility transfers between the two departments. The force needs to clarify these functions to avoid risk being missed or poorly managed.

An example of this confusion is the list of incidents that the MetCC has dispatched an officer to. Officers should update the list with any action they have taken, and incidents stay on the list until a crime reference number has been added and that incident can be closed. The force's policy is that the MetCC isn't responsible for the management of the risk within incidents on the list. However, we found that operation rooms don't regularly review these incidents for risk or make sure that officers are providing updates. This process needs to be reviewed.

## **Officers have a good understanding of their responsibilities at crime scenes, but supervision of response teams is generally poor**

We previously found in [our inspection of the force's response to the Stephen Port murders](#) that the force wasn't appropriately supervising incidents involving unexplained deaths (that is, deaths where the cause can't immediately be determined). The force now has a policy requiring a supervisor to go to the scene of all unexplained deaths and complete a death investigation pack. We found that this policy is being complied with.

Response officers' understanding of their role in initial crime scene management and the preservation of evidence is very good. They know their role in managing the [golden hour](#), the initial response to the incident when prompt action is required to obtain and preserve evidence.

However, we found that the quality of supervision for frontline response officers and staff is poor. We were told that teams regularly have fewer than half of their allocated sergeants working with them, and those who are working don't supervise their officers and staff appropriately. The sergeants we spoke to spend most of their time carrying out mandatory, office-based administration, such as reviewing crime reports, case files or stop and search forms. As a result, they have little time to actively patrol with or supervise officers and staff.

# Investigating crime

## Inadequate

The Metropolitan Police Service is inadequate at investigating crime.

### Causes of concern

#### **The force's investigations aren't being allocated to officers and teams with sufficient skills and experience to carry out good quality investigations**

We found examples of complex crimes being allocated to officers with only basic investigative training. For example, a commercial robbery with multiple lines of enquiry was being investigated by an inexperienced officer with little supervision or guidance. We found inexperienced officers trying to manage large workloads beyond their training and knowledge. We even found crimes with obvious vulnerability, such as indecent images of children, extra-familial child abuse and sexual offences, that were being investigated by new recruits.

The force's crime allocation policy was published in April 2024, but there is more work to do to make sure it is widely understood and consistently applied. Individual BCUs have drafted local policies, but these are based on crime types rather than an assessment of risk or victim needs. This leads to inconsistent decision-making across the force, and to arguments about who should investigate what.

We witnessed discussions between supervisors from different teams about who should investigate individual crimes. These were focused on the capacity of the teams, not the capability of the investigator or the needs of the victim. These discussions, and the repeated transfer of crimes between teams, delay investigations and waste supervisors' time, which could be spent supporting their officers and staff.

In our report '[The police response to burglary, robbery and other acquisitive crime](#)', we recommended that all forces should focus on making sure supervisors have the capability and capacity to meaningfully supervise investigations. In our victim service assessment audit we found evidence of effective supervision in 108 of the 154 cases we reviewed, and effective investigations in 150 out of 200 cases reviewed. We found that the quality of investigations for neighbourhood crimes was generally poor, and lines of enquiry weren't always identified or pursued.

We found that the specialist burglary and robbery teams were generally well trained and had the capacity to manage their workloads effectively. However, we were told that workloads aren't manageable in local investigations (previously known as the criminal investigations department) and in teams responsible for investigating volume crimes (crimes that occur so frequently they have a significant effect on the community and place considerable pressure on police resources, such as street robbery and vehicle-related crime). We found inexperienced officers trying to manage more than 25 crimes at the same time.

We found that appropriate investigation plans were produced by investigators or supervisors in 95 out of 122 cases we reviewed. Where there was an investigation plan, it was generally followed, and lines of enquiry were identified and more likely to be pursued.

Supervisors in investigation teams have little or no training in how to manage crime workloads. It is assumed that they will have that knowledge because they were previously investigators. We found that supervisors are regularly managing large numbers of officers and staff who have high workloads. They told us of their frustration at not having enough time to supervise their officers and staff properly.

### **Recommendation**

Within six months, the Metropolitan Police Service should:

- introduce a risk assessment process for allocating crime to the right investigator with the right skills to maximise the investigative opportunities and to manage any safeguarding needs;
- publish and implement a clear policy for allocating crime in order to minimise the time spent deciding who should investigate it; and
- make sure that there is supervisory oversight of investigations and that all investigative opportunities are taken.



## **The force needs to make sure that it complies with the requirements of the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime**

In [our PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#) we said the force needed to improve its compliance with the Victims' Code. This sets out the minimum level of service that victims of crime should receive from the criminal justice system. We specifically said that it should complete needs assessments for victims and take personal statements from them.

In our report '[Meeting the needs of victims in the criminal justice system](#)', we said: "Victim needs assessments are important tools for the police to understand how best to serve victims of crime. Police should complete them for victims of all types of crime". The College of Policing produces guidance for completing these.

In this inspection we found that the force still doesn't consistently help victims to access their rights as laid out in the Victims' Code. Few victims' needs assessments were completed and there was a low level of understanding about how and when to complete them. The force considered a victim's personal statement in 9 out of 10 cases where it was applicable, but victim needs assessments were only recorded in 38 out of 92 cases. This means the force still doesn't always recognise when a victim is entitled to an enhanced service.

In addition to the assessment of vulnerability, and the need for enhanced support in giving evidence, there should be a victim contract, recording how and when an investigator contacts a victim. We found that, even in inspections where there was a victim contract, they weren't always adhered to. These omissions meant that the force didn't give a good enough level of service to victims in 39 of the 191 cases we examined.

The force has introduced victim focus desks so that victims can contact the force and receive an update on their case. The victim will receive a timely update at their request provided the investigator has updated the crime record, but we found that this hadn't always been done. This service wouldn't be required if the Victim's Code was complied with, and officers were held to account for communicating with the victim.

In [our PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#) we said that the force needed to correctly document a victim's decision to withdraw their support for an investigation. The reasons for a victim not supporting an investigation at the outset were recorded in 47 of the 71 relevant cases we reviewed. The reasons for a victim withdrawing their support later in the process were documented in 46 out of 63 relevant cases. We found an auditable record of the victim's wishes, such as a signed statement, in only 15 of the 49 relevant cases we reviewed.

## Recommendation

Within six months, the Metropolitan Police Service should:

- set clear standards for how to manage victims effectively in accordance with the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime](#) (the Victims' Code);
- improve the workforce's understanding of their responsibilities in relation to the management of victims;
- introduce a process to make sure the Victim's Code is complied with; and
- accurately record a victim's decision to either withdraw support for an investigation or support an out of court disposal or [caution](#), and their reasons for doing so.

## Areas for improvement

### The force doesn't consistently achieve good outcomes for victims

The force doesn't always achieve acceptable [outcomes for victims of crime](#). The number of crimes that are solved following investigations is low. The force needs to understand why this happens and work to achieve better outcomes for victims.

In the year ending 30 September 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service recorded 789,544 victim-based crimes. Of these, 4.1 percent were assigned an outcome of 'offences brought to justice'. This was lower than expected compared to the 9.8 percent average for forces in England and Wales. More specifically, 3.1 percent were assigned a 'charged/summonsed' outcome. This was lower than the average across all forces England and Wales of 6.3 percent.

**Figure 4: Percentage of victim-based crime recorded by the Metropolitan Police Service and all forces in England and Wales by selected outcome types in the year ending 30 September 2023**

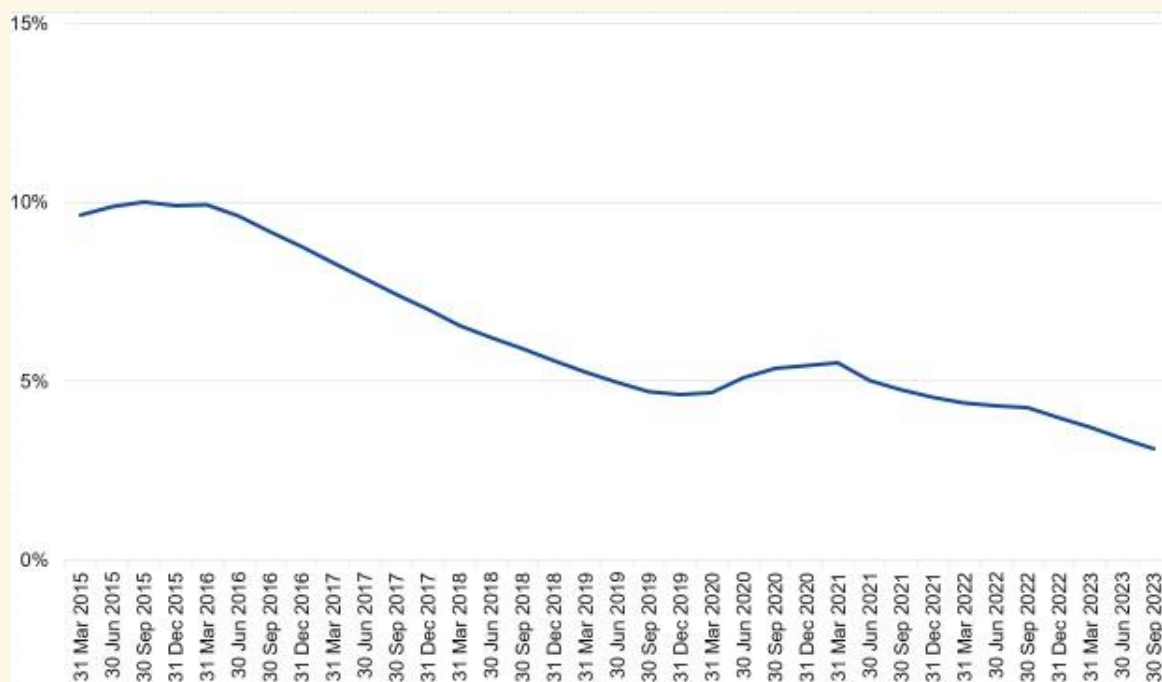
<b>Outcome types</b>	<b>Metropolitan Police Service outcome rate</b>	<b>England and Wales outcome rate</b>
1 – Charged/summonsed	3.1%	5.5
2 & 3 – Caution – youths & adults	0.3%	0.7%
8 – Community resolutions	0.6%	1.6%
9 – Prosecution not in the public interest (Crown Prosecution Service decision)	0.0%	0.0%
10 & 21 – Prosecution not in the public interest (police decision)	0.0%	0.9%
14 – Evidential difficulties (suspect not identified but the victim declines or is unable to support)	6.6%	5.8%
15 – Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim supports police action)	11.2%	13.4%
16 – Evidential difficulties (suspect identified; victim does not support or withdraws support)	13.5%	21.8%
17 – Prosecution time limit expired	0.0%	0.3%
18 – Investigation complete – no suspect identified	59.8%	43.6%
20 – Action undertaken by another body/ agency	0.5%	1.4%
22 – Diversionary, educational or intervention activity	0.0%	0.3%

**Source:** [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Note: This data comes from the April 2024 data release and may have been revised since. British Transport Police and City of London data are excluded from the England and Wales rate. Total police-recorded crime includes all crime except fraud. For a full commentary and explanation of crime and outcome types please see the [Home Office statistics](#).

In the year ending 30 September 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service assigned 3.1 percent of victim-based crimes a ‘charged/summonsed’ outcome. This was a decrease from 9.7 percent in the year ending 31 March 2015.

**Figure 5: Proportion of victim-based crimes assigned a ‘charged/summonsed’ (outcome 1) by the Metropolitan Police Service between the year ending 31 March 2015 and the year ending 30 September 2023**



**Source: Police recorded crime and outcomes data tables from the Home Office**

Note: This data comes from the April 2024 data release and may have been revised since then. Victim-based crimes are defined as all police-recorded crimes where there is a direct victim, such as an individual, an organisation or corporate body.

**The force needs to make sure it assigns outcomes appropriately and complies with its own and national policies**

In this inspection we found that decisions about which outcome to assign to a completed investigation weren’t properly supervised. There was little evidence of the rationale for which outcome code was used. We found that there was appropriate supervision of the way crimes were closed in 132 of 180 relevant cases.

We reviewed a selection of cases that had been closed using community resolutions. These are where the suspect agrees to do certain things, such as repairing damage caused while committing the offence, in agreement with the victim. The force has a policy whereby officers can administer community resolutions immediately, without needing to consult a supervisor. We found they were incorrectly applied by the officer in 6 out of 20 cases. Incorrect recording of crime and resolutions can reduce the public's confidence in policing.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force investigates crime.

### **The force needs to improve the quality of the case files it submits to the Crown Prosecution Service**

A high number of case files that the force submits to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) fail to meet the CPS's standards. Case files are prepared by the officer that investigated the crime and are checked by a supervisor before they are submitted. There are a variety of reasons for the failures, but the most common are insufficient evidence and errors with [disclosure](#). Disclosure refers to providing a person charged with an offence with copies of material that might undermine the prosecution case or assist their defence.

We found that investigators and supervisors had a poor understanding of what is required for a successful case file. The force has introduced a case management team to review case files, improve standards, and reduce the number that don't meet the CPS's standards. This team was in place at the time of our inspection, but the force still has the lowest file quality standards of all forces in England and Wales (only 25 percent met the CPS's standard in November 2023, compared with 57 percent for all forces).

The CPS has an agreed escalation process with the force if officers fail to meet the timescales for providing additional information to assist with the prosecution. We found there was little consequence for officers failing to meet the required standards or reply to the CPS in a timely way. Nor were there consequences for supervisors failing to quality assure their officers' work. In some BCUs there are now teams of people enforcing the escalation process. But none of these measures are tackling the root causes of the problem, namely poor understanding, poor standards, and poor supervision.

## **The force considers using evidence-led prosecutions for cases involving domestic abuse and for complex and serious investigations**

We found that officers investigating domestic abuse and serious crime considered continuing with prosecutions even if the victim withdrew their support ('evidence-led prosecutions'). They showed that they understood the need to balance the requirements of public safety (prosecuting a dangerous offender) with the needs and wishes of the victim. We were told of an example where a victim of knife crime was unwilling to support a prosecution having been stabbed 57 times by a named suspect. The force considered the risk to the wider public and pursued the case to a successful prosecution.

However, frontline teams and those investigating less complex crime had little knowledge about evidence-led prosecutions and when to use them.

# Protecting vulnerable people

## Requires improvement

The Metropolitan Police Service requires improvement at protecting vulnerable people.

### Areas for improvement

#### **The force should align its central and local governance arrangements to protect vulnerable people and create service improvements**

The force has a programme of transformation called Strengthening Public Protection. This is its governance framework for overseeing and improving its response to the 13 strands of vulnerability outlined in the [‘National Vulnerability Action Plan’](#). The force holds monthly meetings which bring together the basic command unit (BCU) vulnerability leads to examine and support the force’s performance in this area.

The first part of the programme aims to add 565 new public protection posts. At the time of our inspection, the force told us it had recruited 482 officers and staff into public protection. It had 200 vacancies at the start of the programme, so this resulted in an overall increase of 282 people. It has also increased the level of supervision of public protection work. Dedicated senior officers lead the most critical vulnerability strands, and more supervisors have been allocated to the public protection teams.

The force is good at analysing data to help it understand all 13 strands. However, this isn’t used to influence resourcing decisions, for example by matching people to demand. We found that some areas had enough officers and staff with the right skills to manage vulnerability, while others were struggling. This affects how well the force can protect vulnerable people.

In [our PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#) we found that there was a lack of cohesion between the people responsible for the governance of public protection and those responsible for the officers and staff implementing the transformation plan. The force has reorganised its structure so that both groups are under a single command. However, despite this positive step, there is still tension and a lack of cohesion between the strategic aspirations of the force and the performance priorities of the BCUs. The 'A New Met for London' plan clearly prioritises vulnerability and neighbourhood issues, while BCUs often see crimes such as robbery as a higher priority. Even at a senior level, we found that vulnerability is seen as the responsibility of those working in public protection teams, rather than everybody in the force.

### **The force needs to improve how it communicates with vulnerable people to improve the service it provides to the public**

The force only communicates with victims in limited ways, which restricts how well it can show that it has a victim-informed approach to improving its service. In our review we found that the voice of vulnerable victims isn't routinely sought. This was an area for improvement from [our PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#). We found that lessons learned from independent reviews, such as those of domestic homicide and child safeguarding, weren't understood by frontline officers and staff.

There are some areas of good work in the force. One example is the partnership forums for domestic abuse, where independent sexual violence advisors review crimes with the force. However, we found that these forums review only very limited numbers of cases – around 12 offences a year. There isn't a consistent framework across the force to allow vulnerable victims to help shape its service.

### **The force needs to improve its use of preventative orders and notification schemes to protect vulnerable victims**

The use of preventative orders is inconsistent. We found that those investigating domestic abuse routinely consider using orders and understand how and when to apply for them. But outside these teams, knowledge of preventative orders is low. The policing of orders isn't monitored, except for [stalking](#) orders which are well managed.



The force also makes low numbers of applications for preventative schemes such as the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) (also known as Clare's Law) and the [child sexual offences disclosure scheme](#). For example, in the year ending 30 September 2023, the Metropolitan Police Service recorded 854 'right to know' applications which equated to 9.6 applications per 100,000 population. This was at the low end of the range for forces in England and Wales, whose average was 40.1 applications per 100,000 population.

In the same period, the Metropolitan Police Service made 295 'right to know' disclosures, which equated to 3.3 disclosures per 100,000 population. This was also at the low end of the range for forces in England and Wales, whose average was 17.5 disclosures per 100,000 population.

The force needs to do more to promote these schemes.

### **The force needs to make sure all personnel have suitable training, skills and experience to carry out safeguarding roles and functions**

In cases involving children and vulnerable adults, the force and its safeguarding partners hold a strategy meeting to discuss which agency is best placed to lead the investigation and to decide how the other agencies will help with that investigation.

Officers within the specialist child abuse investigation teams have training and regularly arrange, attend, and chair strategy meetings. These officers, however, only investigate familial child abuse (abuse by people close to the child or in a position of trust of the child, such as teachers, and church or community leaders).

Offences against children perpetrated by someone not classed as familial are investigated by a variety of teams. Investigators from these other teams haven't been specifically trained in investigating offences involving children. Police officers investigating non-familial abuse who attended the strategy meetings told us that they had no training for this role. We also found investigators and supervisors who had been posted into safeguarding roles without being given specific training. In both cases, safeguarding and investigative opportunities related to child protection could be missed due to officers not knowing the requirements of their role.

### **The force should make sure that officers and staff understand the purpose of risk assessments and that referrals to partners include all relevant information**

Officers and staff who attend incidents involving vulnerable people generally complete the relevant forms used to notify other safeguarding agencies. For example, officers attending domestic abuse related incidents are required to complete a [domestic abuse risk assessment](#). However, they don't always understand what the form is for or how it will be used. Consequently, we found that these risk assessments were generally of poor quality and provided insufficient information. Detailed questions were often answered with a single word and didn't always include the salient points of the incident or the risk.

This means that risk isn't being properly assessed, and vulnerable people aren't being appropriately safeguarded.

## **Innovative practice**

### **The force has taken effective steps to address police-perpetrated domestic abuse and support victims**

Operation Onyx, the force's response to police-perpetrated domestic abuse, has revisited all reports since 2011 and made sure all lines of enquiry and opportunities to investigate misconduct have been taken.

The force is following up all investigations with a vetting review and removing anyone from the organisation who fails the vetting process.

### **The force is performing well in relation to stalking and harassment investigations and the use of relevant orders to protect victims**

The force has a dedicated team that reviews all cases of [harassment](#) and stalking, called the stalking threat assessment centre. It works alongside partner agencies and charities, including the Suzy Lamplugh Trust, to support investigators and victims of stalking. It also provides training and advice to officers.

The centre also advises officers on the use and monitoring of prevention orders to manage suspects and to keep victims safe.

In the year ending 30 September 2023, the force had 106 full [Stalking Protection Orders](#) granted at court, equating to 8.7 orders per 1,000 stalking offences. This compares to the 70 full Stalking Protection Orders that the force had granted at court in the previous year, which equated to 5.9 orders per 1,000 stalking offences.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force protects vulnerable people.

### **Public protection officers and staff work well with others to keep vulnerable people safe**

The force has provided specialist training to all public protection officers and staff investigating familial child abuse and serious sexual offences. Officers and staff in public protection roles are clear about their responsibility to give safeguarding support to vulnerable people, and generally do it well.

The force has a co-ordinated approach to managing the victims and perpetrators of the most serious crimes, including domestic abuse. It makes effective use of [multi-agency public protection arrangements](#). It also participates in [multi-agency safeguarding hubs \(MASH\)](#). These are broadly effective at managing threat, harm and risk, and they include good representation from partners. They have daily meetings with partner agencies to manage any immediate risk to vulnerable people.

The MASH facilitates information-sharing among participating agencies, and is used to decide which agency or agencies will investigate particular cases of child or adult abuse. The force also operates a separate system via its child referral desk for sharing information with partner agencies and for jointly investigating allegations involving children. These parallel arrangements work well to safeguard children, although the force recognises the need for similar arrangements for vulnerable adults. These arrangements are under development.

Ultimately, the force intends to combine these functions into a single MASH, co located with partners where possible. There is no timescale for this change.

The Metropolitan Police Service also participates in a [multi-agency risk assessment conference \(MARAC\)](#), where it shares information with partner agencies about people at high risk of domestic abuse. In the year ending 30 September 2023, the force discussed 15,688 cases at the MARAC. This is a similar level to the year ending 30 September 2022, when the force discussed 16,571 cases at the MARAC. We found that the MARAC is effective and there are no delays in discussing cases.

The force has a central public protection team, Operation Aegis, which reviews BCUs' public protection arrangements and provides feedback to local managers. We saw examples of these reviews leading to improvements in how BCUs identify and manage vulnerability.

## **The force doesn't have a vulnerability strategy and doesn't prioritise vulnerability across all strands of its work**

Within the force, safeguarding vulnerable people isn't seen as everybody's responsibility. Rather, it is seen as solely the responsibility of officers and staff in specialist public protection roles. We were told by officers outside the public protection departments, including a superintendent, that safeguarding isn't part of their role.

Forces that are better at protecting vulnerable people have a workforce that understands its role in safeguarding. These forces, unlike the Metropolitan Police Service, also tend to have a vulnerability strategy explaining the importance of safeguarding, describing everyone's role within it, and detailing the governance and performance frameworks that track its implementation.

We found a low level of understanding of potential risks to children among officers and staff. We heard [victim-blaming](#) language being used that clearly showed they weren't considering vulnerability due to age or other circumstances when dealing with incidents and investigations. We also highlighted these findings in [our 2024 report on the criminal and sexual exploitation of children](#).

The central public protection team has worked hard to increase the workforce's understanding of vulnerability. It has provided awareness training to 12,000 frontline officers over the last three years. This training has been well received. But, given the high turnover of frontline officers and staff, we found few people who could remember the training.

We were told by supervisors that the general level of awareness of the responsibility to safeguard vulnerable people was low. We are aware that the force has commissioned another series of training sessions (DA [Domestic Abuse] Matters training) to increase frontline officers' awareness of domestic abuse. This will eventually form part of the initial training for all officers joining the force.

# Managing offenders and suspects

## Inadequate

The Metropolitan Police Service is inadequate at managing offenders and suspects.

### Causes of concern

#### **The force isn't safely managing risks posed by registered sex offenders in the community**

The force's governance structure for the management of registered sex offenders includes a central team led by a superintendent who is responsible for the force's policy and the production of performance data. Each of the 12 basic command units (BCUs) has its own Jigsaw team, managed by a detective inspector, which carries out the day-to-day management of registered sex offenders.

However, in our inspection we identified a lack of training in both the process of managing suspects and offenders, and in use of the [Violent and Sex Offender Register \(ViSOR\)](#). This is the national database system for information about sexual offenders and other dangerous people, including information about visits and risk assessments. This affects the ability of detective inspectors to meaningfully oversee the work of their team. Some inspectors are also responsible for several other portfolios, which limits the amount of time they can dedicate to proper oversight of Jigsaw.

While staffing levels in Jigsaw teams are good, in our inspection we identified that the structure of the teams leads to inconsistent practice across BCUs, inflexibility in using resources to manage demand, and a lack of oversight of performance.

The performance data produced by the force doesn't appear to be scrutinised in any meaningful way within BCUs. And it doesn't include all the information needed for a full understanding of the risk held within each team. For example, it focuses on the number of outstanding visits and overdue [active risk management system \(ARMS\)](#) assessments and risk management plans (RMPs). But it doesn't consider how long a piece of work has been overdue, or the level of risk within it. This affects the ability of each BCU and the force to properly prioritise its overdue work.

At the time of our inspection, the force told us that 10 percent of ARMS assessments, 13 percent of RMPs and 18 percent of visits were overdue. This means that it doesn't have an accurate understanding of the risk posed by those offenders and may not have the right activity in place to mitigate the risk.

In our audit of information on ViSOR we highlighted one case where a high-risk registered sex offender hadn't been successfully visited since 2017. As such, this individual and the risk they pose to the community wasn't being managed. ViSOR showed that eight attempts had been made over a six-year period to contact the individual, but there had been no proactive consideration of arresting the individual or issuing a warrant.

In our inspection we found evidence that too many visits to registered sex offenders are announced in advance. The force isn't meeting the standards laid out for visits in the College of Policing's [authorised professional practice \(APP\)](#), or its own policy. The APP states that visits to registered sex offenders should be unannounced so they provide a true understanding of the risk the registered sex offender poses. If visits are announced, there is greater opportunity for the registered sex offender to conceal prohibited devices such as phones and laptops or items that might indicate that they are in breach of licence or the conditions of a [sexual harm prevention order](#).

While it may sometimes be necessary to meet registered sex offenders away from their home, this prevents the offender manager from seeing the living environment of the registered sex offender and accurately assessing the risk of reoffending.

At the time of our inspection, the force wasn't recording how many announced visits it makes. As such, it can't assure itself that either the number of or the rationale for using announced visits is appropriate.

The force uses an automated intelligence review process which includes the PND. But how much and how often this is used across BCUs varies. For example, one BCU completed 50 PND checks in one month, while another completed 1,144 checks. In our ViSOR audit of cases at all risk levels we found that PND checks hadn't been carried out in 11 of the 20 (55 percent) cases we reviewed.

At the time of our inspection, the force was reviewing all low-risk cases to see if any are suitable for reactive management, as there may be registered sex offenders who are being managed at a higher level than their risk requires. The force needs to complete this review to help it to better manage risk.

Officers and staff reported being regularly diverted away from their core role to carry out other duties. This limits their ability to plan and complete their work. The force doesn't have a process in place to monitor these diversions.

### **Recommendations**

Within six months the Metropolitan Police Service should:

- improve its ability to safely manage the risk posed by registered sex offenders.

The Metropolitan Police Service should immediately:

- review its operating model for the Jigsaw teams, who are responsible for the day-to-day management of registered sex offenders, to make sure that it has clear oversight of their performance and that teams across the force operate consistently;
- make sure that the [Police National Database \(PND\)](#) is used consistently;
- review its use of [reactive management](#);
- protect officers and staff in Jigsaw teams, as far as is possible, from being diverted onto other work; and
- record and monitor the number of announced visits to registered sex offenders to make sure they are only used when appropriate and don't become commonplace.

### **The force doesn't manage the risk posed by online child abuse offenders effectively**

The force has a lead responsible officer for OCSAE, who oversees a central OCSAE team and has oversight of OCSAE across the force. However, decisions regarding much of the work related to indecent images of children are made by the 12 basic command unit (BCU) commanders. As mentioned in the ['Investigating crime'](#) section of this report, the force's policy for allocating investigations is a cause of concern.

OCSAE work is investigated by three teams. The central OCSAE team oversees all referrals made by the National Crime Agency that are assessed as very high and high risk. The OCSAE teams in each of the 12 BCUs oversee medium and low risk cases referred by the National Crime Agency. And most other cases that come into force by other means (such as a call from the public) are overseen by BCU officers who don't have OCSAE training, regardless of the level of risk. These officers might be local investigations, safer schools, or uniform officers. OCSAE officers do provide advice to less experienced officers and, in cases with exceptional risk, can take the lead for other investigations not referred by the National Crime Agency.

The lead responsible officer reviews the performance of central and local OCSAE cases, but cases allocated outside OCSAE (48 percent of all cases) don't have this level of scrutiny.

The central team produces performance reports which are available via dashboards, but we found that the data in these doesn't reflect the actual demand faced by the force. For example, data relating to [grooming](#) and distribution of images is not included. This indicates a lack of consistency in oversight of performance across all [indecent imagery of children \(IloC\)](#) offence types. Therefore, at the time of our inspection, we were unable to establish the full extent of IloC offences being dealt with by the force.

The performance report provided to our inspectors highlighted that the force has a 'no further action' rate of 60 percent for IloC investigations. The force is unable to explain this, other than to speculate that it is due to a high volume of cases involving young people sharing indecent images of themselves with other young people.

While the force can commission work to investigate this, it isn't routinely monitored and there are limitations to the analysis that it can do. Therefore, the force isn't able to understand whether the proportion of cases closed with no further action is appropriate.

In our inspection we identified an inconsistent approach to the use of warrants, arrest, and voluntary attendance across BCUs. There are currently no processes for recording and monitoring the use of these powers, either at BCU or force level. As such, the force can't assure itself that its use of these powers is appropriate and in the best interests of child safeguarding.



The force has a high-tech crime unit, whose officers and staff attend warrants if needed. We found that investigators have good access to this. However, officers and staff outside the OCSAE team don't have access to a digital triage capability. This is needed to assess the level of offending that has taken place, the correct devices to submit to the digital forensic unit, and the risk of further offending posed by the suspect. This lack of capacity means that officers must guess which devices could have indecent images on them. They are also only allowed to submit two devices to the unit at one time. This increases the likelihood that investigative opportunities are being missed.

At the time of our inspection, the force planned to allocate a digital forensic specialist to each BCU. But we have had no further update from the force on this matter.

The force has a small team that is responsible for identifying victims in indecent images. We found that officers within BCUs were unaware of this team, which may suggest that the team focuses on the central OCSAE team's work only. At the time of inspection, the victim identification team consisted of four constables and a supervisor. This may not be enough, given the size of the Metropolitan Police Service compared to other forces.

We found an inconsistent approach to [image grading](#) – some teams grade all images, while others grade only as many as they need to meet the Crown Prosecution Services' charging threshold. The force has implemented a new View and Grade capability, which allows local OCSAE teams to grade images from their offices. But officers outside OCSAE still need to travel to a central location, which is time consuming.

Positively, the force's grading policy states that all grading must be done by trained officers and staff. However, in practice, all officers and staff seizing devices are expected to review images to identify IloC cases before sending them for grading. This is a welfare and safety concern for officers and staff.

## **Recommendations**

The Metropolitan Police Service should immediately:

- review its operating model for online child sexual abuse and exploitation (OCSAE) to make sure it has clear oversight of performance and that work is carried out consistently;
- review its use of [voluntary attendance](#);
- provide consistent access to digital triage capability for specialist OCSAE teams and other investigators;
- provide consistent access to victim identification officers; and
- make sure there is a consistent approach to [image grading](#).

## Area for improvement

### **The force needs to reduce the number of outstanding suspects and make sure officers and staff are aware of the priority list of outstanding higher-risk suspects**

The number of outstanding suspects was an area for improvement for the force in our [PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#) and in [our PEEL 2018/19 inspection](#). The force told us that the number decreased by 25 percent between 2019 and 2022, but it has subsequently increased again.

The force told us that, as of 28 February 2024, there were 15,049 wanted people on the [Police National Computer](#) and another 13,208 people named as suspects on their own crime system. Reducing these numbers, while prioritising the offenders likely to cause the highest harm, is a priority for the force.

Those who commit violent offences against women and girls are risk-assessed. The 100 of these assessed as the most dangerous to women and girls are allocated to basic command units for arrest. This is known as the V100 list.

While this is a positive development, we found that the knowledge and understanding of the V100 list among frontline teams was generally low. This means that activity to arrest these higher-risk suspects may not be as effective as it could be.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force manages offenders and suspects.

### **The force has processes in place to monitor the management of suspects**

The force produces data relating to outstanding suspects, and those [released under investigation \(RUI\)](#) or on [pre-charge bail](#). This is monitored through the BCUs' daily management meetings. Pre-charge bail is used to manage most suspects after arrest, with conditions to prevent reoffending and protect victims when appropriate. The proportion of suspects RUI (and therefore without conditions) is reducing. In the year to 30 September 2023, per 1,000 arrests, the Metropolitan Police Service issued 350.1 pre-charge bail and only 36.7 RUI.

Outstanding suspects are prioritised according to the type of offence (including through use of the V100 list). Enquiries to trace suspects are managed by the BCUs and activity is monitored daily.

### **Workloads in Jigsaw teams are maintained at a manageable level**

At the time of our inspection, the ratio of offender managers to registered sex offenders in Jigsaw teams was between 1:38 and 1:50, which is positive. The force complies with the APP's principle that visits should be carried out by at least two officers. Despite this, as mentioned in the cause of concern, in our inspection we identified that the structure of Jigsaw teams leads to inconsistent practice across BCUs, inflexibility in how resources are used to manage demand, and a lack of oversight of overall performance.

### **Specialist teams receive appropriate training and welfare support for their roles**

We found that officers within the Jigsaw and OCSAE teams had received relevant training. The bespoke three-week training package for Jigsaw teams exceeds national requirements and is viewed positively by officers and staff.

Detective sergeants and inspectors demonstrated good knowledge of their areas of work. But we didn't find this was the case for officers of a higher rank with specific responsibilities for this area.

Safer schools officers, who investigate cases where indecent images are shared between children, are also appropriately trained.

The officers in OCSAE teams are provided with regular psychological screening and enhanced welfare support.

# Building, supporting and protecting the workforce

## Requires improvement

The Metropolitan Police Service requires improvement at building, supporting and protecting the workforce.

### Areas for improvement

#### **The force needs to develop a consistent welfare service for the whole workforce**

The force's [occupational health service](#) has improved significantly since [our PEEL 2021/22 inspection](#). There are lower waiting times for all services. Using this service, the workforce can access autism and dyslexia assessments much more quickly than through the NHS. The contract for the outsourced occupational health provider is managed well by the force, leading to real improvements in the services available for officers and staff.

However, the less formal well-being support has developed in a more ad hoc way. There are more than 50 separate schemes across the force, involving staff associations, charities, and members of the workforce with an expertise or interest in the issue they are supporting. The offering is broad but inconsistent, and doesn't cover the whole workforce. The force is aware of this issue and is looking to identify all the available schemes and standardise those that offer the best, most useful service to officers and staff.

### **The force needs to better understand the challenges faced by new recruits to encourage them to remain in its workforce**

We found that new recruits have a mixed experience during their first few years of service. Some receive excellent support from their line managers to help balance their formal learning with their workloads, while others described being left to manage on their own. The force has taken steps to improve the way that initial training is supported, using uniform sergeants in the university setting to support individual classes. The feedback from the most recent cohort of graduates about the training environment has improved compared with previous feedback.

We found many examples of new recruits not feeling welcomed onto teams as part of their first posting. This wasn't always being appropriately dealt with by supervisors. The force needs to understand why this is happening and work to improve it.

The force carries out regular surveys with new recruits and collects a range of workforce data. Through the force's Recruit Training Optimisation Programme, it has used feedback from recruits to improve its initial training. But it doesn't use this data to improve the overall experience of new recruits after they have been posted to a basic command unit. The force told us that the data they collect as to why recruits leave is too broad and can't effect real change. Senior leaders in basic command units aren't aware of the results of the surveys or the reasons why people leave the force.

### **The force needs to make sure that members of its workforce from under-represented groups are aware of, and take up, the opportunities to develop and progress**

The force has sought to understand the barriers that prevent officers and staff from developing and progressing, and to use these to inform a positive action strategy. But it needs to be clearer how it will achieve these objectives, as it has no accompanying action plan.

There are some initiatives to support officers and staff from under-represented groups to develop, but we found that not all members of the workforce knew about them. For example, the Inspiring Leadership Programme is a series of workshops for Black constables, which aims to identify and overcome barriers to career progression and build confidence for individuals to move forward along their career pathway.

Some supervisors have received training on how to support officers and staff from under-represented groups to progress their careers, but awareness of this training is limited. Some members of the workforce from under-represented groups told us they don't always feel supported to achieve their full potential.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how well the force builds, supports and protects the workforce.

### **The workforce understands what behaviour is unacceptable, but the positive values, behaviours and principles of the force are less well understood**

Transforming the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service forms a key pillar of the 'A New Met for London' plan. The workforce is very aware of what behaviours are unacceptable, and is confident to challenge and report these types of behaviours. However, officers and staff have less confidence that their leaders will deal with this effectively and proportionally. They are also aware of, and support, the commissioner's ambition to rid the force of people who shouldn't be serving. However, we found that officers and staff didn't know what the new values, behaviours and principles that the force is intending to make sure are widely understood actually are.

We will continue to monitor this important area in future inspections.

### **The force gives extra support to officers and staff in high-risk roles, and those experiencing potentially traumatic incidents**

The force has identified departments and roles that pose a higher risk to the well-being of officers and staff. These are regularly reviewed. Most officers and staff we spoke to told us they had been trained and equipped for their role before starting it, and that they felt confident in starting.

Members of the workforce in high-risk roles told us they felt well supported. This support includes regular one-to-one meetings with line managers, stress and trauma risk assessments, and regular mandatory psychological screening.

The force has a well-established process for post-incident support, including debriefs after traumatic incidents. There is a well-regarded and developing peer-to-peer trauma support process – officers volunteer for the role and receive training to help support colleagues following trauma.

We found there is good understanding of the services available for obvious, one-off traumatic events, such as sudden deaths or road collisions. But services for cumulative trauma caused by repeated exposure to traumatic work are less well understood, and therefore take-up is low.

The force supports members of its workforce who have been assaulted. It has a clear governance structure for this. It records incidents, and supports and monitors the well-being of officers who have been assaulted. Those with visible physical injuries receive a better response from senior leaders than those with psychological trauma.

### **The force needs to improve its understanding of why officers leave**

The force told us it that 6.6 percent of its officers left during 2023/24, which is below the for England and Wales average of 7.1 percent. The force has some understanding of why officers leave, but it needs to improve this so it can take effective action to improve retention.

Although the force has an exit interview process, it doesn't use it effectively. We were told that senior leaders don't receive feedback as to why their officers have left. The force is revising its exit processes to make the data obtained more useful in identifying why people leave.

The force has recently published a new retention strategy and action plan, but it needs to improve the way it monitors the progress of the plan. By better understanding which factors influence retention, the force will be in a stronger position to attract and retain talented people across the organisation.

The force has introduced a process to intervene to help people stay in the organisation where their reasons for wanting to leave can be overcome. At the time of our inspection, this had very recently been rolled out across the whole force and hadn't yet been evaluated. We will continue to monitor this area.

### **The force is struggling to recruit enough officers and has high numbers of police officers in back-office roles**

In July 2019, the government announced plans to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers in England and Wales by the end of March 2023. The Home Office established the Police Uplift Programme to help forces to achieve this. The Metropolitan Police Service failed to meet its Operation Uplift target despite its best efforts. The force was allocated 4,557 officers via Operation Uplift, but it only managed to recruit 3,468 – a shortfall of 1,089.

During this inspection we found that the force continues to struggle to recruit enough officers. The force finished 2023/24 with 34,017 officers, a reduction of 423 from the start of that period. It expects this trend to continue through 2024/25 and predicts a further fall to 32,750 officers by the end of the financial year. The force's problems with recruitment creates risks in operational delivery and reduces the quality of service to the public.

The force's police officer recruitment challenges are also having an effect on its police staff functions. Some officers have to work in back-office roles that should be filled by police staff, and the force is unable to release these officers to frontline duties as many of the roles are critical to the force's work.

### **The force is improving its process for developing staff and officers**

We previously told the force that it needed an effective appraisal and development process for staff and officers. It has made some progress in this area.

In April 2023, a new personal development review (PDR) process was introduced. This appears to be better understood and valued by the workforce than the previous process. The force told us that, as of the end of March 2024, 68 percent of the workforce had objectives set in their PDR and 40 percent had a mid-year review. The force intends to use this process to inform its officer and staff development activities, and help identify officers and staff who may be suitable for promotion.

The performance of the most senior officers and staff has gone through a moderation process to make sure they are being assessed fairly in comparison to others at that level. At the time of our inspection, the force hadn't completed a full annual cycle of the new process. We hope to see further improvements in PDR completion rates once the new process has been fully implemented.

### **The force supports the development of its first-line leaders**

We previously told the force that it needed to improve the training it provides its leaders. We are pleased to see that it has made progress in this area. The force committed to providing five days of face-to-face training to all its first-line leaders by April 2024. It succeeded in giving this training to 5,961 people (96 percent of first-line leaders).

We reviewed the lesson plans, attended the training, and spoke to attendees. The training was well-received and covered a good range of leadership topics. Over the next year, the force says it will provide five more days of leadership training to its first-line, middle and senior leaders, building on last year's curriculum. This is positive progress.



# Leadership and force management

Requires  
improvement

The Metropolitan Police Service's leadership and management requires improvement.

## Areas for improvement

### **The force needs to improve its business planning processes**

The force is struggling to produce meaningful [force management statements \(FMS\)](#), and to submit them on time.

The FMS is a self-assessment that the commissioner prepares and submits to us each year. It is the commissioner's statement and explanation of:

- the performance, condition, composition, capacity, capability, serviceability and security of supply of the force's workforce;
- the demand the force expects to face in the foreseeable future, and the extent to which it will be able to meet this with its current assets;
- how the force will change and improve its workforce, policies, practices and other assets to cope with future demand;
- the effect the force expects those changes to have and the effect of any residual risk of service failure; and
- the money the force expects to have to do all this.

The 2023/24 FMS was submitted four months late, and we assessed that it wasn't of sufficient quality to properly assist the force in planning for the future.

This year's FMS is due to be submitted by June 2024. The force notified us that they were finding it difficult to produce the document and that it would likely be submitted late.

To help the force, we have assessed the draft FMS for 2024/25. We found that it didn't provide enough detail about the risks it had identified, how they would be mitigated, and which of them would be tolerated. It lacked detail about which areas of its work were of concern and why, and what mitigating actions were needed. It had little detail about timescales, costs, or how issues and decisions in one area of its operations might affect other areas.

The force is aware of its difficulties in this area, and in response it has created a new business support team with specific skills in business planning. This new team should allow the force to produce a meaningful and timely FMS in future.

### **The force needs to make sure leaders throughout the force understand what is expected of them to implement the 'A New Met for London' plan**

Leaders in the force aren't always aware of what is expected of them or what their role is in implementing the strategic direction of the force. While senior leadership teams across the force understand the 'A New Met for London' plan and how it affects their role, we found that this wasn't the case at lower ranks. At chief inspector, inspector and sergeant levels, we found limited knowledge and understanding of the plan.

This means that these leaders are making decisions about things such as resource deployments and work prioritisation without paying attention to where they fit within the plan and the force's key priorities.

Linked to this lack of knowledge, we found that the personal development reviews of these officers and their staff didn't include objectives related to implementing the plan and their part within it.

Senior leadership teams need to be more consistent in their communication about the plan to make sure their officers and staff fully understand and buy in to it.

As the force rolls out further leadership training, it should make sure that this includes the 'A New Met for London' plan and how leaders can help staff understand their role in implementing it.

### **The force needs to improve its workforce planning and its understanding of its officers' and staff's skills so that it can deploy them more effectively**

The force doesn't have a detailed understanding of its own data about the skills of its officers and staff. This is affecting its ability to make sure it is putting the right people with the right skills in the right roles.

The force told us that 11 percent of its police officers are classed as requiring either restricted or adjusted duties. These officers are being used in police staff roles in each basic command unit.

Though this situation has been inherited by the current executive team, and is being reviewed, it continues to impact the effectiveness of its workforce planning and has led to inconsistent approaches to deploying restricted officers.

This is a priority area within the 'A New Met for London' plan. Further progress will be key if the force is to achieve the improvements it has set itself.

### **The force needs to improve the quality of its data and how it is used**

The force collects a lot of data and is clearly ambitious in its desire to use it more effectively to underpin its decision-making. Despite this, the force doesn't consistently use data to help improve its performance. This is exacerbated by a lack of analytical capability, leading to an absence of consistent and meaningful reports beyond high-level basic command unit meeting data packs.

The development of new data management teams is positive, particularly around the force's desire to automate processes and increase the use of robotics. However, the force isn't using data consistently to manage individual or team workloads or backlogs.

Staff shortages in analysis, in part due to a 12-month backlog in vetting, is also preventing the force from producing accessible management information at all levels of the organisation.

The force uses the data visualisation software Power BI, which can be accessed via dashboards. However, the lack of training, awareness and understanding of this means it isn't used consistently to improve performance in a meaningful and measurable way.

## **Main findings**

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to leadership and management.

## **The force has an ambitious strategic plan and is working with its partner organisations and communities to provide a better service**

The force has developed 22 improvement plans that underpin its ambition to improve. It has established a transformation group and appointed a chief officer to oversee this change programme. Its ambitious, overarching, strategic plan, 'A New Met for London', sets out how improvements will be made.

The plan focuses on three key areas of reform:

- community crime-fighting – how the force intends to cut crime, rebuild trust, and restore the bond with its communities;
- culture change – how it will embed the values of policing by consent and build a strong culture focused on delivering for London, maintaining high standards and learning from others; and
- fixing its foundations – how it will help its workforce to succeed, by providing better deployments, training, equipment and tools, including data and technology.

Using this plan, the force intends to improve the service it provides in the areas of neighbourhood policing, frontline policing, public protection, victims, crime reduction, training, data, efficiency and raising standards. The force told us that it has developed this plan based on 10,000 pieces of information from stakeholders, members of the public and partner organisations (such as the City of London Police, the British Transport Police and emergency services), and through working with the community in all its boroughs.

The force's governance is structured around its priorities. Data is made available in a way that can be used by departments, teams and individuals to see how each of them contributes towards the performance of the force.

We found that this approach is working at the very senior levels of the force but is much less evident in the BCUs. The 'A New Met for London' plan isn't widely understood by frontline officers, staff and leaders, nor is it linked to performance goals in everybody's PDRs to make sure the whole force understands its role in implementing it.

## **The force provides guidance and leadership training for its frontline leaders**

The force provides a leaders' course to sergeants, inspectors and first- and second-line police staff leaders. The course includes practical lessons on culture, values, priorities, improving standards, and what is expected of leaders. Feedback from attendees was positive. The course is supported by consultants and is being implemented across the entire organisation. This is a positive step forward for the force and a significant investment that needs to continue.

The force should make sure that support is also provided to acting and temporary supervisors, who reported feeling less supported in their roles.

The force is undoubtedly taking action to improve leadership across the force and providing guidance as to what is expected of leaders. This is being taken forward through its cultural change programme. Effective leaders need to communicate with, and be accessible and visible to, their officers and staff. We saw evidence of some senior leaders engaging with officers and staff, including producing 'you said, we did' updates in their BCUs. But in other areas we found senior leaders who weren't at all visible or communicative with their officers and staff. This inconsistency will and does have a negative effect.

### **Demand pressures sometimes exceeds the capacity of frontline resources**

We saw evidence of response officers working below minimum staffing levels due to officers being redeployed to support the force's response to operations, such as policing protests. This leaves the remaining officers overwhelmed with demand. We also saw response officers being taken away from their scheduled training days.

Response officers were often seen as 'spare', and so are used to manage demand, or are deployed to aid operations such as policing protests. This means that they are routinely missing valuable training opportunities.

### **The force doesn't have a force-wide operating structure that allows its workforce to work in a cohesive or consistent way**

The force's BCUs have different processes for allocating work. This has resulted in inconsistencies in the approach to core areas. For example, the force has different approaches to how it gives crime investigations to officers. This means that there are variations in the supervision and quality of investigations, and in workloads. We saw officers who didn't have the skills or training to deal with the complexity of crime they had been allocated, such as complex domestic abuse.

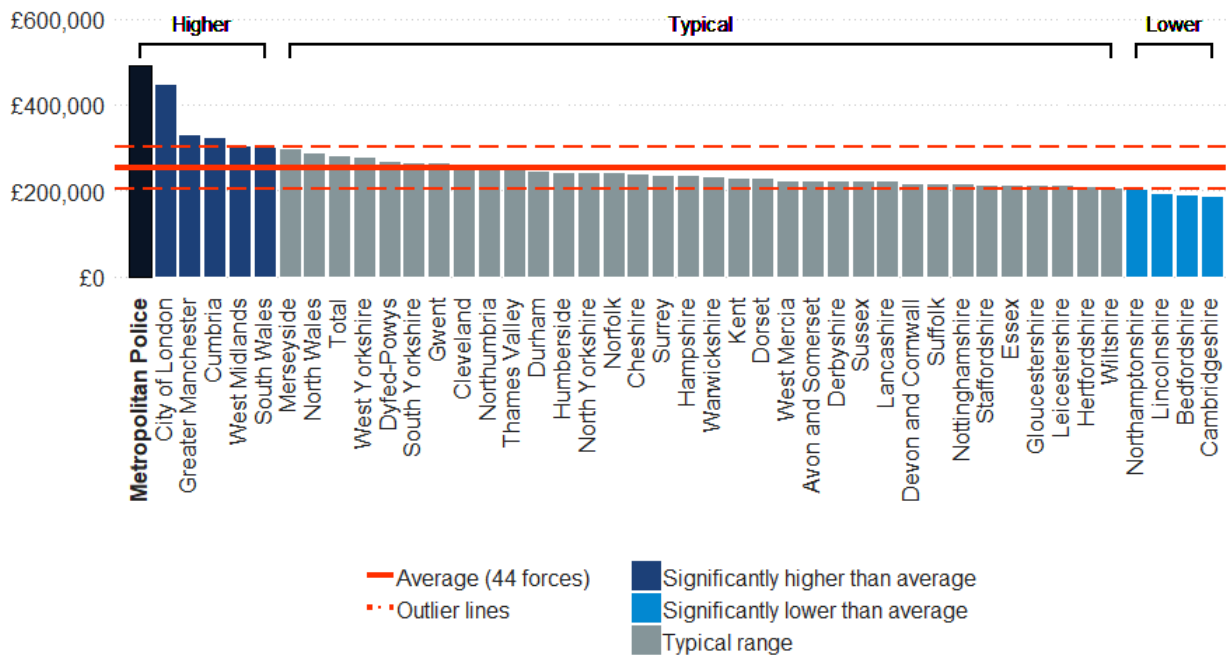
During our inspection, the workforce highlighted the high demands that they were experiencing. We saw officers who had high workloads in most areas of the force and across all departments. Importantly, in those areas where supervision was effective, and systems better understood by everyone, officers and staff were under less pressure and had more manageable workloads.

We also found that some working practices across the force were inconsistent, and that good practice isn't being shared.

### **The force is forecasting budget gaps across each of the years between 2025/26 and 2027/28 and will find it increasingly difficult to meet those gaps**

In the year ending 31 March 2023, the force received a total of £4.33 billion in funding, equal to £489,705 per 1,000 population. This was significantly higher than the average for forces in England and Wales. This is due, in part, to the unique position the force has of policing the capital, and the demand and challenges that this brings.

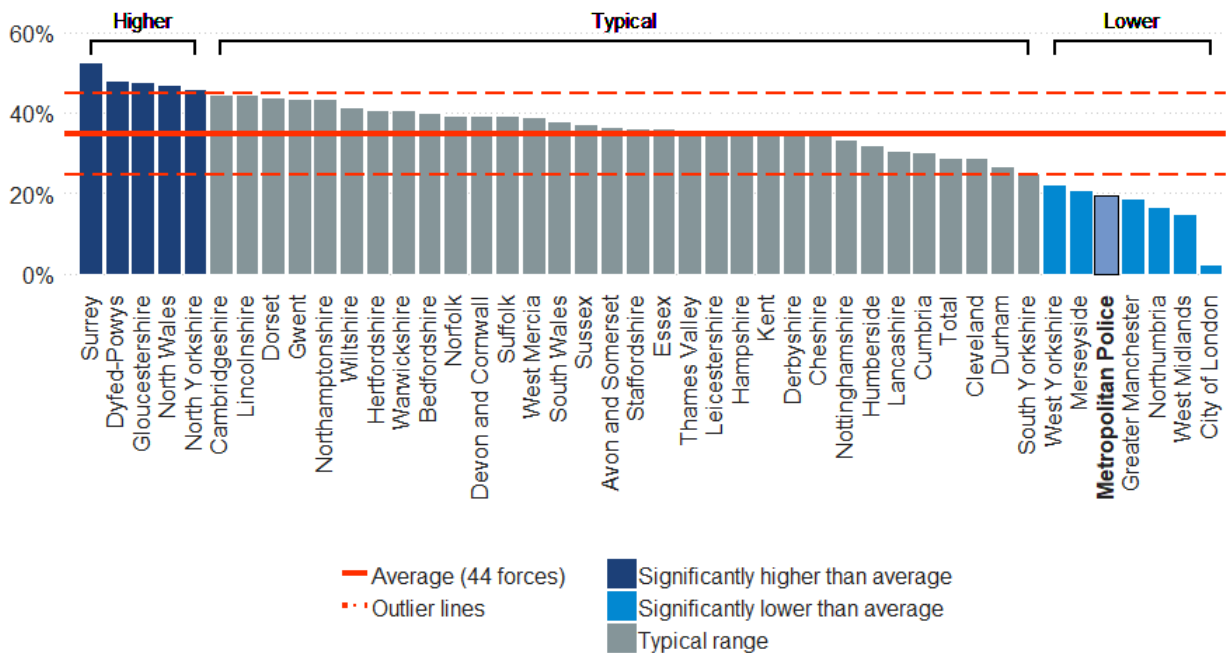
**Figure 6: Total funding per 1,000 population for forces in England and Wales in the 2022/23 financial year**



Source: Data collection and analysis from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

In the year ending 31 March 2023, 19.4 percent of the force’s total funding (equal to £849,474,000) was through the council tax [precept](#). This proportion is significantly lower than the average for forces in England and Wales.

**Figure 7: Precept funding as a proportion of total funding by forces in England and Wales in the 2022/23 financial year**



Source: Data collection and analysis from His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services

Reserves fall into two categories: a general reserve, and earmarked reserves held for specific purposes such as capital investment. It is usually considered financially prudent to maintain general reserves equivalent to 2–3 percent of the annual budget to meet any unforeseen circumstances. The force told us that, as of 31 December 2023, it had a general reserve of £46.6m. This is considerably less than the £90m–£135m that would be sensible. The force told us that its earmarked reserves, which were close to £500m a few years ago, will fall to less than £70m by the end of 2024/25, and to around £23m by the end of 2027/28.

The force estimates its budget requirement for 2024/25 to be around £4.5 billion. It expects to receive funding of £4.1 billion, leaving a gap of £400m. To fill the gap, the force proposes to make cost savings and cuts by scaling back its reform plans.

We are concerned by this. It presents a significant risk to the capability and capacity of the force to implement the improvements that are required.

The force estimates that the total cost of implementing its ‘A New Met for London’ plan in 2024/25 will be £170m, but it will only have £78m available.

This has affected, and will continue to affect, how quickly the force can move officers away from back-office roles. It means it will have to take its reform agenda forward more slowly, affecting its improvement plans for leadership and culture, public protection, neighbourhoods and investigations.

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