

Emergency Services News Briefing

February 2025



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Introduction

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recent review of the police response to public disorder, the government's policing reforms and newly announced funding. Additionally, we cover the new fire and rescue service inspection programme starting in June 2025 and the National Fire Chiefs Council's participation in a global fire safety initiative.



Police

The police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024

HMICFRS has published its review, commissioned by the Home Office, of the police response to public disorder in the summer of 2024. The first part of the review (tranche 1) examined the police service's Public Order Public Safety (POPS) capacity and capabilities, their ability to mobilise officers across different areas, and the impact of repeated exposure to disorder on officers' well-being and resilience. Key findings from the review include:

- the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) mobilised public order officers effectively, but the decision to implement the national mobilisation plan was made too late;
- there were information gaps, leading to some deployment decisions being made without adequate intelligence;
- while national training standards and command structures were well-established, there were concerns about the initial dress code of officers, which could have left them vulnerable to injury; and
- the report emphasised the importance of better utilising the National Police Well-being Service to support officers during such challenging times.

HMICFRS has made three main recommendations for chief constables and forces to enhance their capacity and capability to respond to widespread violent disorder, improve the mobilisation of POPS resources, and enhance overall preparedness.

Recommendations include:

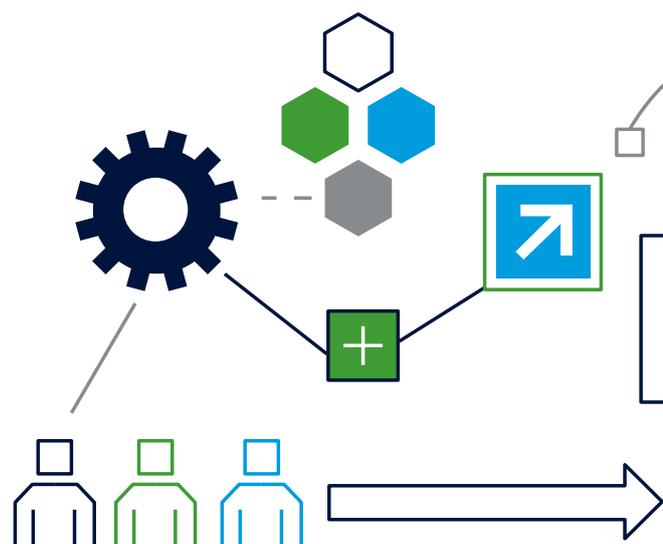
- develop a plan to improve the police's ability to handle widespread violent disorder;
- give the NPCC POPS lead full authority over national strategy and deployment, improving regional information centres, and upgrading technology for resource management; and
- improving well-being support for officers and staff, such as establishing protocols with ambulance services and hospitals, ensuring access to basic needs during operations, and providing additional support for officers in hostile incidents.

HMICFRS has also published the [terms of reference](#) for the second part (tranche 2) of the review of policing public disorder which focuses on further examining the police service's preparedness, response, and resilience in handling widespread violent disorder. The report is due to be published later this year.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is the Audit Committee assured that the Force has taken action to address the recommendations from the HMICFRS report?



Home Secretary announces major policing reforms

Yvette Cooper, Home Secretary, has announced significant reforms aimed at improving police performance and public safety. Key initiatives include creating a new Home Office unit to monitor police performance, focusing on high-priority areas such as tackling violence against women and girls, knife crime, and improving neighbourhood policing. The reforms also introduce a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee to ensure officers spend more time being visible and accessible in communities. Additionally, there will be a focus on police standards, with data on misconduct, vetting, and disciplinary procedures collected, monitored, and acted on to ensure forces are rooting out those who are not fit to serve and help restore the public's trust in their local officers. These measures are part of a broader effort to enhance public trust and ensure the police are better equipped to handle modern challenges.

The initiative builds on a government commitment to give HMICFRS more power to intervene in failing forces and supports ongoing efforts by the College of Policing and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) to boost standards and drive improvement.

Multi-agency responses to serious youth violence: working together to support and protect children

The report, published by HMICFRS, Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, and HM Inspectorate of Probation, examines how local partnerships and services respond to children and families affected by serious youth violence. The findings are based on six Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAs) conducted between September 2023 and May 2024. The inspections focused on three main themes; strategic responses to serious youth violence, work with children affected by serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation, and interventions to improve safety for children and communities.

The inspections highlighted the need:

- for better strategic planning;
- improved multi-agency collaboration;
- enhanced support for children at risk; and
- addressing the links between serious youth violence and child criminal exploitation.

Recommendations are made to improve practice, knowledge, and understanding among agencies involved in protecting children from serious youth violence.



Questions for committee's consideration

- What are the assurance mechanisms in place to provide assurance that the Force has responded appropriately to these reforms?
- What action will the Force be taking to ensure officers spend more time being visible and accessible in communities?



Questions for committee's consideration

- How will you be assured that the Force's partnership working will achieve better outcomes for the public?

Funding boost for police to keep streets safe

The Home Secretary has announced a £1bn funding boost for police forces in England and Wales to enhance public safety and restore neighbourhood policing. This increase will bring total police funding to £19.5bn in 2025/26. Most of the funds, up to £17.4bn, will be allocated to PCCs to tackle local crime, reduce antisocial behaviour, and apprehend persistent offenders. This includes a significant rise in the police core grant and new funding to recruit 13,000 additional neighbourhood officers, community support officers, and special constables.

Additionally, £140m will be invested in Counter Terrorism Policing to ensure they have the necessary resources to address threats and protect the public. The funding aims to address financial and operational challenges faced by police forces, improve efficiency, and deliver the government's Safer Streets mission.

Police workforce statistics

The Home Office has published the latest police workforce statistics for England and Wales, as of 30 September 2024. The total police workforce was 236,655 full-time equivalents (FTE), a slight increase of 0.2% from six months earlier. This includes 146,868 FTE police officers, a decrease of 0.6% from March 2024. Police staff and designated officers also totalled 82,371 FTE, up by 1.8%.



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does the proportion of police officers to total workforce in your Force compare to the national average?

Amendments to the Police Regulations 2003

The Home Office has published details of the amendments that have been made to the Police Regulations 2003. The amendments are detailed in two circulars.

- Circular 008/2024:** This circular includes changes to determinations under regulation 35, specifically related to expenses. The amendments, effective from 1 January 2025, cover reimbursement of medical charges for injuries received in the line of duty, removal expenses for officers relocating, and other related expenses.
- Circular 009/2024:** This circular addresses amendments under regulation 10B, which relates to the conditions and procedures for officers rejoining a police force after leaving.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Have Force policies and procedures been updated in respect of changes to Police Regulations?



Performance framework

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) has published its monthly performance framework, highlighting its progress in meeting priorities. The framework aims to increase public awareness and confidence in the complaints system. Key performance indicators include resolving complaints against the IOPC within 20 working days and monitoring the percentage of complaints made by various demographic groups. The framework also emphasises delivering fair outcomes that hold police accountable. Targets include completing 85% of core investigations within 12 months and deciding on the mode of investigation for all cases within an average of five working days.

Oversight newsletter

The IOPC has published its latest oversight newsletter providing an update on its work. The newsletter highlights several new investigations into serious incidents involving police conduct. It also emphasises the IOPC's commitment to learning from these investigations to improve policing practices. Recent recommendations made to police forces aim to address systemic issues and prevent future incidents. Additionally, the newsletter details the IOPC's community engagement efforts to build trust and ensure that public concerns are heard. Performance metrics are also provided, highlighting the timeliness of investigations and the implementation of recommendations by police forces.



Fire

Fire inspectorate emphasises that effective leadership is key to making improvements

Roy Wilsher, His Majesty’s Inspector of Fire and Rescue Services, has highlighted the importance of leadership in tackling issues such as cultural shortcomings and misconduct management. He spoke at a recent event which was joined by chief fire officers and fire authority chairs from across England. Mr Wilsher acknowledged the progress made by some services but emphasised that further reform is necessary.

Representing the UK at global fire safety initiative

The National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) represented the UK at the launch of the ‘1 Billion Readiness’ initiative by the Dubai Civil Defence. This global programme, taking place between 2025 and 2027, aims to train and raise awareness among one billion people worldwide on fire prevention techniques. The event, held in Dubai, brought together FRSs from 34 countries and 18 major firefighting organisations.

Phil Garrigan, NFCC Vice-Chair and Chair-elect, highlighted the opportunity for the NFCC to contribute to global fire prevention efforts and enhance fire safety awareness within UK communities. The UK will also host the World Fire Congress in 2026, further demonstrating its leadership in international fire safety.

Fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework

Following its [consultation](#), HMICFRS has published the fire and rescue services (FRSs) inspection programme and framework commencing in June 2025. The inspection programme and framework aims to evaluate and report on the effectiveness and efficiency of England’s 44 FRSs, providing the public with information to compare performance and track improvements. The new framework includes a five-tier grading system, removal of pillar judgments, and a ‘fast-tracked process for addressing public safety risks.’

Recent inspections highlighted the need for stronger leadership and enhanced skills in managing change, as well as addressing cultural issues and misconduct. However, progress has been observed in raising awareness of behaviour standards and implementing the Core Code of Ethics. The final reports are expected to be published in summer 2025.



Questions for committee’s consideration

- Do you have oversight of the Fire and Rescue Service’s expected performance against the framework and are plans in place to address any under-performance?

Remediation acceleration is welcome, but faces significant practical challenges

The NFCC has welcomed the [government's plan](#) to accelerate the removal of unsafe cladding from buildings, recognising it as a crucial step towards enhancing public safety and preventing future tragedies. However, the NFCC also highlighted significant practical challenges in achieving these targets. One of the main issues is the shortage of skilled professionals needed to carry out the remediation work. FRSs are already under pressure to meet their statutory obligations, and without a coordinated, long-term strategy to address workforce shortages, there is a risk of overstressing resources. The NFCC calls for a collaborative approach involving local authorities, industry leaders, and training providers to build workforce capacity and ensure sustainable building safety improvements.

Fire and rescue incident statistics

The Home Office has published its latest fire and rescue incident statistics for England, covering the year ending September 2024. Key statistics include:

- fire and rescue services attended 591,676 incidents, a 4.8% decrease from the previous year;
- the total number of fires attended was 143,625, marking a significant 23% reduction compared to the previous year;
- of all incidents attended by fire and rescue services, fires accounted for 24%, fire false alarms for 42%, and non-fire incidents for 34%; and
- despite the overall reduction in incidents, there were 278 fire-related fatalities, which is slightly up from 273 the previous year.



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your Fire and Rescue Service compare to these national statistics?

References



[The police response to the public disorder in July and August 2024](#)



[Fire and rescue services inspection programme and framework](#)



[Home Secretary to announce major policing reforms](#)



[Fire inspectorate emphasises that effective leadership is key to making improvements](#)



[Multi-agency responses to serious youth violence: working together to support and protect children](#)



[Representing the UK at global fire safety initiative](#)



[Funding boost for police to keep streets safe](#)



[Remediation acceleration is welcome, but faces significant practical challenges](#)



[Police workforce statistics](#)



[Fire and rescue incident statistics](#)



[Amendments to the Police Regulations 2003](#)



[Performance framework](#)



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Further information

Daniel Harris

National Head of Emergency Services and Local Government

T +44 (0)7792 948 767

daniel.harris@rsmuk.com

Risk and Governance Technical Team

Research and author

technical.consulting@rsmuk.com

rsmuk.com

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