

POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER FOR LEICESTERSHIRE

ETHICS AND TRANSPARENCY PANEL

PAPER MARKED

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Report of	OFFICE OF THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER
Subject	BARONESS CASEY REVIEW
Date	TUESDAY 28 MARCH 2023 10:00 – 12:00
Author	LIZZIE STAR, DIRECTOR OF GOVERNANCE AND PERFORMANCE

Purpose of Report

1. The purpose of this report is to acknowledge the findings of The Baroness Casey Review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service. Despite its heavy focus on the Metropolitan Police Service, the report does ask questions indirectly of all in policing.
2. The review began in February 2022 and was completed in March 2023 when the findings, final report and recommendations were published.

Recommendations

3. It is recommended that members note the contents of the report.

Commentary

4. The Baroness Casey Review has been included for members' information only at this stage. The force is currently evaluating the implications of the report and it will be brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Implications

Financial / Legal:	None
Equality Impact Assessment:	None
Risks and Impact:	Public perception and reputation issues for force
Link to Police and Crime Plan:	Proposal is in line with the Nolan Principles and Code of Ethics.
Communications:	Feed into wider force response to review

List of Appendices

None

Background papers

None

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BARONESS CASEY
REVIEW

Final Report

An independent review into the
standards of behaviour and internal culture
of the Metropolitan Police Service

Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB
March 2023

CASEY REVIEW

Contents

Foreword	6
Summary and conclusions	9
Fixing the Met – Recommendations	19
Cleaning up the Met	20
A new offer to women and children	21
Building trust with London’s communities to restore consent	22
A new police deal for Londoners	22
New leadership and new management.....	23
New oversight and accountability.....	23
Showing London that reform is working	24
Introduction and context	26
Chapter 1: The Met and Londoners	36
1.1. London’s dynamic population.....	36
1.2. Changing service demands and performance	38
1.3. Public confidence and trust in the Met	47
1.4. Why public consent matters: the Peelian principles	52
1.5. Conclusion.....	58
Chapter 2: The Met’s resources and its response to austerity	59
2.1. Introduction	59
2.2. Resourcing in the Met.....	59
2.3. Reductions in the Met’s resources	60
2.4. Protecting officer numbers.....	62
2.5. The Met’s approach to resourcing constraints and their impact.....	64
2.6. The impact of changes in workforce numbers.....	70
2.7. Workforce planning in the Met: A missed opportunity.....	73
2.8. Conclusion.....	75
Chapter 3: How the Met is run	76
3.1. Introduction	76
3.2. Recruitment in the Met.....	77
3.3. Vetting.....	78
3.4. Arrival and initial training in the Met.....	79
3.5. Management and supervision	81
3.6. Performance Development Reviews	83
3.7. Promotion	84

3.8. Training.....	85
3.9. Policing is a tough job	88
3.10. Leadership	91
3.11. Initiative-itis: activity rather than action	98
3.12. The views of Met officers and staff on culture in the Met.....	103
Chapter 4: On the frontline of policing in London.....	106
4.1. Introduction	106
4.2. Reorganisation of frontline policing in London: Basic Command Units.....	107
4.3. The numbers: Who’s on the frontline?	108
4.4. BCUs: the beleaguered frontline.....	111
4.5. Demand is not matching supply	115
4.7. The impact of inexperience	123
4.8. Supervision.....	125
4.9. Loss of civilian staff and support services	127
4.10. Geography	128
4.11. Drivers.....	130
4.12. Specialist Teams	131
4.13. Commanders not in control.....	132
4.14. Conclusion.....	134
Chapter 5: Public Protection	136
5.1. Introduction	136
5.2. Child protection.....	137
5.3. Violence against women and girls	140
5.4. Who’s in charge of Public Protection?	141
5.5. Staffing and workloads	143
5.6. Caseloads	145
5.7. Facilities and resources.....	146
5.8. Inexperience and lack of specialist knowledge.....	147
5.9. Impact on staff.....	149
5.10. Domestic abuse.....	151
5.11. Sexual violence	156
5.12. The responsibility of the rest of the criminal justice system	159
5.13. How the Met deals with rape and serious sexual offending: findings from Operation Soteria Bluestone	162
5.14. The victim experience	165
5.15. Met response to Operation Soteria Bluestone	166
5.16. Conclusion.....	167

Case studies	168
Chapter 6: Two specialist units	190
6.1. Introduction	190
6.2. Specialist Firearms Command (MO19)	190
6.3. PaDP: Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection	196
6.4. Conclusion.....	201
Chapter 7: How the Met deals with misconduct and grievances	202
7.1. Introduction	202
7.2. Misconduct	203
7.3. Dealing with officer and staff grievances	206
7.4. Employment Tribunal Claims	208
7.5. Victims' and survivors' perspectives on misconduct.....	211
7.6. Misconduct case studies: an update	213
7.7. Conclusion.....	216
Chapter 8: Governance, scrutiny and accountability.....	217
8.1. Introduction	217
8.2. The tripartite structure of police accountability.....	217
8.3. Inspection, audit, investigation and advice.....	221
8.4. Transparency.....	226
8.5. How the Met responds to external scrutiny.....	232
8.6. Conclusion.....	233
Chapter 9: Discrimination.....	235
9.i. Introduction	235
9.ii. Bullying.....	238
Chapter 9.1: Homophobia.....	243
9.1.1. Introduction	243
9.1.2. LGBTQ+ officers and staff: the view from the inside.....	244
9.1.3. The Met and the LGBTQ+ community: the view from outside	249
9.1.4. Conclusion.....	257
Chapter 9.2. Sexism and Misogyny	258
9.2.1. Introduction	258
9.2.2. Recruitment of women in the Met	261
9.2.3. Attrition	263
9.2.4. Progression of women within the ranks	263
9.2.5. Life for women in the Met	267
9.2.6. Speaking out against sexism and misogyny.....	273
9.2.7. Initiatives to challenge sexism and misogyny	274

9.2.8. Police perpetrated sexual misconduct and domestic abuse	275
9.2.9. Conclusion.....	284
Chapter 9.3: Racism.....	286
9.3.1. Introduction	286
9.3.2. Racism and its persistence in the Met.....	288
9.3.3. The Met’s workforce; the internal culture.....	289
9.3.4. The Met and Black Londoners.....	308
9.3.5. Conclusion.....	329
Chapter 9.4. Conclusions on discrimination	330
Chapter 10: The missing voice of Londoners.....	333
10.1. Introduction	333
10.2. Neighbourhood policing	334
10.3. The Met’s approach to communications and community engagement.....	335
10.4. Public complaints.....	341
10.5. The voice of Londoners	343
10.6. Conclusion.....	346
Annex A. Terms of Reference	347
Annex B. Methodology	349
Annex C. The Review Team.....	363

Foreword

Only two years ago, in March 2021, Sarah Everard was abducted, raped and murdered by a serving Metropolitan Police Officer. With greater courage than I can ever imagine, Sarah's mother, Susan Everard, told the Court in her victim impact statement that: "There is no comfort to be had, there is no consoling thought in the way Sarah died. In her last hours she was faced with brutality and terror, alone with someone intent on doing her harm. The thought of it is unbearable. I am haunted by the horror of it...I am repulsed by the thought of what he did to Sarah. I am outraged that he masqueraded as a policeman in order to get what he wanted."

The lifespan of this Review has been book-ended by that tragedy and another avoidable and abhorrent case when, only two months ago, another serving Met officer, who also exploited his position, was convicted as one of the country's most prolific sexual offenders.

They are connected in another way too. What Mrs Everard could not have known as she made her statement was that another woman heard her words and was so struck by them that she was moved to call 101 and report that other Met officer as having tortured and raped her and left her for dead. It was only as a result of her call that other women came forward and that same officer was eventually prosecuted.

None of this should have happened. Enough was known about both men to have stopped them so much earlier. And there is no comfort I can offer Sarah's family and the victims of that rapist with my words. Nothing I say can match the daily agony and pain these crimes continue to cause all of those affected.

But I do want to begin this report by remembering Sarah, thinking of all those who have suffered as a result of Met officers' crimes, and paying tribute to those who have fought for justice on their behalves.

Those crimes, and those betrayals of trust, led to my appointment to review standards and culture in the Met. The previous Commissioner was right to establish this Review, with the Mayor's support. I am glad to have had the opportunity to lead this work, and am grateful to the new Commissioner for his continued support. I am also deeply grateful to all those who have given us their time and told us their stories, often recounting traumatic and painful experiences.

I am fundamentally pro-police. I have personal reasons to be thankful to them. Policing attracts the best of humanity. I have met many shining examples during this Review – those who uphold the highest of standards and who put themselves at risk in order to protect the rest of us. During the course of this Review, two officers were stabbed on duty in Leicester Square, one of whom suffered life-changing injuries.

Every working day, I pass Carriage Gates in Parliament where PC Keith Palmer was killed in 2017, and every day I think of his and others' bravery.

Of course I accept that so many police officers go to work for the right reasons. They are committed to public service, and I thank them for that. But policing needs to accept that the job can also attract predators and bullies – those who want power over their fellow citizens, and to use those powers to cause harm and discriminate. All of British policing needs to be alive to this very serious risk. It needs to keep them out when they try to get in, to root them out where they exist, and to guard against the corrosive effects that their actions have on trust, confidence and the fundamental Peelian principles of policing by consent.

I am unconvinced that police forces are fully alive to that risk, nor that the Met fully understands the gravity of its situation as a whole. If a plane fell out of the sky tomorrow, a whole industry would stop and ask itself why. It would be a catalyst for self-examination, and then root and branch reform. Instead the Met preferred to pretend that their own perpetrators of unconscionable crimes were just 'bad apples', or not police officers at all. So throughout this review, I have asked myself time and again, if these crimes cannot prompt that self-reflection and reform, then what will it take?

Many of the issues raised by the Review are far from new. I make a finding of institutional racism, sexism and homophobia in the Met. Sir William Macpherson made the first of those findings in his inquiry into the racist murder of Stephen Lawrence as long ago as 1999. Many people have been raising grave concerns about the Met for much longer than that.

So this report is rigorous, stark and unsparing. Its findings are tough and for many will be difficult to take. But it should leave no one in any doubt about the scale of the challenge.

During the course of this Review, new leadership arrived at the Met. The new Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have a daunting task, but thankfully they accept the scale of that challenge, and they deserve the chance to succeed. I believe that they will do so, and I fully support them. They also deserve support as they go about their reforms, both from within the Met, and from above them politically. I hope this report can serve as both a diagnosis of what needs to change, and a blueprint for how to begin.

That starts with everyone accepting the scale of the challenge, no matter how hard that may be. As the Reverend Mina Smallman, the mother of two murdered daughters and another victim of Met officers' crimes, told me: "What we can't have is that the only reason that people who corrupt the police are taken in hand is by the tenacity of the women and the families they abused."

Reverend Smallman also told me that: “The strides and the windows that we’ve been able to open into this institution have not come about because of the police’s desire to change. It’s come about on the backs and the tenacity of people of colour and women, and that’s not the way we’re going to affect real change. If you’re constantly trying to cover up the cracks then you’re never going to address anything.”

She is right. She can continue to campaign. The Met can be subject to better forms of scrutiny. I can continue to speak the truth as I see it. She will. They will. I will. But, ultimately, it is the Met that has to change itself. It is not our job as the public to keep ourselves safe from the police. It is the police’s job to keep us safe as the public. Far too many Londoners have now lost faith in policing to do that. Many Londoners, particularly Black Londoners, never had it to begin with. I completely understand why they feel that way.

However, we have to be able to have faith in the police. They stand in the way of danger for us. We need to be able to tell our children to go to them when they are in danger. We give the police exceptional powers and we trust them to use them responsibly. That is how policing by consent works. It’s a deal: a deal that we now need to restore in London. The police want to earn our trust. And we want to trust the police.

It is what great police officers deserve. It is what the great city of London deserves.

Words alone cannot do that. It is only through actions that the Met can now begin to re-earn that trust. This is the moment for it to do so.

Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB
March 2023

Summary and conclusions

The Met has faced significant challenges over the last ten years. Many of these have been beyond their control. These include austerity, changes in crime patterns, greater non-crime demand and a regulatory system that makes it difficult to get rid of people who corrupt the Met's integrity. The Crown Prosecution Service and the courts are also under acute pressure. This impacts the effectiveness of the Met, and makes the criminal justice system overall much less effective.

Significant societal shifts are rightly making us less tolerant of crimes such as domestic abuse, rape and child abuse as well as discrimination. Public expectations on policing are therefore greater.

London too is always changing. Its population is expanding, and is swelled by thousands of commuters daily and millions of visitors each year. It is more diverse in terms of nationalities, ethnic and faith groups, and sexuality than other UK cities. The majority of the population are not from White British ethnic backgrounds, one in five do not have English as their main language, and London has greater extremes of wealth and poverty than other parts of the UK.

In contrast, Met officers are 82% White and 71% male, and the majority do not live in the city they police. As such, the Met does not look like the majority of Londoners.

Traditional volume crime (such as burglary and theft) has declined, while low volume but more serious offences such as violence against the person, and sexual offences have significantly increased from 17% of all crimes in 2012-13 to 31% in 2022-23. Such cases take longer to investigate and resolve. Domestic abuse-related crimes have doubled over ten years to nearly 100,000 a year and the number of reported rape cases have increased fourfold. But the number of officers investigating them has not increased at the same rate. This places more demand on police detective services in particular, while there is a national shortage of detectives.

Like other public services, austerity has profoundly affected the Met. In real-terms, the Review has calculated that the Met now has £0.7 billion less than at the start of the previous decade, meaning its budget is 18% smaller. This is enough to employ more than 9,600 extra Police Constables at full cost. It has lost 21% of its civilian staff and two thirds of its Special Constables while the number of Police Community Support Officers has halved. Between 2010 and 2022 it closed 126 police stations. Specialist units and functions have been prioritised, including through ring-fenced Government funding.

Together, this has eroded frontline policing, weakening the strongest day-to-day point of connection with Londoners, as well as impacting the Met's reactive

capabilities, its response levels, and its response to male violence perpetrated against women and children.

The model of policing by consent, pioneered in London and admired and copied around the world, requires the Met to both earn and maintain public trust in everything it does. However, there is declining public confidence and trust in the institution. Public trust has fallen from a high point of 89% in 2016 to a low of 66% in March 2022. Public confidence in the Met to do a good job locally has fallen from high points of 70% in 2016 and 2017 to a low of 45% in March 2022.

People from Black and mixed ethnic groups have lower trust and confidence in the Met, scoring 10 to 20% lower than average on trust and 5 to 10% lower on confidence, although declining scores among White Londoners mean that gap is closing.

Among those who responded to surveys undertaken for the Review, three quarters of Met employees and two in five Londoners think the Met's external reputation is poor. Black Londoners are even more likely to say its reputation is poor.

A series of scandals involving the Met and the Met's response – playing them down, denial, obfuscation, and digging in to defend officers without seeming to understand their wider significance – combined with this loss of trust, are strong indicators of fundamental problems.

In September 2022, the appointment of a new Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner with a commitment to reform marked a new, positive beginning for the Met.

This Review, commissioned in the wake of the scandals that have rocked policing nationally, has sought to examine the Met's culture and standards. We have not undertaken an inspection of the Met's overall performance, efficiency and effectiveness although we have looked at some aspects of this.

Our approach has been to talk to officers, staff and others, and review and analyse information, data, systems and operational performance for their relevance to the Met's culture and standards. We considered how the Met's culture affects its central purpose to keep Londoners safe, how it inspires trust and confidence, and how it upholds the British model of policing by consent.

Our conclusions are set out below.

1. There are systemic and fundamental problems in how the Met is run

The size of the Met makes it challenging to operate and also to change. The problem, however, is not its size but its inadequate management. The Met is run as a set of disconnected and competing moving parts, lacking clear systems, goals or strategies. It runs on a series of uncoordinated and short-lived initiatives, long on activity but short on action.

There is no workforce plan, no strategic assessment of the needs and skills of the organisation, and demand modelling is outdated. Recruitment and vetting systems are poor and fail to guard against those who seek power in order to abuse it. There has been no central record of training, so officers may well be in roles which they are not trained for.

The management of people is poor. The Met's processes do not effectively root out bad officers, help to tackle mediocre officers, or truly support and develop good officers. Some of this is down to national systems (including misconduct processes, under-performance regulations, and the national promotion framework). But the Met doesn't actively intervene to make these work better for its people, and its own policies, practices and culture serve to exacerbate the problem.

We witnessed clear signs of high stress and pressure among officers due to the nature of their work dealing with very stressful and upsetting situations, working with traumatised, vulnerable and dangerous people and facing daily abuse from the public. Frontline officers working on Response and Public Protection Teams were not being properly assisted with psychological support to protect their mental health or prevent desensitisation towards victims and the public.

Sergeants and Inspectors are expected to manage very large numbers of constables and junior staff as a core feature of their work, without the time and the tools to do so. Under current Met systems it is easier for them to ignore poor performing officers or let those with conduct issues get away with bad behaviour. In an organisation where people are its principal asset, the vital role of Human Resources has been outsourced and is too distant from local policing needs.

Since publication of the Macpherson report in 1999, the Met has remained largely White and largely male. If recruitment continues on its current trajectory, it will take at least another thirty years, until 2053, to reach gender balance. It will take even longer, until 2061, to reach 46% Black, Asian and ethnic minority representation – what is needed to be representative of London today, let alone the even more diverse city it will be in nearly 40 years' time.

The Police Uplift Programme has been a missed opportunity to improve the diversity and skills base of its workforce. There is no plan B. This isn't about being 'woke' or having politically correct quotas. It means the Met is missing out on the talent it desperately needs to improve its effectiveness. It is also damaging community confidence, by failing to create a force that looks like the city it polices. This is creating a negative spiral in which some communities continue to have negative experiences at the hands of the police, trust them less, and are less likely to join.

2. The Met has not managed the integrity of its own police service

This Met is tasked with upholding law and order and keeping citizens safe. But it has failed over time to ensure the integrity of its officers and therefore of the organisation. Despite the obvious signals of major failure – with heinous crimes perpetrated by serving Met officers – it did not stop to question its processes.

Policing will attract those who wish to abuse the powers conferred by a warrant card. The Met has not taken this fact seriously. Its vetting processes are not vigilant in identifying clear warning signs such as previous indecent exposure or domestic abuse from applicant officers. Transferees from other forces are trusted to be good enough. Periodic re-vetting has been perfunctory, and self-declarations are relied upon. The Met does not make ethical standards as clear as it could, and it has no systems in place to ensure staff and officers adhere to them, nor clear consequences if they do not.

Concerns raised through the misconduct or complaints process are not well recorded and are more likely to be dismissed than acted upon. Patterns of behaviour and escalating incidents which are the hallmarks of predatory behaviour are not identified. Instead, time and time again, those complaining are not believed or supported. They are treated badly, or face counter-claims from those they have accused. Behaviour which in most other organisations would lead to instant dismissal or serious disciplinary action – particularly amongst those who work routinely with vulnerable people – is too often addressed through 'management action' or 'reflective practice'.

In the absence of vigilance towards those who intend to abuse the office of constable, predatory and unacceptable behaviour has been allowed to flourish. There are too many places for people to hide. The integrity of the organisation remains vulnerable to threat.

3. The Met's new leadership represent a welcome change of tone and approach. However, deep seated cultures need to be tackled in order for change to be sustained

When he became Commissioner in 1972, over 50 years ago, Sir Robert Mark said he had 'never experienced...blindness, arrogance and prejudice on anything like the scale accepted as routine in the Met'. The Met is a very different organisation today. But we have found those cultures alive and well. We want to be crystal clear that we are not saying everyone within the organisation behaves in these ways, but that these are the prevailing and default cultures: 'the way we do things'. Worryingly, some of the worst cultures, behaviours and practices have been found in specialist firearms units, where standards and accountability should be at their absolute highest.

Too much hubris and too little humility: The organisation has a 'we know best' attitude. It dismisses external views and criticisms, and adopts the attitude that no one outside the Met can understand the special nature and unique demands of their work. This hubris has become a serious weakness. It stops them hearing and understanding other views, including those of Londoners, and prevents them bringing in external help, co-opting experts and stakeholders to provide support and challenge.

Defensiveness and denial: The Met does not easily accept criticism nor 'own' its failures. It does not embrace or learn from its mistakes. Instead, it starts from a position that nothing wrong has occurred. It looks for, and latches onto, small flaws in any criticism, only accepting reluctantly that any wrong-doing has occurred after incontrovertible evidence has been produced.

One of the saddest aspects of this culture of denial is that many of the issues highlighted in this report – systemic racial bias in the misconduct system, poor child protection services, not recognising predatory behaviour, the dire state of property storage – have been known about, reported on and investigated before. But the Met's culture, combined with its poor management, has meant that these issues have not been sufficiently addressed. This has allowed wrongdoing to persist.

Speaking up is not welcome: Keeping your head down, looking the other way, and telling people – especially senior officers – what they want to hear is the way things are done in the Met. The culture of not speaking up has become so ingrained that even when senior officers actively seek candid views, there is a reluctance to speak up. Disciplined services such as policing might be more prone to such behaviours. This makes it all the more important that those who do speak up are supported, protected, and their contribution is valued. But those who speak up in the Met learn the hard way that there are adverse consequences for themselves, for their careers, and for their teams. Systems support wrongdoers. Complainants are not believed.

Staff Associations and Independent Advisory Groups feel ignored. A bullying culture underpins all this. Racist, misogynist, homophobic and other discriminatory acts are tolerated, ignored, or dismissed as 'banter'.

Optimism bias: Following any issue, there is a strong tendency to look for a positive spin, which allows the organisation to move on. They seek to put it in the past and blame individual 'bad apples', rather than pausing for genuine reflection on systemic issues. The Met talks up future actions as if they were already implemented. This tendency is most clearly noticeable in a tick box approach to critical reports, inspections, inquiries and other forms of scrutiny where bigger picture issues are broken down into individual actions. Problems with culture and attitudes cannot be addressed by developing a new policy, changing the rules or developing a new process.

'Initiative-itis': Instead of focusing on getting the basics right, short term projects and campaigns have been launched from HQ without seeing them through, considering their impact or engaging the organisation in embedding enduring systemic change. This particularly wears down officers on the frontline. They experience slogans and spreadsheet returns instead of a single, clear and widely understood strategy for improvement. This is exacerbated by poor management within the organisation.

Elitism: putting frontline policing at the back of the queue: The Met has allowed an imbalance to grow between well-resourced specialist units and a denuded frontline. It has also allowed the distance between New Scotland Yard and frontline policing teams to widen. Londoners see and rely on frontline officers the most day to day, but these officers feel demoralised and let down by their leaders.

4. Londoners have been put last

The frontline has been deprioritised. A reorganisation moved 32 borough-based police commands to 12 units with some covering up to four boroughs. There are now much weaker connections to long established communities. Democratic borough structures and Londoners have become a step further removed from their police service.

Local policing has been fractured by the loss of skilled civilian staff, especially crime analysts and support staff. Officers who should be on the streets of London are left to backfill some of these roles. There is less knowledge of local crime patterns and Response teams are responding to ever increasing demands on their service. The result is longer response times.

London no longer has a functioning neighbourhood policing service. Far from being ring-fenced as promised in the reorganisation, it has become a resource for

backfilling other services like Response. The number of PCSOs has been drastically reduced.

Those running BCUs do not have authority over their patch and are not responsible or accountable for the actions of specialist teams like the Violent Crime Task Force and the TSG.

5. London's women and children have been left even further behind

The de-prioritisation and de-specialisation of public protection has put women and children at greater risk than necessary.

Despite some outstanding, experienced senior officers, an overworked, inexperienced workforce polices child protection, rape and serious sexual offences. They lack the infrastructure and specialism which the Sapphire specialist command benefited from. Instead of access to fast-track forensic services, officers have to contend with over-stuffed, dilapidated or broken fridges and freezers containing evidence including the rape kits of victims, and endure long waits for test results.

It is more than six years since the 2016 HMIC report into child protection was described as “the most severely critical that HMIC has published about any force, on any subject, ever.” But the Met's child protection service continues to have major inadequacies.

The Met's VAWG strategy rings hollow since its claim to be prioritising 'serious violence' has really not included the crimes that most affect women and girls. Those investigating domestic abuse are also under considerable pressures, with unmanageable caseloads and poor support for victims. This has increased the disconnection from Londoners.

6. The Met lacks accountability and transparency

The Met is a £4 billion public institution. Therefore, it should be transparent and accountable for the services it provides and the resources it uses, while maintaining operational responsibility for policing decisions. Yet all too often, it has been unaccountable to the public and their representatives.

The structures of governance and scrutiny are relatively weak. HMICFRS are an inspectorate not a regulator and can only really comment on what they find. They have limited levers to drive improvement. The 'engage' phase is a reflection of the Inspectorate's significant concerns about the force, but it holds no real consequences for the Met. Their internal audit processes are not valued by the organisation as a process of assurance and early warning.

The Met have in the past avoided scrutiny, holding MOPAC at arms-length, and not sharing information and data. MOPAC in turn have not been able to provide the strategic oversight function that the Met needs. Holding the Met to account has become more tactical. More robust and strategic oversight, based on support, challenge and mutual respect for their respective roles, is needed.

Within each BCU, some the size of a county police force, it is very surprising and concerning that local policing lacks the level of local accountability which would be found in a constabulary across the rest of England and Wales. Londoners are further and further from their policing service.

The Met needs to increase its accountability to Londoners, by being more transparent with the public, with local authorities and MPs, by explaining their decisions and the reasons for them, and by acting with greater candour.

The checks and balances provided by robust scrutiny, governance and accountability are vital for public bodies, perhaps especially the police with their duties towards and powers over the public. However, at a point where the Met requires major reform, it is even more important that those who have responsibility for oversight and inspection support it to change.

7. Discrimination is tolerated, not dealt with and has become baked into the system

We have found widespread bullying, particularly of those with protected characteristics. 22% of staff and officers experienced bullying. There is a profound culture across the Met that incentivises people to look, act and sound the same, and a resistance to difference.

33% of those with a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity have experienced bullying. Claims for disability discrimination is the most frequent claim type brought against the Met. But there is no willingness to learn from these cases.

There is deep seated homophobia within the Met, as shown by the fact that almost one in five lesbian, gay and bisexual Met employees have personally experienced homophobia and 30% of LGBTQ+ employees have said they had been bullied. Trust, confidence and fairness scores among LGBTQ+ Londoners have fallen significantly.

Female officers and staff routinely face sexism and misogyny. The Met has not protected its female employees or members of the public from police perpetrators of domestic abuse, nor those who abuse their position for sexual purposes. Despite the Met saying violence against women and girls is a priority, it has been treated

differently from 'serious violence'. In practice, this has meant it has not been taken as seriously in terms of resourcing and prioritisation.

There are people in the Met with racist attitudes, and Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers and staff are more likely to experience racism, discrimination and bullying at their hands. Discrimination is often ignored, and complaints are likely to be turned against Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers. Many do not think it is worth reporting. Black officers are 81% more likely to be in the misconduct system than their White counterparts. The organisation has failed to significantly improve the recruitment and retention of Black officers at all levels. This is particularly true of Black and ethnic minority women.

Meanwhile Black Londoners in particular remain over-policed. They are more likely to be stopped and searched, handcuffed, batoned and Tasered, are over-represented in many serious crimes, and when they are victims of crime, they are less satisfied with the service they receive than other Londoners. There is now generational mistrust of the police among Black Londoners. Stop and search is currently deployed by the Met at the cost of legitimacy, trust and, therefore, consent.

We have found institutional racism, misogyny and homophobia in the Met. In coming to this conclusion, we have applied four tests. We believe these can be applied in respect of homophobia, misogyny and racism but we have applied them in respect of racism below.

1. Clearly not everyone in the Met is racist, but there are racists and people with racist attitudes within the organisation
2. Black and ethnic minority officers and staff experience racism at work and it is routinely ignored, dismissed, or not spoken about. Many do not think it is worth reporting
3. Racism and racial bias are reinforced within Met systems
4. The Met under-protects and over-polices Black Londoners

Tackling discrimination is a legal and operational imperative for the Met. It needs to acknowledge the extent to which racism, misogyny and homophobia are present within its organisational processes and systems in order to move forward.

8. The Met is in danger of losing its way – consent is broken

The Met's key values, the College of Policing's Code of Ethics and the Peelian principles all provide clear standards and direction for how the organisation should operate and how it should police London. However, these values and principles have not been front and centre of the Met's strategic or operational approach either internally or externally. It has been disfigured by austerity and the decisions that were made during that period, alongside changes in the crime mix and societal

expectations. The Met has been losing its way and the worst aspects of its culture have impeded its ability to recognise this.

The Met has become less effective and is less trusted. Public confidence has dipped below 50%. Fewer Londoners agree that the Met treats everyone fairly, and the proportion of people believing that the Met does a good job for London has also fallen.

Public attitudes and the findings of this Review are also evidence that the Met has become unanchored from the principles of policing by consent. Consent is not passive but relies on the police operating with transparency, to be willing to explain their decisions and their reasons for it.

Fixing the Met – Recommendations

The Review hopes the Met – and policing more generally – will accept both the seriousness of the findings evidenced in this Review and the enormity of the reform that must happen next.

We found an organisation that needs not just a series of changes that have been called for numerous times in the past, or even a root and branch set of reforms to meet its responsibilities to Londoners, but a complete overhaul and a new approach to restore public trust and confidence and earn back consent from women, Black communities and the rest of London.

The Review calls for a series of actions, as set out below. If done well and together these will help the Met get back on its feet.

The Met owes nothing less than this to the victims, and to the families and friends of those women who have been murdered, raped and abused by serving officers. It also owes it to children not provided with the protection they needed, to women who do not feel safe in our capital city, to Black Londoners who have been under-protected and over-policed for too long, and to all communities who deserve to be served by what should and could be the best police force in the world.

The arrival of a new Commissioner and new Deputy Commissioner, and their commitment to reform is major step towards a new, positive beginning for the Met. This provides a new broom to sweep the Met clean. However, they face deep-seated and long-standing cultures which are present throughout the organisation and its systems that have previously prevented change. They cannot achieve that change on their own and deserve all our support.

We need every officer and member of staff in the Met to step up to the challenges identified in this Review, to accept its findings and commit to change.

The Review calls for the following changes to be made by the Met, the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime, and the Home Office, to create a radically improved new London Metropolitan Police Service. These reforms are of a significant scale, and on a par with the transformation of the Royal Ulster Constabulary to the Police Service of Northern Ireland at the end of the last century.

Cleaning up the Met

We have found widespread bullying, discrimination, institutional homophobia, misogyny and racism, and other unacceptable behaviours which are a far cry from the high ethical standards the public rightly expects of its police officers.

1. The misconduct process is not fit for purpose. A new, independent, multi-disciplinary team of officers and staff should be brought in by the Met to reform how it deals with misconduct cases, with a particular focus on how it handles sexual misconduct, domestic abuse and discrimination.
2. The Met should embed and enforce the highest policing ethical values and standards across all of its systems and management, from recruitment and vetting through to supervision and the misconduct process, making sure these are adhered to by all its officers and staff, and that those who breach the standards face the consequences the public would expect.
3. Vetting standards should be changed with immediate effect to guard against those who intend to abuse the powers of a police officer. The Met should introduce new end-to-end processes throughout an officer or staff member's service – from initial recruitment and vetting through to leaving the force – with a relentless focus on identifying and reducing opportunities for predators who seek to abuse the powers of a police officer from joining or staying in the Met.
4. Some of the worst cultures, behaviours and practices identified by the Review have been found in specialist firearms units, where standards should be at their absolute highest. The Commissioner should introduce immediate changes to address our concerns with the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) and Specialist Firearms (MO19) Commands, including:
 - i) effectively disbanding PaDP in its current form, ensuring there is an absolute 'reset' with a new ethos, identity and a focus on rooting out unacceptable behaviour.
 - ii) setting new, higher vetting and behaviour standards in its specialist armed teams to identify any conduct issues and to keep out those drawn to these roles for the wrong reasons. In addition, all current officers carrying firearms, including those in MO19 and PaDP, should be thoroughly re-vetted and have this standard applied to them retrospectively.
 - iii) revoking unequivocally and permanently firearms qualifications or 'blue cards' where any officer's values and standards fall short of public expectations.

iv) installing new, external management to oversee the Specialist Training Centre to immediately address issues with its culture and standards.

5. The Government should expedite providing the Commissioner with new powers to support his efforts to rapidly reform and clean up the Met, including:

i) providing Chief Constables the right of appeal to a Police Appeals Tribunal following a misconduct hearing when they conclude the sanction is inadequate.

ii) enabling the Met and other forces with a clear legal power to reopen closed misconduct investigations.

iii) changing police regulations to ensure that failure to maintain or achieve vetting status is grounds for removal.

iv) introducing a managed severance process to allow officers to exit from the service and ensure that the service has the skills it needs.

v) strengthening the pension forfeiture rules so that a criminal offence does not have to only be committed 'in connection' with an officer's service in order for them to lose their pension.

A new offer to women and children

The policy prioritisation of violence against women and girls has not been made an operational reality, and women and children do not get the protection and support they deserve. They need a dedicated women's protection service.

6. The Met should radically reform and re-specialise Public Protection Teams, including the establishment of new Specialist 'Soteria' teams to deal with rape and serious sexual offences. The Met should also aim to specialise its domestic abuse service to create more victim-centred approaches and to work more closely and in a more integrated way with non-police specialist domestic abuse services. These teams should be reinvigorated and properly resourced. Together this should be a new and significantly enhanced offer to women in London.

7. The Met should create an overarching children's strategy for London to address long-standing concerns about its child protection and safeguarding practices. This should:

i) address its approach to children and young people who are suspected of crimes, and its approach to protecting children and young people who are

both victims and perpetrators, for example, through criminal and sexual exploitation and grooming

ii) provide training for all officers who work with children to prevent 'adulthoodification', where police officers and others regard children, especially Black and ethnic minority children, as threats rather than children who need protection from harm.

Building trust with London's communities to restore consent

Public respect has fallen to a low point. Londoners who do not have confidence in the Met outnumber those who do, and these measures have been lower amongst Black Londoners for years. The Met has yet to free itself of institutional racism. Public consent is broken. The Met has become unanchored from the Peelian principle of policing by consent set out when it was established.

8. The Met should be reformed so that the Peelian principles of policing by consent – securing and maintaining the respect and approval of the public – are its guiding principles, and the measures against which all of its policies and practices are tested.

9. The Met should introduce a new process with Londoners to apologise for past failings and rebuild consent, particularly with communities where this is most at risk.

10. The use of stop and search in London by the Met needs a fundamental reset. The Met should establish a charter with Londoners on how and when stop and search is used, with an agreed rationale, and provide an annual account of its use by area, and by team undertaking stop and searches. Compliance with the charter should be measured independently, including the viewing of Body Worn Video footage. As a minimum, Met officers should be required to give their name, their shoulder number, the grounds for the stop and a receipt confirming the details of the stop.

A new police deal for Londoners

To rebuild trust, confidence and consent, there should be a new deal for Londoners.

11. Frontline officers are those who Londoners see and depend on the most from day to day but feel demoralised, let down by their leaders, and exposed to high stress and pressure:

i) The Met should build a frontline policing service for London which is as revered and well-resourced as its central specialist teams, giving Londoners

the Safer Neighbourhoods, Public Protection and Response teams they deserve.

ii) BCU Commanders in the Met should be empowered to account for, and explain with candour and transparency, the actions that are taken in their Borough, including those of the central, specialist units such as TSG and VCTF.

iii) The Met should recognise trauma and desensitisation in its officers as a corporate responsibility and provide trauma training for Public Protection and Response officers as a priority, making access to counselling and other services easy.

12. Londoners' voices are missing from how London is policed. Existing structures do not provide a clear way for local authorities and their residents to hold the Met to account for how they police and tackle crime on a Borough basis. A new borough based approach should be put in place, building on the positive introduction of new dedicated Borough Superintendents, to ensure structures allow for greater transparency and challenge, including democratic representatives through local authorities, provide the ability to access high quality data and review case handling, and deliver strong and consistent community engagement.

New leadership and new management

There are systemic and fundamental problems in how the Met is run and its leadership needs to be strengthened further.

13. The Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner, building on their recent appointments to lead the Met, should bring in new specialist expertise from outside the Met in permanent – rather than advisory – roles. This should be used to support them to overhaul the management of the organisation, and lead on work including reforming the culture of the Met and the creation of a workforce plan, including measurable and rapid progress on the diversity of the Met's officer corps at every level.

New oversight and accountability

The Met lacks accountability and transparency to Londoners.

14. A new governance structure should be introduced to oversee and scrutinise the changes needed and ensure full transparency and accountability to Londoners, while maintaining the operational independence of the Commissioner:

i) A new, quarterly Policing Board for London – chaired by the Mayor of London, similar to the model used for Transport for London – should be created to drive forward the changes called for in this review.

ii) The Commissioner should continue to chair the new Met Management Board responsible for the leadership, strategic direction and operational policing of the Met.

Showing London that reform is working

The issues identified in this Review cannot continue.

15. The Met and the Mayor of London should commission independent progress reviews after two years, and again after five years, so that Londoners can have trust and confidence that reform is taking place.

16. The key measures used to test whether these reforms are taking place and delivering reforms at the scale and pace necessary should include:

- Improvements in public trust, confidence and fairness amongst Londoners, and a narrowing of the gaps in these measures between Black, ethnic minority and LGBTQ+ Londoners and all Londoners
- Increases in the proportion of misconduct cases where action is taken
- Reductions in racial disparity in misconduct cases
- Improvements in the charge rates for reported crimes and, in particular, improvements in charge rates for crimes involving violence against women and girls
- Increases in the number of adult rape cases reaching court in line with Operation Soteria ambitions
- Improvements in response rates and times
- A narrowing in the gap between the diversity of the Met's workforce, including its officers and senior officers, and the make-up of the city it polices.

If sufficient progress is not being made at the points of further review, more radical, structural options, such as dividing up the Met into national, specialist and London responsibilities, should be considered to ensure the service to Londoners is prioritised.

Introduction and context

This is the final Report of Baroness Casey of Blackstock's Review of the Culture and Standards of the Metropolitan Police Service (the Met). It follows an Interim Report into the Met's internal misconduct system which was published in October 2022.¹

The Review was commissioned in October 2021 by Dame Cressida Dick QPM, then Commissioner of the Met. It followed the sentencing of a serving Met officer to whole life imprisonment for the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard in September 2021.

In commissioning the Review, Dame Cressida said the Met recognised that Sarah Everard's abduction, rape and murder had prompted grave levels of public concern. She also referred to other deeply troubling incidents which were undermining public trust and confidence in the force. Her aspiration was for a Review that would ask difficult questions in order to build a stronger Met, ensure lasting improvements to the service it provides for London, and increase public confidence.

The terms of reference were to undertake a review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Met and make recommendations on actions required.²

In particular, the Review was asked to examine the extent to which the standards of behaviour expected of officers, staff and volunteers working in the Met were sufficiently clear, consistent, appropriate and adhered to.

The Review was asked to:

- engage current and former Met personnel and other stakeholders
- review relevant systems, policies, programmes and processes in the Met
- consider the wider regulatory context in which the Met operates
- examine the Met's approach to transparency
- consider learning from other sectors and internationally.

In conducting the Review, we have:

¹ [Baroness Casey Interim Report on Misconduct](#)

² These were published in full in October 2021, see [Baroness Casey Review, Terms of Reference](#)

- listened to and engaged with many officers, former and current staff and volunteers, stakeholder groups and individuals
- held or attended around 350 meetings and conducted visits to all 12 of the Met's Basic Command Units (BCUs) and 11 of the other Operational Units that make up the Met
- conducted surveys of 6,751 current and former personnel
- polled more than 1,200 Londoners.

In addition to our listening exercises, we have analysed a vast array of public and unpublished data, research, practice and learning from the Met and other sectors and other countries.

We have been humbled and impressed by the real passion and pride of everyone who has come forward to give frank, and often painful and personal, evidence, in order to improve policing in London and to restore public confidence and trust in the Met.

A review of culture and standards

We were invited to undertake an assessment of culture and standards in the Met police and in doing so, we have gone where the evidence has led us. Our intention has been to hold a mirror up to the organisation and that has necessarily included some aspects of the organisation which have not previously been scrutinised or reviewed either by the Met or by other organisations.

- It includes the voices of those who have not been listened to, have faced adverse consequences for speaking up and do not currently feature in the reflection that the Met has of itself
- We also analyse data and statistics that are either not often reviewed or tend to be presented in ways that reflect procedural compliance or existing bias
- We comment on aspects of operational performance where we believe there are underlying cultural issues
- We examine how the Met's culture affects its central purpose: keeping Londoners safe, inspiring trust and confidence and maintaining the British model of policing by consent.

This is not intended to be a comprehensive assessment of Met performance, efficiency and effectiveness. His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspectors provide this important function annually for all forces as well as other reviews of thematic analyses, promoting best practice and undertaking assessment of partnership working undertaken with other justice inspectorates.

Nor have we examined other police forces' standards and culture and compared these with the Met's. We reference other forces where relevant and comment on what might be a national policing issue where we have evidence of this. It is for others to determine the extent to which our findings are relevant to other forces.

This Review is about "*lifting up the stones and seeing what's beneath them*" to help the Met look at themselves as they are, and as others see them.

A police service of many strengths

The funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II was watched by millions of television viewers across the world and brought huge crowds to the streets of London. The Met was highly visible in this playing a leading role in 'Operation London Bridge', which involved 10,000 police officers from across the country. Praise for the Met's management of the event and their conduct on the day itself came from a wide variety of sources. Many Londoners felt pride in seeing their police officers ensuring everyone's safety on such an important occasion.

Anyone who has worked in national or London government has seen at close quarters the Met's remarkable expertise and incisive handling of threats and incidents of terrorism. Some areas of technical expertise in the Met are world-class and globally renowned. The British model of ethical 'policing by consent' based on the Peelian principles which we describe later in this chapter has long been admired and copied internationally. Many people have examples of receiving or witnessing help from the police, and of individual officers going the extra mile with courage and good humour under difficult circumstances.

Every report, review or inspection of the police starts with the positive side. Their bravery and courage. Their readiness to run towards danger when everyone else is running from it, putting their own lives at risk to protect others. Their day-to-day willingness to deal with people who break the law. They deserve our support and respect.

But the management and leadership of the Met and those who hold them to account let down those officers and staff if they obfuscate, deny, cover up or fail to learn from mistakes, failures and wrong-doing.

We know many Met officers and staff uphold high professional standards and good conduct. We know that some of what they do is world-beating. But in order to support them and enable them to stay world-class we have to look at and accept what is wrong, learn from it, change and move forwards. That is the intent of this Review. If we do not identify and change what is wrong with the Met, we put community safety in jeopardy.

A series of incidents and scandals

The Met's strengths have been overshadowed in the public mind by a series of high-profile incidents and public reports over the last two years. These have damaged the Met's reputation and cast doubt upon its culture and standards. They include:

- in March 2021, the kidnap, rape and murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Met officer
- also in March 2021, the Met's handling of a public vigil marking this murder
- in June 2021, the Independent Panel report into the murder of Daniel Morgan in 1987 which identified institutional corruption in the Met
- in December 2021, the inquest into the murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor, which found that fundamental failings by the Met 'probably' contributed to three of the four deaths
- also in December 2021, the jailing of two Met officers for taking and sharing photos of two murdered women, Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman
- in February 2022, the publication of Operation Hotton findings by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC), which identified discrimination, misogyny, harassment and bullying – including racist, sexist and homophobic messages on social media – amongst officers based predominantly at Charing Cross police station between 2016 and 2018
- in March 2022, the publication of a Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review following an incident at an East London school
- in December 2022 and January 2023, the arrest, suspension and subsequent guilty pleas of a serving Met officer to over 50 charges of offences relating to 12 female victims, including 24 of rape, committed between 2003 and 2020.

Other reports and investigations into these events have already been published. The concern here is that they often reach findings similar to reports on earlier events. As well as identifying similar themes, which are also explored in this report, the Met's handling of these events has tended to follow a pattern.

That pattern is initially denying that there is a problem, sometimes making misleading or obfuscating statements, and making life difficult for those investigating the issue. Only when external findings eventually show wrongdoing or ineffectiveness by the Met, is there finally an admission of failings. This is usually accompanied by announcements of new actions which the Met claim address the problems and present as if they are fully implemented and effective.

Another part of the pattern is an acceptance of failings only in respect of individual officers, who are termed 'bad apples'. They are seen as distinct from the majority of officers, who do their jobs well and with integrity.

The Met's investigation into the murder of Sarah Everard was praised as *"the most impressive police investigation that I have encountered in the 30 years I have been sitting as a part-time and full-time judge"* by the Judge.³ However, at an organisational level, the response regarding the arrest and subsequent conviction of the murderer of Sarah Everard was unequal to the seriousness and magnitude of the fact that a serving officer was responsible for such awful crimes. It was as if they had been taken by surprise.

A former senior officer told the Review that the Met's response when the officer who murdered Sarah Everard was charged in March 2021 was *"astonishing and awful."* They went on to say that very few people knew he was going to be charged because the Met were worried about leaks. We were told that a senior officer responsible for the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) command at the time found out about the charge by reading it in the newspaper.

On the morning of the conviction, just before it was confirmed that the murderer had used his police warrant card identification and handcuffs to perpetrate his crimes, a former Met Detective Chief Inspector undertaking media interviews stated that the force *"do not view"* the murderer *"as a police officer."*⁴

The inappropriateness of the Met's responses was reinforced by further public statements. After the sentencing of the officer who murdered Sarah Everard, the Met suggested that women concerned about officers approaching them should ask for sight of warrant cards to prove the officer was genuine. This was despite the fact that the murderer of Sarah Everard had **used his warrant card** to identify himself as a police officer to her.

³ [Lord Justice Fulford, 30 September 2021, R v Couzens Sentencing Remarks](#)

⁴ [Sky News, 29 September 2021, Sarah Everard: Images show victim with her killer Wayne Couzens moments before he abducted her, court hears](#)

The Met's statement also advised women to wave down the bus if they were concerned about anybody claiming to be a police officer.⁵ MP for Streatham, Bell Ribeiro-Addy described the statement as playing into a "*vile culture of victim-shaming*."⁶ Former leader of the Scottish Conservatives, Ruth Davidson, referred to the suggestion as "*grim*" and "*horrendous*."⁷

Such suggestions were irrelevant to the circumstances of Sarah Everard's murder. Rather than providing assurance, they missed the point so spectacularly that, for many people, they caused further distress, more upset, and a deepening loss of confidence in the Met.

Nowhere was this illustrated more, than in the Met's response to the Vigil organised in memory of Sarah Everard.

Clapham Common Vigil

The Vigil held for Sarah Everard took place ten days after her abduction, rape, and murder by a serving Met police officer. Inside the Met, officers expressed shock, horror and upset at the news that this had happened at the hands of a serving police officer. Her disappearance, on a brightly lit main road, also prompted an outpouring from women and girls sharing their experiences of harassment and violence and their sense of fear when walking alone. The arrest of a serving officer for the crime had provoked outrage and a wave of distrust and fear towards the police not only in London but nationally.

London was under Tier 4 restrictions of the COVID-19 regulations at the time, effectively banning all outdoor gatherings of more than two people. So, when Reclaim These Streets approached the Met with plans for a socially distanced event in her memory, the Met had to strike a balance between the need to acknowledge the pain and outrage of what had happened and the need to follow current COVID-19 regulations.

There were many things to balance including:

- if the Met 'cherry-picked' which events they facilitated and which they didn't, they could be challenged in court

⁵ The Met's guidance from this time has been taken down, but reporting at the time cites the guidance directly. For example, [The Independent, 1 October 2021, Met Police issues advice to women to 'shout or wave a bus down' if they don't trust a male officer](#)

⁶ [Bell Ribeiro-Addy MP, 1 October 2021, Twitter](#)

⁷ [Baroness Ruth Davidson, 1 October 2021, Twitter](#)

- that London was in the highest tier of restrictions due to the number of COVID-19 related deaths but that regulations did allow for exceptions where there was a 'reasonable excuse' for gatherings
- the Met's legal obligation to always act in accordance with human rights law⁸
- the importance of adhering to the Peelian principle of not 'pandering to public opinion' but demonstrating 'absolute impartial service to law...without regard to the justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws,' as well as maintaining 'at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police.'⁹

The Met's decision was that the Vigil, should it go ahead, would be unlawful. When challenged in court by Reclaim These Streets, the court found that All Tier Regulations must be interpreted in a way that protects and gives effect to human rights. The Met decided that this did not change anything.¹⁰ They confirmed their decision and Reclaim These Streets felt they had no alternative but to cancel the event due to the threat of police action and potential criminal conviction.

However, it was clear at that point that the Vigil was going to take place whether it was officially cancelled or not.¹¹ But Reclaim These Streets would not now be providing the management and infrastructure for the Vigil, effectively leaving the Met to put in their own arrangements to police it in a sensitive way.

There were instructions not to have a heavy police presence. There were no police helicopters deployed and only one CCTV van was on site, placed far away from the gathering. But it could have gone further: the Review was told that a member of the Met's Management Board suggested that the Vigil be policed with only women officers, but that this idea was rejected as impractical and too controversial amongst rank and file officers.

⁸ Including the rights of people to freedom of peaceful assembly (Article 11) and freedom of expression (Article 10)

⁹ Peelian Principles

¹⁰ [HMICFRS, 30 March 2021, *The Sarah Everard vigil – An inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service's policing of a vigil held in commemoration of Sarah Everard on Clapham Common on Saturday 13 March 2021*](#)

¹¹ As the HMICFRS report points out, it 'was clear to the council representatives that the vigil was likely to go ahead, whether supported or not, from the levels of interest being expressed on social media and the fact that other local planned events had been cancelled in favour of this one'

What happened afterwards, when the Vigil inevitably went ahead and video footage of Met officers holding down and arresting women at the Vigil quickly went viral across social media, led to widespread condemnation and accusations that the Met were 'heavy-handed' and 'tone-deaf' in their policing of the Vigil.

After the Vigil took place, the Met continued to defend their view that they were right. This included continuing to pursue those issued with Fixed Penalty Notices at the Vigil. They continually appealed the decision of the High Court that found that it was unlawful for them to have not facilitated the original Vigil, despite a judge calling their claim 'hopeless.'

An organisation charged with the safety of women and girls might have paused to consider how they should respond to the strength of feeling given that the murderer was a serving police officer.

Clearly the Met were under huge pressure at the time but under that pressure, Met culture seemed to drive the organisation's decision making, with characteristic defensiveness, internal focus and lack of humility.

The Met failed to recognise the significance of the murder of Sarah Everard, why there was such anger and grief and their own role within that. Their own abhorrence of Sarah Everard's murder did not extend to a recognition of how badly let down women in London felt by the Met itself, nor the importance of allowing people to express their grief and anger about this. This tendency to focus inwards, on their own feelings and their own officers and not see or accept things from other perspectives is a recurring feature of Met culture. When a member of the Met Board suggested that they might consider deploying only women officers, their response was internally focused – that it would go down badly with the rank and file.

Had they acknowledged the depth of feeling of women in London, they would have recognised that the Vigil would go ahead anyway and would have worked out how they could have supported it in order to minimise the risks to public health.

As it was, the outcome of the Vigil only reinforced mistrust and damaged confidence further in the Met.

The Met defended its actions both publicly and to the Review team, emphasising the abuse faced by their officers, and the presence of political groups at the Vigil as evidence that they had 'no choice' but to try and stop it from going ahead, and to police it in the way that they did.

The events around the Vigil illustrate how far culture in the Met had become removed from the founding principles of policing by consent. It took the view that strict compliance with regulations overrides all circumstances even where the law itself allows exceptions and every police officer has discretion around the enforcement of the law. The inability to look at things from other perspectives even in these shocking circumstances are further examples of their lack of humility.

We identified similar patterns of unpreparedness, denial, and an inability to grasp the seriousness of issues during the Review in the Met's response to a series of high-profile cases.

In response to one case, the relevant BCU told the Review it had been aware of the incident for nearly a year before it became public. They said that they always knew that it *"would become a big problem"* and that *"this day [referring to it becoming public knowledge] would come."* Despite this, the Met seemed unable at the time to recognise its magnitude when it became public.

In the immediate days following the incident becoming public, a senior officer in the Met seemed less than concerned. They had not read or asked for a briefing on the incident, yet were ready to defend the actions of the Met without knowing the facts.

"The Board has totally misunderstood the room – people have called me saying this is the worst thing the Met have ever done – and the Board were kind of dismissive."

In response to another case, a senior officer described the Met's failure to interrogate the underlying issues it had identified. The senior officer told us there was *"celebration"* from some senior officers that the Met had *"managed to limit the damage rather than the approach of 'what are the issues?'"*

The Review saw a culture where the Met was more comfortable focusing on individual wrongdoers or procedural failings than on systemic issues or bias. It leans into the 'bad apples' and 'wrong'uns' rhetoric, rather than accept wider failings. We return to these issues throughout the Review, because the lack of curiosity and defensive responses to events are deeply ingrained in the Met.

The impact of many of Met failings are often then felt nationally by other police forces and other staff and officers working in policing. As one senior officer said, *"when the Met sneeze we all get the cold."* After the Children's Commissioner undertook a

study into the Met police's use of strip search of children in August 2022,¹² the National Police Chiefs' Council had to defend the national use of strip search following further work undertaken by the Runnymede Trust that called for an end to the practice.¹³

So while the Met buries its head in the sand and attempts to manage the controversy away, others in policing have to deal with the problems that have been created for them.

¹² [Children's Commissioner, 8 August 2022, *Strip Search of Children by the Metropolitan Police Service – new analysis by the Children's Commissioner for England*](#)

¹³ [Runnymede Trust, 16 January 2023, *Over-policed and under-protected: the road to Safer Schools*](#)

Chapter 1: The Met and Londoners

Chapter summary

In a growing and increasingly diverse city, the Met has tried but failed to ensure its workforce fully reflects all the communities it serves. In recent years, the nature of crimes being committed has changed and wider demands have grown, with more crimes being reported but fewer cleared up. In the same period, public trust and confidence in the Met has fallen, hitting its lowest ever point, it is persistently lower amongst Black Londoners but also now falling sharply in communities that have traditionally scored them highly. The Peelian principle of policing by consent – so fundamental to the British model of policing – is at risk, and public respect needs to be regained.

1.1. London's dynamic population

Any public service must understand the population it serves. It follows that such organisations – including the Met – should have policies in place to connect with all the different communities they serve, in order to understand and reflect their concerns and priorities; to monitor, analyse and predict change as far as possible; and to stay up to date and relevant to those communities.

Nationally, London presents a different challenge in terms of policing to the rest of the country. London is where British policing started. Having been a major settlement for two millennia and covering an area of over 600 square miles, it is now home to over 9 million residents. Every day, this resident population is swelled by many millions of commuters and other visitors who travel to the city for work or leisure. In 2017, overseas residents spent over 130 million nights visiting London.¹⁴

The challenge of policing London is never fixed. The population is growing. After a period of population decline post-war up until the 1980s which saw the number of people living in London fall below 7 million, London's population has grown significantly over the last forty years. Just in the year to the middle of 2020, London's population is estimated to have grown by 40,000, including through both national and international migration, exceeding 9 million for the first time ever. It is set to continue to grow, with central range projections produced by the Greater London Authority of between 10.3 and 10.7 million people by 2050.¹⁵

London is also increasingly diverse. The majority of London residents today are from non-White British ethnic backgrounds. Londoners identifying as White British

¹⁴ [Number of nights spent by overseas residents visiting London](#)

¹⁵ [Greater London Authority, 2023: Interim 2021-based Population Projection Results](#)

account for 36.8% of the population in the capital, compared with 81.7% across England and Wales. In London, 20.7% of the population are Asian, 17% White non-British, 13.5% Black, 5.7% Mixed or multiple ethnicities, and 6.3% from other ethnic groups.¹⁶

In 2021, more than 4 in 10 (40.6%) of London's population were born outside the United Kingdom (UK), a higher proportion than in any other UK region. 18 of the 20 local authorities with the highest proportions of non-UK born residents in England and Wales were in London. In the London Boroughs of Brent, Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea, the majority of residents were foreign-born (56.1%, 55.6% and 53.9% respectively). Londoners speak over 300 different languages and, in the 2021 Census, more than one in five (21.6%) of London's population reported that English was not their main language.¹⁷

The city's diversity is not just in terms of ethnicity. In the 2021 Census, 4.3% of Londoners identified as gay, lesbian, bisexual or another sexual orientation, compared with 3.2% nationally.¹⁸ This makes London the English region with the highest proportion of people who identified in this way.

Diverse and strong religious affiliations are also a feature of London. 66% of Londoners report an affiliation with a religion, compared with 57% across England and Wales. More Londoners affiliate with Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism, Buddhism and other non-Christian religions than the population across England and Wales, while fewer Londoners affiliate with Christianity than the population nationally.

The age profile of London is also different to the rest of the country. In a nation with an ageing population, London has a younger age profile than the rest of the United Kingdom. Only 11.9% of people are aged 65 and above, compared to 18.3% across the rest of England. Traditionally, younger people move to London in their twenties and early thirties for work and London's cultural experiences. But as these younger groups age, they form partnerships and families, and often move out of London.

Hand-in-hand with such growth, diversity and change, London has a wide variation in levels of income – with much larger gaps between the richest and poorest than in the rest of the United Kingdom, especially if considered after the high costs of housing in the capital. The income of the poorest 10% of Londoners is less than two-thirds of

¹⁶ [Regional ethnic diversity: Census 2021](#)

¹⁷ [Language, England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

¹⁸ This was a voluntary question, and questions about gender identity were asked separately to those on sexual orientation – see: [Sexual orientation and gender identity: Census 2021](#)

their equivalent group across the rest of the United Kingdom, while the richest 10% in London have incomes that are nearly a third higher than their equivalent group outside the capital. This means that the richest 10% in London have ten times the income of the poorest 10%, whereas the richest outside London have five times the income of the poorest.¹⁹ In the quarter ending December 2022, London had a higher rate of unemployment than the rest of the country: 4.5% compared with 3.7% across the United Kingdom.²⁰

Geographically, London is a patchwork of deprivation and affluence, with more and less deprived neighbourhoods located cheek by jowl across many Boroughs. The centre, City and West End tend to be the least deprived areas, alongside some of the more suburban areas in outer London, particularly in the south and west around Richmond and Kingston. In contrast, parts of inner London, particularly around Tower Hamlets, Hackney and Islington, parts of East London and the western side of the Lea Valley include clusters of highly deprived neighbourhoods. The connection between deprivation and crime are well known, but writ large in London.

Like all public services, the Met faces the challenge of keeping up with a constantly changing population and responding to new challenges which often differ between and within geographical areas. This requires an analytical, responsive approach, which protects poorer areas and communities.

The Met does not appear to have undertaken a deep analysis to understand the diverse communities we have highlighted in this chapter. It may know some of the facts, and in 2021 it conducted a high-level future capabilities exercise: 'A Blueprint for 2029.' But it does not translate these into plans or use them to recalibrate the services it delivers. Later chapters of this Review show that, while the Met has aspirations to engage with London's communities, it does not do enough to make its workforce look like and represent the make-up of the community it polices, undermining both trust and confidence, and effectiveness.

1.2. Changing service demands and performance

Crime in London

Overall levels of recorded crime in London are 12% higher now than in 2012-13, but have jumped up and down over that period, peaking in 2019-20, dropping sharply during the COVID-19 pandemic and rising again after 2021-22.²¹ This is national, not a London specific trend: the overall number of offences recorded by the police

¹⁹ [Economic Fairness - Income Inequality - London Datastore](#)

²⁰ [Unemployment Rate, Region - London Datastore](#)

²¹ [Metropolitan Police Service Crime Dashboard – Total Notifiable Offences. Period ending January 2023](#)

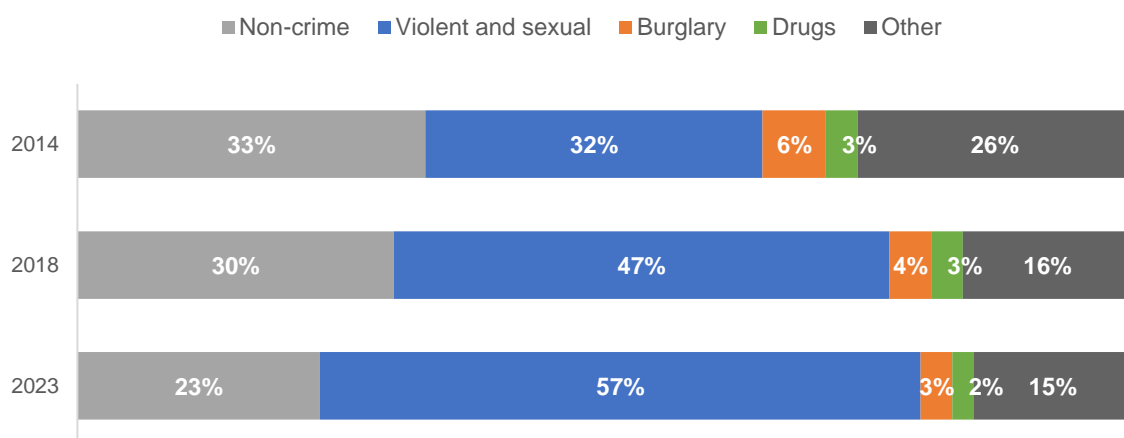
nationally in 2022-23 was the highest it had been since new crime counting rules were introduced 20 years ago.

Levels of *recorded* crime do not give a completely accurate picture of how many crimes there really are, because they depend on the willingness of people to report offences, on levels of policing activity, and on how effective forces are at logging them. In the past, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) have been critical of the police in general for poor performance on recording crime. Levels of recorded crime are particularly important to this Review because they show how many and what kinds of offences police officers are faced with, and the demands these generate on police time and resources.

As well as a higher volume of crime, there have also been key changes in the mix of crimes recorded. Traditional volume crime such as burglary, criminal damage and some theft offences have declined. But there have been significant increases in low volume but more serious violent and sexual offences.²²

The figure below shows the projected growth in the proportion of complex crime. It suggests that, nationally, serious violence and sexual offences forms the majority of recorded crime, with crimes such as drugs and burglary declining. This has significant implications for the resourcing of investigations that involve vulnerable victims and witnesses.

Figure 1.1: Figure 15 from Crest Poliscopes. Proportion of complex crimes, including serious violence and sexual offences, as part of the overall crime mix, 2014, 2018 and 2023 (projected)



²² MPS Crime Data Dashboard

The tables which follow illustrate these changes in the crime mix in London. Traditional volume crime, like arson and criminal damage, burglary and drug offences are all in decline, whilst violence against the person, public order, possession of weapons, and sexual offences are all rising.²³

²³ MPS Crime Data Dashboard

Figure 1.2: Met Offence Data Table: period ending January 2023²⁴

	Total crime	Arson & criminal damage	Burglary	Drug offences	Poss. of weapons	Public order	Robbery	Sexual offences	Theft	Vehicle offences	Violence against the person
Number of offences	872,841	53,382	53,864	43,407	6,107	58,863	28,197	25,209	241,403	109,120	241,303
% total crime	-	6%	6%	5%	1%	7%	3%	3%	28%	13%	28%
rate per 1000 population	99.2	6.1	6.1	4.9	0.7	6.7	3.2	2.9	27.4	12.4	27.4
1 year % change in number of offences	8%	0%	0%	-8%	-2%	-3%	20%	3%	27%	7%	2%
5 year % change in number of offences	6%	-15%	-43%	16%	-29%	18%	-13%	29%	8%	4%	18%
10 year % change in number of offences	12%	-12%	-42%	-16%	62%	127%	-20%	180%	1%	15%	90%
1 year change % of all crime	-	-0.5%	-0.5%	-0.9%	-0.1%	-0.8%	0.3%	-0.1%	4.3%	-0.1%	-1.6%
5 year change in % of all crime	-	-1.4%	-3.2%	0.5%	-0.3%	0.9%	-0.7%	0.7%	0.4%	-0.3%	3.4%
10 year change in % of all crime	-	-1.7%	-5.9%	-1.7%	0.2%	3.4%	-1.3%	1.7%	-3.1%	0.3%	11.3%
Sanction detection rate	8%	6%	7%	39%	67%	10%	8%	9%	2%	1%	8%
1 year change in sanction detection rate	-1%	-1%	1%	-3%	3%	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	0%
5 year sanction detection rate change	-6%	-5%	1%	-51%	5%	-7%	1%	-5%	-4%	-2%	-9%
10 year sanction detection rate change	-13%	-8%	-4%	-51%	-24%	-31%	-8%	-16%	-8%	-5%	-21%

²⁴ MPS Crime Data Dashboard

Figure 1.3 - Met Offence sub-group Data Table: period ending January 2023²⁵

	Homicide	Rape	Violence with injury	Other sexual offences	DA offences	Gun crime	Knife Crime	Hate crime
Number of offences	112	9,228	77,595	15,981	95,779	1,470	12,754	24,712
% total crime	0.0%	1.1%	8.9%	1.8%	11.0%	0.2%	1.5%	2.8%
rate per 1000 population	0.0	1.0	8.8	1.8	10.9	0.2	1.4	2.8
1 year % change in number of offences	-14%	1%	5%	4%	0%	10%	13%	-7%
5 year % change in number of offences	-18%	41%	0%	40%	22%	-43%	-13%	1%
10 year % change in number of offences	5%	244%	34%	152%	95%	-33%	7%	104%
1 year change % of all crime	0.0%	-0.1%	-0.2%	-0.1%	-0.9%	0.0%	0.1%	-0.4%
5 year change in % of all crime	0.0%	0.3%	-0.5%	0.4%	1.4%	-0.1%	-0.3%	-0.1%
10 year change in % of all crime	0.0%	0.7%	1.4%	1.0%	4.7%	-0.1%	-0.1%	1.3%
Sanction detection rate	88%	6%	11%	11%	10%	23%	15%	14%
1 year change in sanction detection rate	-13%	2%	-1%	3%	0%	2%	-2%	1%
5 year sanction detection rate change	13%	-4%	-11%	-6%	-15%	2%	-2%	-5%
10 year sanction detection rate change	-9%	-18%	-23%	-15%	-34%	-5%	-9%	-28%

²⁵ MPS Crime Data Dashboard

Since 2016, the Met has prioritised violent crime, reflecting the priorities of the strategy and plans for policing London set out by the Mayor of London and Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC).

Recorded crimes that relate to serious violence show long-term decreases in robbery and gun crime. However, as the table above indicates, the majority of serious and sexual violence offences have increased, sometimes substantially.

Some of the significant uplifts in violence offences have been influenced by changes in definitions of violence or by new legislation rather than actual increases. The Crime Survey for England and Wales which measures victimisation (rather than crimes that have been reported) does not suggest that there has been a significant increase in violence nationally. Indeed, it indicates that violence has actually been falling since 1997).²⁶

That indicates both that, as a society, we are less tolerant of violence and therefore more likely to report it, and that the police are more likely to record it. This in turn adds to the demand placed on the police. For example, recorded rapes and other sexual offences have been rising rapidly since 2012. These tend to be offences that are more complex due to the vulnerability of victims. They take longer to investigate and increasingly involve analysing digital data. While these tend to be lower volume cases, the time demands that these crime types place on officers can be significant. Later chapters consider how the caseloads of detectives working in public protection are affected by these increases.

Domestic abuse and violence are also high volume and high complexity crimes. They present particular challenges for officers. Cases flagged by officers as domestic abuse-related have nearly doubled over ten years to over 95,000 a year.

In our survey of Met officers and staff, and of Londoners, we see how respondents think different types of crimes *are* being prioritised by the Met, and how they think they *should be* prioritised:

Met staff survey respondents see gun/knife/gang-related crime (53%), domestic abuse and violence (48%), terrorism/extremism (42%) and sexual offences including rape (31%) as the crime types that the Met's leadership prioritises the most.

When asked what the Met leadership *should* prioritise, sexual offences (50%) and street crime/robbery (29%) are highlighted, compared with those citing

²⁶ [Crime Survey for England and Wales](#)

terrorism/extremism (25%). This demonstrates the diverging attitudes to what Met respondents feel *is* currently prioritised by the Met versus what *should* be.

This broadly aligns with Londoners' views on what the Met should prioritise. Half of Londoners think the Met should prioritise gun, knife and gang-related crime (50%), while 42% think sexual offences including rape, and 29% think domestic abuse and violence against children should be prioritised.

Women are more likely to cite sexual offences (49%) and domestic abuse and violence against children (36%) as a priority (compared with 35% and 22% of men respectively).

Men are more likely to think the Met should prioritise street crime (32%) and anti-social behaviour (18%), compared with 25% and 11% of women.

While crime demand has increased, nationally there has also been a significant decline in the rate at which offences have been cleared up over the same period. In the Met, the proportion of offences receiving a sanction detection (that is, a conviction or other formal sanction) has more than halved over 10 years, from 21% of offences in 2012-13, to 8% in 2022-3. This reflects the national picture.

Sanction detection rates between 2012-13 and 2022-23 indicate that some of the fall is attributable to the increasing complexity and seriousness of crime. For instance, the sanction detection rate for violence offences, drug offences, robbery, hate crime and violence with injury have more than halved, while the rate for domestic abuse, rape, and other sexual offences has dropped over 75% in the past ten years.²⁷

Other factors are also at play. There has been a long-term downward trend in victims supporting prosecution. 18.5% of cases are being closed due to evidential difficulties where the victim was not supporting police action. It should be noted that the Met compares much better than England and Wales average in this respect. Nationally, over one in four cases do not progress due to victims not supporting prosecution.²⁸

Shortages of police officers and detectives are likely to have had an impact on how quickly officers can respond. Response times for incidents have also increased over

²⁷From 2012/13 to 2021/22, sanction detection rates for: violence against the person offences fell 21% points from 30% to 8%; drug offences fell 51% points from 91% to 5%; robbery fell 8% points from 16% to 8%; hate crime fell 28% points from 42% to 14%; violence with injury fell 23% points from 34% to 11%; domestic abuse fell 34% points from 44% to 10%; rape fell 18% points from 24% to 6%; other sexual offences fell 15% points from 26% to 11%

²⁸ [Gov.uk, police recorded crime open data tables](#)

time, which also has an impact on crimes being solved. The average response times for I-grade (the most urgent calls) has increased from 10 to 12 minutes between 2012 and 2021 and for S-grade (the second most urgent) from 44 minutes to 107 minutes over the same period.²⁹

Overall, *more* crimes are being recorded and *fewer* are being cleared up.

The *increases* in recorded crime from 2016 coincide with the *declines* in Londoners' confidence in the Met to do a good job locally, which we explore further below. At a more personal level, many officers say they worry that they are letting people down: the rape survivor, the family whose house has been burgled, or the person who has suffered a violent street robbery.

In our survey of Londoners, the majority say they are confident in the ability of the Met to respond to emergency calls (69%) and to protect the public (63%). However, only 44% are confident in the Met's ability to respond to non-emergency calls, with half (51%) saying they are not confident in this aspect of policing.

Non-crime demand

Many officers have told us of the additional demands placed on the police through non-crime demand; enforcing social distancing rules through the pandemic was one example. More worryingly, demand has resulted from gaps in wider public service provision, for example around missing and exploited children.

In 2021-22 the Met investigated over 41,000 cases of missing people, of which 5,000 (12%) were high risk. There has been a 190% increase in high-risk missing person cases over the last ten years, with 75% of high-risk cases relating to adults, the majority of whom are suffering from mental ill-health or suicidal ideation.³⁰

Demands have also increased in relation to mental health issues more widely. We should make it clear here that this is not about people with mental health problems who have been victimised or who are reporting crime. This might take more officer time due to their particular needs and level of vulnerability. The police have responsibilities to fulfil in order to protect life.

²⁹ [Metropolitan Police Service, *Police callout response times from 2011 to 2021*](#)

³⁰ Data provided by the Metropolitan Police to the Review

However, we were concerned that Met officer resources are being drawn into responding to, and managing, mental health issues due to lack of provision for those in crisis. Met force-wide data shows that:³¹

- demands under the Mental Health Act have been increasing year-on-year since 2013³²
- 50% of mental health detentions were taken to A&E rather than a Health Based Place of Safety (HBPOS)
- in 60% of occasions when the patient was taken to A&E rather than a HBPOS this was because the NHS Trust stated that no beds were available
- the average duration of officer time handing over a patient at A&E was 14 hours and 8-10 hours for handover to a HBPOS
- in over 60% of S.136 detentions, a police vehicle was used to transport individuals to the place of safety due to lack of ambulance availability
- police officers are making decisions to use detention powers (S.136) when there might be less intrusive alternatives, because they lack access to mental health professionals. Over 50% of decisions are made without advice.

This is an issue that has been well documented. For example, a 2018 HMICFRS report on policing and mental health said:

[Too many aspects of the broader mental health system are broken; the police are left to pick up the pieces.](#)³³

We reiterate this point here to create a fuller picture of the demands for service being placed on the police, and of the frustration felt by officers on the frontline. Many officers were very disturbed by the decisions they were having to make when they did not feel qualified to do so.

³¹ Metropolitan Police Service, Turnaround Board paper 'Update on Mental Health', October 2022

³² Demands are defined as S.135 warrants (see below) and S.136 detentions. S.135 of the Mental Health Act provides a power for the police to enter someone's home and take them to a HBPOS for a mental health assessment. S.136 provides a power for police to take a person to and/or keep them at a place of safety, without a warrant, in cases where that person is in need of immediate care and control.

³³ [HMICFRS, November 2018, Policing and Mental Health: Picking up the Pieces](#)

While statistics on recorded crime do not give a complete picture of levels of crime being committed, and data on non-crime demands on police time is relatively poor, the information available presents a picture of changing and more complex demands on police time in recent years.

1.3. Public confidence and trust in the Met

With declining success in apprehending criminals and prosecuting them for crime and a series of scandals and incidents, it is not surprising that public confidence in the Met is falling. Indeed, in some communities it is at rock bottom. The Peelian principles of policing by consent, which we examine towards the end of this chapter, require the approval, respect and willing co-operation of the public. This is fundamental to policing communities and protecting the public, so we should be extremely concerned about the significant drops in public trust and confidence in London.

There are two main measures of public confidence and trust used by the Met which are included in the MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey.³⁴ MOPAC and the Met deserve credit for capturing this data. These track public attitudes and responses to two statements:

- “The MPS is an organisation that I can trust”, and
- “The police do a good job in my local area.”

Historically, the Met has scored fairly highly with the public on both statements, and the first of these – on trust – has scored more highly than the second – on confidence – in the police doing a good job locally. But both have been declining in the last few years.

MOPAC’s modelling of its Public Attitudes Survey results shows that perceptions of police effectiveness and engagement or treatment by the police are important drivers shaping attitudes to both confidence and trust. Confidence is more strongly associated with patrol visibility, social cohesion and local concerns, whereas trust is more strongly associated with police transparency and accountability.³⁵

We noted that these measures on trust and confidence have been used interchangeably to talk up levels of trust in a way that is confusing to the public.

At the February 2022 Police and Crime Committee, the Deputy Mayor for Policing said:

³⁴ [MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey Dashboard](#)

³⁵ MOPAC, Public Trust in the Metropolitan Police Service Q2 20-21

“When you look at the Public Attitude Survey that MOPAC undertakes...51% of Londoners said they had confidence in the MPS. That has plummeted since 2017. In 2017 it was 68%...The other thing that you can see... is the gap between Black Londoners, LBGTQ+ Londoners and ‘Mixed’ Londoners...For some of those categories, less than 50% have trust and confidence in the MPS.”³⁶

In response, the Acting Commissioner said:

“Earlier this week I saw the results of the most recent survey carried out not by the MPS but by MOPAC on behalf of the Mayor, which shows that three quarters of Londoners – 75% – continue to trust the MPS despite all of the current and very real challenges which we know we face.”

There are two more indicators of public trust and confidence captured by MOPAC which are less frequently reported:

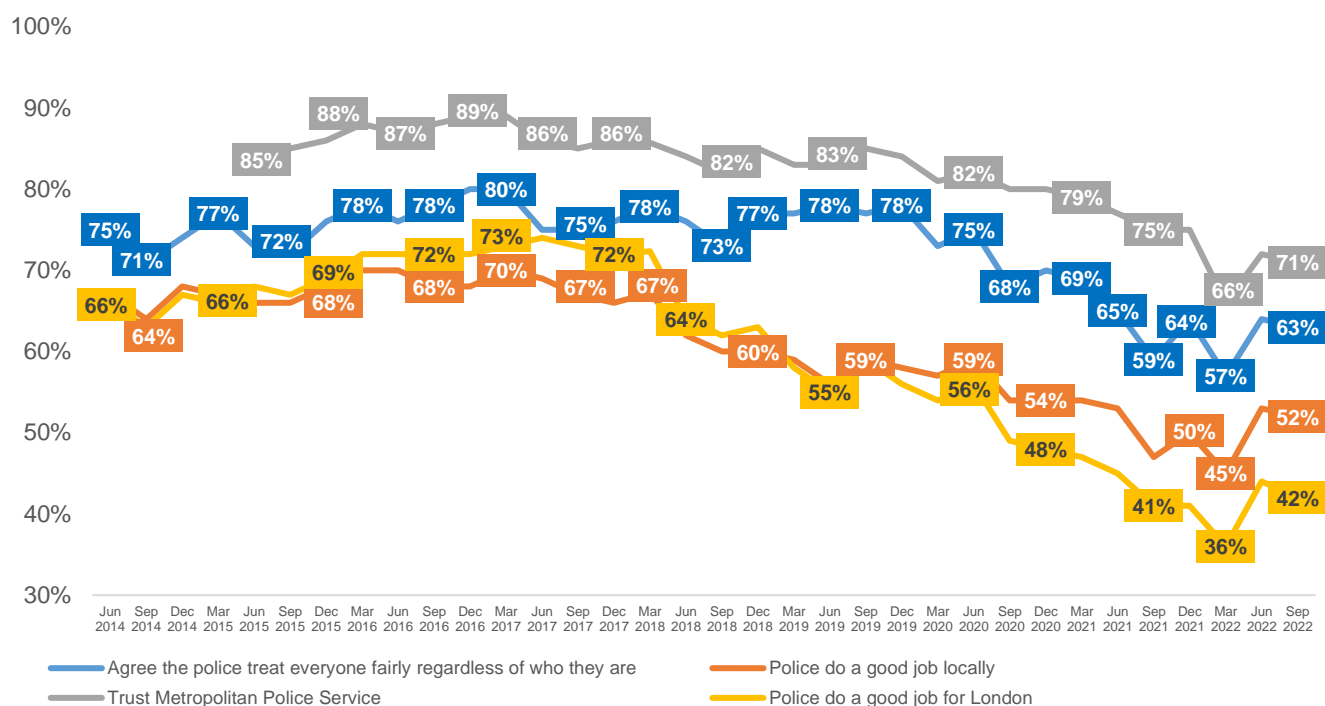
- “The police do a good job for London” and
- “The police treats everyone fairly regardless of who they are.”

The first of these – London-wide confidence – presents a view of public confidence in the Met as an organisation, so is a helpful complement to the local confidence measure. The second indicator – fairness – speaks to how far the public believes the Met legitimately and proportionally uses their power.

Taken together, the four measures on public trust and confidence (on trust, local and London-wide confidence, and fairness) are a useful basket of indicators which should be used to gauge the extent to which the Met is achieving public consent to the way it polices London. All four measures have been in decline for some time, as the graph which follows shows.

³⁶ [London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, 23 February 2022, *Public Minutes: Appendix 1*](#)

Figure 1.4: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage respondents who agree the police treats everyone fairly regardless of who they are; trust the Metropolitan Police Service; think the police do a good job locally; think the police to a good job for London, June 2014 to September 2022 (discrete quarterly data points)



Since 2015:

- public trust in the Met has fallen from a high point of 89% in March 2017 to a low of 66% in March 2022
- public confidence in the Met to do a good job locally has fallen from a high point of 70% in March 2016 to a low of 45% in March 2022
- public confidence in the Met to do a good job for London has fallen from a high point of 74% in June 2017 to a low point of 36% in March 2022
- public agreement that the police in London treat everyone fairly, regardless of who they are has fallen from a high point of 80% in March 2017 to a low point of 57% in March 2022.³⁷

³⁷ [MOPAC Trust and Confidence Dashboard](#)

Trust and confidence in the Met are at different levels within different demographic groups across London and are changing in different ways:³⁸

- People from Black and Mixed ethnic groups have consistently lower trust and confidence in the Met, frequently scoring around 10-20% lower than average on trust and belief in fairness, and 5-10% lower on local and London-wide confidence, and with declining scores across all measures. Chapter 9.3 of this Report discusses this further
- Confidence, and particularly trust and belief in fairness, in the Met amongst younger people and those from the LGBT+ community have fallen sharply in recent periods, from close to average scores to notably lower
- White Londoners, older respondents, and those who do not identify as LGBT+ typically have higher trust and fairness scores. These are declining, but remaining above average. However, their confidence in local policing also shows sharp declines.

On the positive side, the two most recent quarterly surveys have shown signs of positive change, with all four measures seeing an increase of 5-7%. However for some of the trust and confidence indicators, the gap between demographic groups remains as evident as ever. For trust, the difference between Black and White British respondents is 17%. For fairness it is 11%. For the two confidence measures, the gap is closing. For local confidence, there is no gap at all between Black and White British scores (48%), but this is as much the product of a reduction in the White British scores as it is an increase in the confidence of Black Londoners in their local police. For some groups, like LGBT+ Londoners, scores continue to plummet.

This basket of indicators provides a clear and concerning picture of declining public confidence and trust in the Met. Despite a recent uptick in trust and confidence measures, this came from a position of the lowest scores ever recorded and the decline has been evident for a number of years.

Some groups – particularly Black Londoners – have been known to have low levels of trust and confidence in the Met for an even longer period. This has not been addressed. Rather, it has been neglected. In the last five years Black Londoners have increasingly been joined in their lack of trust and confidence by a much broader cohort in London's population, including groups that have traditionally held the Met in high regard.

³⁸ The demographic groups referred to in the Review's analysis reflects the categories used by MOPAC in their survey

The negative trends in crime and public confidence over the last few years reported in this Review are not unique to the Met. Other forces across the UK have seen falling crime outcomes and public confidence. There has also been a global decline in public confidence in policing associated, in part, with the Black Lives Matter movement and other protests highlighting current and historical discrimination. But the declines in London are more acute and the scale of the population and size of the Met are far more significant.

The impact on the Met's reputation is being felt by officers and staff in the Met and by Londoners. It can be seen in the results of our survey of Met employees and Londoners.

Indeed, officers and staff in the Met who responded to the survey have a more negative view of the Met's external reputation than Londoners:

- Nearly three quarters (74%) of Met employees who responded to the survey think the Met's external reputation is poor
- 12% of respondents think the Met's reputation is good. Certain groups of respondents are more likely to have a positive view. Staff (17% vs police officers 11%); new employees who have been in the Met for less than 2 years (17%) and those working in Met Operations (16%) think the Met's reputation is good
- Two in five Londoners (41%) think the Met's reputation is poor, compared to a third (34%) who think it is good. This varies, with over half of LGBTQ+ Londoners (54%) and Black Londoners (53%) saying the Met's reputation is poor (compared to 40% of non-LGBTQ+ Londoners and 40% of White Londoners)
- Those on higher incomes (over £100k a year) (53%); men (42%); those living in inner London (42%) and from White ethnic groups (40%) are more likely to think the Met's reputation is good
- 85% of Met staff survey respondents think the Met's reputation has worsened in the last 12 months while just 4% think it has got better. This perception of change is more negative than views expressed by Londoners, amongst whom 45% think it has got worse and 22% think it has got better.

When giving reasons for *why* they think the Met's reputation has worsened:

- Met employee survey respondents are most likely to cite negative media coverage (93%); high profile incidents and scandals (86%); poor behaviour

and actions of individual officers in the Met (85%); lack of funding for the Met (64%); poor training (63%) and failures of leadership and management structures within the Met (63%)

- Londoners are most likely to cite poor behaviours and actions of individual officers in the Met (77%); high profile incidents and scandals (68%); institutional bias within the Met (55%); failures of leadership and management structures within the Met (54%) and negative media coverage (53%).

Whilst negative media coverage is cited by the large majority of Met staff survey respondents as a reason for the Met's reputation worsening (93%), it is only similarly cited by just over half (53%) of Londoners.

1.4. Why public consent matters: the Peelian principles

Having looked at how the Met has been performing in tackling crime and how Londoners' trust and confidence in the Met has changed, it is important to consider why public consent – the idea that 'the police are the public, the public are the police' – matters in British policing.

The concept of public consent in policing derives from what are known as the nine Peelian principles, named after the founder of the Met Police, Sir Robert Peel. They are believed to have been devised by the first joint Commissioners of Police of the Metropolis when the Met was first established in 1829. They are reproduced below.

In a 1956 study, police historian Charles Reith described the policing by consent philosophy as:

unique in history and throughout the world because it derived not from fear but almost exclusively from public co-operation with the police, induced by them designedly by behaviour which secures and maintains for them approval, respect and affection of the public.³⁹

The model of policing by consent reflects a belief in an ethical model of policing. Police officers serve as members of the public in uniform and they exercise powers with the consent, approval, support and willing cooperation of other members of the public. They maintain the order in society that the public want, and would otherwise have to maintain themselves.

³⁹ [Home Office, 10 December 2012, *Definition of policing by consent*](#)

Consent is not unconditional. It relies on the police operating with integrity and with accountability.

There is a virtuous circularity to the Peelian principles. If implemented effectively, they result in the public co-operating with the police in supporting and observing the law, meaning fewer crimes taking place, and there is little or no need for use of force or compulsion by the police. Conversely, if the principles are not being observed, public co-operation reduces, crime increases and greater force and compulsion are used, creating a negative cycle.

Despite the age of the Peelian principles, they remain at the heart of the Met's stated approach to policing in London. In February 2022, one of the Met's senior leaders wrote on the Met's intranet that the

*Peelian principles are not an abstract theory, but the cornerstone of policing and still totally relevant today.*⁴⁰

Many of the values and standards of conduct adopted by the Met and other UK Police Forces – including in the College of Policing's Code of Ethics – link back strongly to the Peelian principles.

There is explicit recognition in Met plans and strategies of the important part that adherence to the Peelian principles can play in gaining public trust and confidence. They are set out in full as the Nine Principles of Policing in the Met's diversity and inclusion strategy (STRIDE):⁴¹

STRIDE continues the tradition of policing by consent, established for the Met and honours the Peelian principles.

In his foreword to the Police and Crime Plan for London 2022-2025, the Mayor, Sadiq Khan said, of increasing trust and confidence:

This is the foundation of our system of policing by consent and crucial to everything we want to achieve in this Plan. We appreciate that public trust has been affected by a series of deeply concerning incidents that have called into question the culture and standards of the MPS. These issues must be confronted and addressed not only for the benefit of Londoners, but also for the tens of thousands of dedicated, caring and professional police officers and staff who have been badly let down by the appalling behaviour and misconduct of others. That work is underway and will continue over the lifetime of this Plan. In partnership with the next

⁴⁰ Internal intranet article, MPS

⁴¹ [The Met's Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement \(STRIDE\) 2021-2025](#)

Commissioner, I am resolutely committed to driving the reforms that are desperately needed over the coming years so that the trust and confidence of all Londoners in the MPS can be restored and so that the MPS can become an organisation in which all of its officers and staff – no matter who they are or where they're from – are proud to work and made to feel supported.⁴²

Policing by consent and the Peelian principles remain an element of police recruit training, particularly in training modules related to the role of police constable, engagement and inclusion, policing communities, trust and confidence, stop and search, professional standards and procedural justice.

The Peelian principles, and the concept of ethical policing they embody, can also be felt in the oath of allegiance sworn by every officer joining a police force in England and Wales through the following statutory attestation under section 29 of the Police Act 1996:

I [name] of [police force] do solemnly and sincerely declare and affirm that I will well and truly serve the King in the office of constable,⁴³ with fairness, integrity, diligence and impartiality, upholding fundamental human rights and according equal respect to all people; and that I will, to the best of my power, cause the peace to be kept and preserved and prevent all offences against people and property; and that while I continue to hold the said office I will to the best of my skill and knowledge discharge all the duties thereof faithfully according to law.

⁴² [London City Hall, 24 March 2022, *Building a Safer London*](#)

⁴³ The Office of the Constable confers legal powers to a police officer in England and Wales

However, we question the extent to which the Peelian principles are currently lived and embedded in the culture, individual behaviours and attitudes in the Met.

The Peelian principles

1. To prevent crime and disorder, as an alternative to their repression by military force and severity of legal punishment
2. To recognise always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour, and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect
3. To recognise always that to secure and maintain the respect and approval of the public means also the securing of the willing co-operation of the public in the task of securing observance of laws
4. To recognise always that the extent to which the co-operation of the public can be secured diminishes proportionately the necessity of the use of physical force and compulsion for achieving police objectives
5. To seek and preserve public favour, not by pandering to public opinion, but by constantly demonstrating absolutely impartial service to law, in complete independence of policy, and without regard to the justice or injustice of the substance of individual laws, by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour, and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life
6. To use physical force only when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is found to be insufficient to obtain public co-operation to an extent necessary to secure observance of law or to restore order, and to use only the minimum degree of physical force which is necessary on any particular occasion for achieving a police objective
7. To maintain at all times a relationship with the public that gives reality to the historic tradition that the police are the public and that the public are the police, the police being only members of the public who are paid to give full-time attention to duties which are incumbent on every citizen in the interests of community welfare and existence
8. To recognise always the need for strict adherence to police-executive functions, and to refrain from even seeming to usurp the powers of the judiciary of avenging individuals or the State, and of authoritatively judging guilt and punishing the guilty
9. To recognise always that the test of police efficiency is the absence of crime and disorder, and not the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them.

Diagnostic testing of the Peelian principles

In testing current Met approaches against the Peelian principles set out above, we have found the Met to be failing on a number of fronts.

Principles 2 and 3 draw out the importance of public approval of police actions and behavior to policing by consent in order to maintain public respect and securing the willing co-operation of the public.

Yet all the indicators of public trust and confidence in the Met discussed earlier in this chapter show that the Met is losing, or has lost, public approval. Across a number of measures and in several demographic groups, those scoring the Met positively are in a minority. Earlier in this chapter, we also noted a decline in the proportion of victims supporting prosecution, with cases being closed because victims were not supporting police action.

A recent report examining the experience of Black communities nationally on stop and search shows that while 77% of Black adults support the use of stop and search in relation to suspicion of carrying a weapon, less than half of those who had been stopped and searched felt that the police had communicated well with them or explained what would happen.⁴⁴ The research showed that larger numbers of Black people felt traumatised and humiliated by the experience of stop and search than other ethnic groups.

These are all indications of deficits in the Met's securing of public approval, respect and willing co-operation.

Principles 4 and 6 refer to the value of minimising use of physical force. They state that it should only be used when the exercise of persuasion, advice and warning is insufficient, and that the willing cooperation of the public is always preferable to the use of force.

The Met's own figures, however, show that force is used much more widely on Black Londoners than on other groups. This calls into question whether it is always used as a last resort and in proportion to the risk presented. Our analysis of Met data found that from 2020-2022 people appearing Black in London aged 11-61 were over 3 times more likely to be handcuffed than people appearing White of the same age, 4.5 times more likely to have a baton used against them, and nearly 4 times as likely to have a Taser fired on them by a Met officer.⁴⁵

We return to this issue in chapter 9 of the Review.

⁴⁴ [Crest Advisory, November 2022, *Crime, Policing and Stop and Search*](#)

⁴⁵ Met Use of Force Data, August 2020 – August 2022

Principles 1 and 9 reference the importance of prevention, and the absence of crime and disorder, as key factors in securing public consent.

The prevention or deterrence of crime can be difficult to measure, and statistics on crime can be affected by changes in recording practices and other factors. But during the Review we have been concerned to note that the total level of recorded crimes has increased over the last decade in London. The Met's success in clearing up crimes has also fallen significantly. Along with many other forces in England and Wales, the Met deprioritised responding to some crimes, including burglary, for a significant period.

We also noted that investment by London Boroughs in crime prevention has fallen in the last decade. Many officers from those Boroughs have expressed concerns that partnership approaches to crime prevention with the Met have been weakened by the reorganisation of frontline policing and withdrawal of local authority and other resources. These issues are examined in later chapters of this review.

Our assessment is that these factors indicate declining success in the Met's efforts to prevent crime.

Principles 5 and 8 highlight the need for complete impartial service to the law, avoiding judgments of guilt and not pandering to public opinion. The need for the police to provide impartial service to the law is not in question, but principle 5 also refers to how service to the law is delivered: *'by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour.'* This reflects the need to maintain common decency and awareness of their role as public servants.

The Met's focus on the legality and lawfulness of an incident or procedure often occurs at the expense of the latter half of principle 5. Stop and search and vehicle stops are justified through their compliance with the law, ignoring how such incidents are perceived, the impact on individuals, and the wider corrosive impact of trust in the police. While the police should not pander to public opinion this is not the same as listening to the public, understanding what it feels like on the other side, and deciding that something might be done differently.

While the Met's *procedures* are set up to align with these principles, we have seen during this Review examples of *cultures* and *behaviours* that do not achieve that in practice, or which are selective in picking and choosing which aspects of the principles to apply.

In some cases, these have been acts of misconduct by individuals, but in others they have been part of a wider set of cultural issues in the Met discussed

elsewhere in the Review – for example, relating to defensiveness and denial when faced with accusations of wrong-doing. These issues can be seen in the Met’s response to the vigil following the murder of Sarah Everard and in their response to the inquest into the deaths of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor.

As we have noted earlier in this chapter, the Peelian principles have a circularity to them. They require balanced application and work as a whole. They were not designed to be applied in an ad hoc or pick-and-choose manner. If they are not being observed fully, public co-operation reduces, crime increases, and greater force and compulsion are used, creating a negative cycle of decline.

1.5. Conclusion

The Met has exceptional strengths and draws the admiration of the public with its adaptability, bravery and resilience in difficult times.

Recent years have seen unprecedented emergencies including terrorist attacks, the Grenfell Tower fire and the pandemic, at a time of significant resource constraints (addressed in the next chapter) and rising demands, both in the types of crimes that are reported, and in non-crime demands, where police are filling in the gaps in other services such as mental health.

However, the series of incidents involving their own officers, and the Met’s defensive attitude to these scandals – playing them down and dismissing them as procedural issues rather than holding up their hands, listening and seeking to change – alongside the growing ineffectiveness of the Met in catching criminals, has rocked the foundations of policing by consent. The Met seems increasingly out of step with Londoners.

The Met purports to hold the Peelian principles as the cornerstone of policing. But on a day-to-day basis, it is not living the values enshrined in those principles. It often seems to consider itself above the public, not seeking to win their respect and approval or securing their willing co-operation. Too often, the Met seems to act in its own self-interest rather than the interests of the public it serves.

In 2022, public confidence in the Met to do a good job locally fell below 50% for the first time. This must be a wake-up call that policing by consent needs a reset.

Chapter 2: The Met's resources and its response to austerity

Chapter summary:

The Met has been challenged significantly during a period of financial austerity. Its spending levels are now around £700 million, or 18%, lower in real terms than they were ten years ago, enough to recruit 9,600 extra officers. While better protected than some other public services, austerity has forced the Met to make difficult decisions. It has prioritised officer numbers, but even these fell below 30,000 for several years during the last decade. The cost of maintaining officer numbers has been significant reductions in PCSOs, civilian staff, Special Constables and closure of police stations. Other steps taken to deliver efficiencies have weakened the management and delivery of frontline policing in the capital and its connection to Londoners. A nationwide Policing Uplift Programme to restore officer numbers is an opportunity to re-strengthen the Met but has not yet been properly planned.

2.1. Introduction

This chapter describes the organisation of the Met, examines its resourcing and how this has changed over the last decade. In particular, it sets out how the Met responded to a period of austerity, in which a government policy of spending constraint was applied to most public sector organisations over the last twelve years. It considers the approaches that the Met adopted to make efficiency savings as funding reduced, and how this affected officer and staff numbers.

2.2. Resourcing in the Met

The Met is a large police force – the largest by far in England – and one that also carries national and specialist responsibilities, with a significant budget. Its annual spending represents 25% of the total police budget for England and Wales,⁴⁶ and gross expenditure has increased from £3.2 billion in 2015-16 to £3.9 billion in 2021-22.⁴⁷

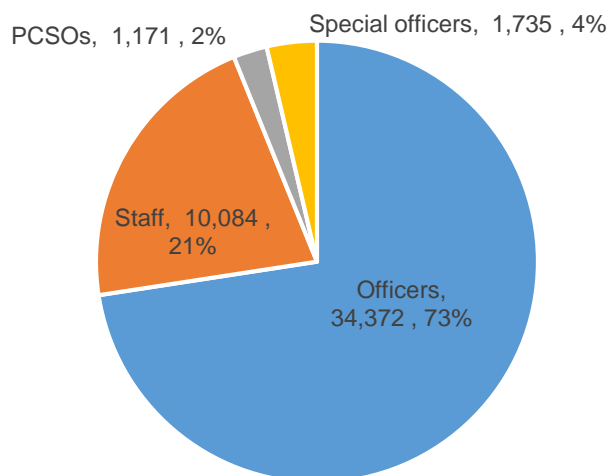
With over 47,000 officers and staff, around 75% of the Met's spending each year is on officer and staff pay, and overtime.

In November 2022, the Met's workforce of 47,362 individuals was comprised of officers, staff, Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) and volunteer Specials, as shown in the chart below.

⁴⁶ [Metropolitan Police Service, The structure of the Met and its personnel](#)

⁴⁷ Gross expenditure as detailed in the Met's Outturn Statements for 2015-16 and 2021-22.

Figure 2.1: Breakdown of officers, staff, PCSOs and Specials in the Met at November 2022, full time equivalent numbers



2.3. Reductions in the Met's resources

While in some ways policing, and indeed the Met, may appear better protected than many other public services such as local authorities, the Met itself has been significantly impacted by austerity. Its annual gross expenditure of £3.2 billion in 2015-16 reflected efficiencies it was required to make compared to gross expenditure in 2011-12 of £3.7 billion. Austerity meant the Met had to reduce its spending significantly and consume real terms increases in pay and other costs.

The additional specialist responsibilities of the Met also mean that it receives separate funding for functions such as counter terrorism, protective security, Transport for London, airports and the Palace of Westminster. In 2021-22, for example, around £527 million was funded by Counter Terrorism and Protective Security Grants.⁴⁸ This funding is ring-fenced and therefore distorts the picture, making the Met's overall reductions in funding for policing London during the period of austerity appear smaller than they were.

Even with gradual increases in spending each year from 2017-18 onwards, spend in 2021-22 in actual or cash terms (excluding real term impacts like inflation) was only 5% higher than spending a decade earlier.

Looking at spending in real terms presents a different picture, and one that feels closer to the reality the Met and the Londoners it serves have experienced.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Information provided to the Review by the Met

⁴⁹ Refers to gross expenditure

Actual spending over the last twelve years is shown in the table below, together with totals adjusted for inflation (Consumer Price Index) to April 2022 prices.⁵⁰

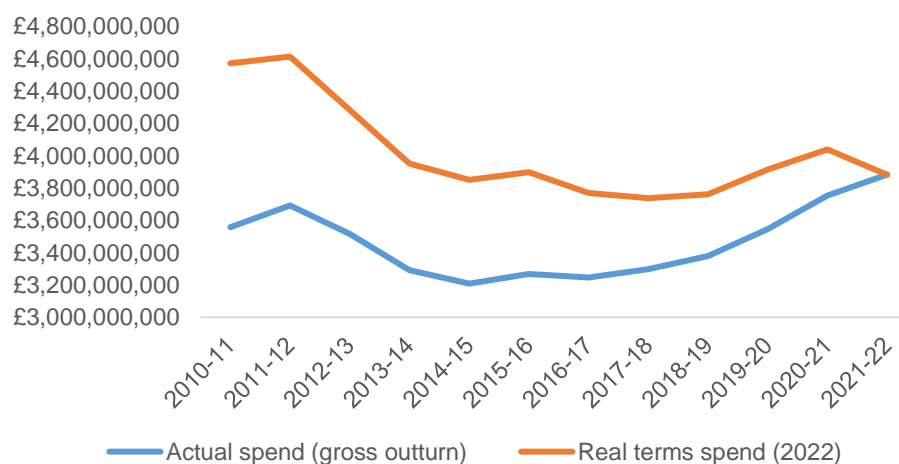
Figure 2.2: Metropolitan Police Annual Spend (gross outturn) and real-terms spend (adjusted to 2022 prices), 2010-11 to 2021-22

(£000's)	2010-11	2011-12	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15
Actual spend (gross)	3,557,789	3,692,002	3,515,710	3,291,223	3,208,173
Real terms spend (2022)	4,571,676	4,613,652	4,283,488	3,952,233	3,850,959

(£000's)	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Actual spend (gross)	3,268,115	3,246,443	3,297,874	3,378,451	3,545,808	3,753,255	3,883,030
Real terms spend (2022)	3,897,203	3,770,200	3,737,315	3,761,264	3,914,287	4,038,760	3,883,030

Actual and real terms spending trends are compared in the chart below.

Figure 2.3: Metropolitan Police Annual Spend (gross outturn) and real-terms spend (adjusted to 2022 prices), 2010-11 to 2021-22



The adjusted figures show the real terms impact with spending in 2021-22 – after a period of financial stabilisation and recovery from 2018 on – still £0.7 billion or some

⁵⁰ Analysis based on the [Bank of England's Inflation Calculator](#)

18% lower than at the start of the previous decade. This is enough to employ more than 9,600 extra police constables at full cost.⁵¹

While that figure takes account of the impact of inflation, it does not reflect the impact of the growing population in London or, as discussed in the previous chapter, changes in the demands on policing from increasingly complex crimes and other non-crime incidents.

Up to 2012-13, the budget had benefited from an additional £200 million of funding for the Olympics. But though it has recovered to a limited extent, the dip in the budget in the middle of the last decade affected the Met's overall resourcing strategy, including its officer and staff complements. It has been required to make significant organisational and operational changes to cope with a major reduction in income.

2.4. Protecting officer numbers

As austerity kicked in, the Met was directed to prioritise and maintain warranted officer numbers. In 2012, the then Mayor of London set a target of 32,000 officers. Nevertheless, there were occasions when budget constraints led to pauses in recruitment, and it ran below this target from 2012 until 2020, as shown in the chart below. In 2017, the current Mayor accepted that funding constraints made it impossible to maintain numbers at 32,000 and said:

“It is sadly now inevitable that police officer numbers will continue to fall – potentially to as few as 27,500 by 2021 – and we are left with no choice but to scrap London’s strategic target for 32,000 police officers that has been in place since 2012.”⁵²

⁵¹ Based on Full Partnership Cost of a Police Constable of £72.5k per officer quoted in [London Assembly’s published response to a question on police officer costs](#)

⁵² [London City Hall, Mayor condemns Government for ‘most anti-London Budget in a generation](#)

Figure 2.4: Total Met officer numbers (full time equivalent), April 2012 to November 2022



Total officer numbers grew from 31,954 in April 2012 to 34,372 in November 2022. More than 90% of officers are Constables and Sergeants. Officers at every rank above Inspector level each account for fewer than 1% of the total. However, the make-up of Met officers has changed to some extent over that period:

- There has been some growth in the proportion of officers who are Constables (from 76% in 2012-13 to 80% in 2022-23)
- The proportion of officers who are Sergeants or Inspectors (supervisory ranks) declined slightly (from 22% in 2012-13 to 18% in 2022-23), decreasing their capacity for management and supervision.

There has been some improvement in the gender and ethnic diversity of Met officers. The number and proportion of female officers has increased from 7,591 (24%) in 2012-13 to 9,565 (29%) in 2021-22. The number and proportion of officers from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds also increased from 3,200 (10%) in 2012-13 to 5,306 (16%) in 2021-22.

The March 2022 Final Report of the Strategic Review of Policing in England and Wales, commissioned by the Police Foundation,⁵³ identified improvements in gender and ethnicity representation across police forces. But it noted that the proportion of female police officers (at 32.3 per cent in 2021) remained significantly less than the proportion of women in the general population; and that all ethnic minorities remained underrepresented in policing compared to their proportion of the English and Welsh population.

⁵³ [Policing Review, March 2022, A New Mode of Protection: Redesigning policing and public safety for the 21st century](#)

The same report identified wide variations in performance on ethnic diversity amongst the three biggest forces in England and Wales, in which Greater Manchester saw a 97.5 per cent increase in Black and ethnic minority officers between 2015 and 2021; West Midlands Police saw a 44 per cent increase; and the Met saw a 37.8 per cent increase. The increases in these three forces were driven predominantly by the recruitment of Asian officers, with some increases in the recruitment of people of mixed ethnicity. However, the proportion of Black police officers in Greater Manchester had increased by just 0.3 percentage points in the past ten years and by 0.9 percentage points in the Met; while in the West Midlands there had been a reduction in the proportion of Black officers.

The overall improvements in diversity are welcome, especially as they occurred during a time when recruitment was more constrained. However, mirroring the national picture, representation in the Met remains far short of the gender and ethnic make-up of Londoners described in chapter 1 of this review. For example:

- While women now make up 29% of Met officers, this falls short of the 51.5% that would be required to represent the gender balance in London
- The 16% of Met officers who are from Black and ethnic minority backgrounds falls even further short of the 46.2% of London's population from these backgrounds.

Mid to upper tier ranks remain more heavily White and male.

The impact of these changes is noted in later chapters of this report when considering changes to frontline policing and equality and diversity in the Met.

2.5. The Met's approach to resourcing constraints and their impact

All police forces in England and Wales were required to find savings over the period of public spending constraint. In its 2015 report, *Policing in Austerity – Meeting the Challenge*, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) examined the approaches police forces in England and Wales had taken to find efficiencies.⁵⁴ HMIC found that police forces had risen to the challenge of austerity, balancing their books and finding almost £2.53 billion worth of savings while protecting their front line crime-fighting capacity as best they could, reorganising themselves to be more efficient and continuing to provide an effective service to the public.

HMIC did, however, express growing concerns that neighbourhood policing risked being eroded in some places and that staffing reductions on the scale planned

⁵⁴ [HMIC, 22 July 2014, *Policing in Austerity: Meeting the Challenge*](#)

across England and Wales would have an adverse effect on the amount of work that can be done to prevent crime and protect the public.

HMIC placed the Met in a group of 22 forces facing 'comparatively difficult challenge' in dealing with austerity and rated their performance as 'good' alongside 15 other forces in that group; with 3 other forces rated 'outstanding' and 3 'requiring improvement'.

Given the budget constraints imposed upon by the Met and the target set for them to maintain and even increase warranted officer numbers, we considered what other efficiencies the Met had to make to work within its allocated funding, and their potential impacts. In the main, these seem to have encompassed five broad strategies.

i) Reducing Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)

PCSO numbers have more than halved from 2,707 (5% of the Met workforce) in 2012-13 to 1,145 (2%) in 2022-23. We understand that when PCSOs were first introduced in 2002, many in the Met did not see this as a welcome change in the policing model, and they took some years to become accepted. Nevertheless, there has been a sharp decline.

During the Review, officers we spoke to have been clear that this has impacted both on the visibility of the Met to the public, and on the burden on frontline officers, particularly those in Response and Neighbourhood Policing. In the past, PCSO recruitment has been an effective route and means of gaining experience for subsequent employment as a warranted officer. It is no longer providing such a strong pipeline.

ii) Reducing civilian staff

The number of full time equivalent civilian staff has fallen by almost a quarter, from 13,033 (25% of the workforce) in 2012-13 to 9,934 (21%) in 2022-23.

These reductions have created higher administrative burdens for warranted officers and reduced levels of specialist support. For example, there are fewer human resources professionals to confidently address relevant issues and fewer analysts to assist in dealing with rape and sexual offences.

iii) Reducing Special Constables

Similarly, whether a deliberate strategy or not, there has been a reduction of nearly two-thirds in the number of Special Constables, from 5,317 (10% of workforce) in 2012-13 to 1,786 (4%) in 2022-23.

Specials are not paid employees: they are volunteers with a requirement to work a minimum of 16 hours per month. Nevertheless, this reduction is likely to have impacted frontline policing, with warranted officers having to undertake duties which Specials might have been deployed for, such as road safety initiatives, house to house enquiries, public safety support, or anti-social behaviour operations.

iv) Estate rationalisation and other efficiency measures

The Met has taken a series of measures to raise income and achieve savings in its efforts to find efficiencies while maintaining officer numbers.

Estate rationalisation has involved closing and selling off a large number of buildings across London, including the former New Scotland Yard offices on Victoria Street, much of the Hendon police training estate and many local police stations.

The Met has introduced IT replacement programmes expected to deliver significant efficiency improvements. Many are still in progress.

There has also been a mix of centralisation and contracting out of human resources, finance, procurement, fleet, catering, uniform and logistics services.

It is incumbent on any organisation to seek efficiencies, and austerity demanded difficult decisions. But officers and staff expressed concerns to the Review that some of the resulting changes have gone too far and have had detrimental effects, including:

- a more dispersed and hands-off training experience for new recruits and existing personnel, which gives them less sense of belonging to the Met
- greater distances for Response officers and Neighbourhood Policing teams to travel to and from local bases
- fewer points of accessible contact for the public as a result of closures of police stations and other buildings where the public could access police services and report crimes. Between 2010 and 2022, the Met closed 126 police stations across London (although 2 were temporary closures for refurbishment)⁵⁵

⁵⁵ [Metropolitan Police Service response to a Freedom of Information request No: 01.FOI.22.026587](#) - for this purpose, a police station is defined as an operational building with a front counter

- less accessible, less navigable and too often, poorer services, delivered through centralised or contracted out services, with local units often assigning their own staff to replicate local provision, and police officers having to make do with inferior or missing services and equipment.

v) Restructuring of frontline policing

Following a pilot, the Met introduced a major restructuring of frontline policing. It moved from a local model with 32 Borough Operational Command Units (BOCUs) aligned with each of the 32 London Boroughs (excluding the City of London which has a separate Police Force) to a new Basic Command Unit (BCU) model based on 12 geographical areas, with each BCU covering 2 to 4 London Boroughs. Frontline policing is examined in more depth in chapter 4.

In theory, this reorganisation was intended to create a more flexible frontline operating model, better able to operate with changing officer numbers – higher or lower – but with a planning assumption that numbers might fall as low as 26,000.

In reality, it was essentially an austerity measure. But it has been implemented despite a recovery in levels of police funding from 2018 onwards, and the government's introduction of a major Police Uplift Programme in 2020, which is providing for an additional 4,557 officers for London, as part of a 20,000 national uplift.

The term 'Basic Command Unit' had been used for some years previously in national policing. But the significance of the change in name from Borough Operational Command Unit to Basic Command Unit in London was not lost on many frontline officers or on local partners and communities. They saw the removal of the more direct 'Borough' connection as symbolic.

Officers in several BCUs, including senior leaders, told us that:

- the formula (part of a plan the Met calls the 'blueprint') used to determine the allocation of officer numbers to the 12 BCUs was flawed or out of date
- numbers allocated did not reflect demand in the area
- the overall resourcing picture had been further undermined by high levels of probationers and inexperienced officers, wider management spans for supervisory ranks, high rates of abstraction and large numbers of officers on restricted duties.

During the Review visits and fieldwork, it became clear that the numbers of officers supposed to be in the BCUs did not match up to the number of officers actually there. We asked questions on this issue.

In parallel, it was picked up by the new Deputy Commissioner, who commissioned analysis indicating that around 8,800 officers out of just over 34,000 (around a quarter of all officers) were absent or restricted in the duties they could perform. The greatest impact was in local policing.

This would leave a typical BCU running at 25 to 30% below their already contested 'agreed' resourcing level, even before other short-term absences such as sick leave or holiday are taken into account.

Alongside changes to support services already noted, and the wider sense of overwhelming demand on frontline policing, we have heard from many BCU officers that they do not feel valued by the Met. They believe they will make better career progress if they move to a specialist unit. This is further depleting the experience on the front line, which receives the bulk of new recruits, and engages most directly and regularly with the public.

The London Councils' Chief Executives Policing Group also expressed concerns that the introduction of BCUs had changed the level of engagement with local policing had changed for the worse, both in the relationship and partnership working with Councils, and in engagement and visibility with local communities. The Chief Executives were also concerned that this weakening of local engagement seemed to have been exacerbated by high levels of turnover amongst senior BCU officers, and a reduction in the experience and capabilities of many frontline officers.

We asked the Met whether it had evaluated the pathfinder BCUs prior to rolling the restructuring out across the whole of London. In response, the Met shared a 91-page document dated September 2018 and titled 'Basic Command Unit (BCU) Pathfinder Review' with the Review.

This appeared to be an internally drafted report on the pathfinder BCUs which had taken place in the 'Central North' area comprising the boroughs of Camden and Islington, and the 'East Area' made up of Barking & Dagenham, Havering and Redbridge. Preparation for the pathfinders started in October 2016, phased implementation began in January 2017, and they were fully in place by April 2017.

The report is not structured in a way that makes it easy to understand the methodology applied in reviewing the pathfinders. Nor is it clear who conducted the review. We were expecting an evaluation that would set out:

- The aims of the BCU pilots
- What measures had been identified to assess their performance
- How the pilots had fared against those measures
- What learning had been gained to inform further development or wider implementation of the concept.

Instead, it:

- Sets out some high-level aims, mainly around efficiency and resilience
- Identifies problems encountered, including difficulties staff and officers faced in moving to the new model and negative feedback from partners about collaboration
- Provides an assessment of what feel like a selective group of performance indicators (such as incidences of anti-social behaviour) which do not seem to relate to the objectives of the BCU model, and suggest that the performance in tackling crime in the pilot areas was no worse than the rest of London
- Concludes that knowledge of the difficulties faced in piloting the concept and a wider context of major incidents and rising crime across London could be addressed by pushing ahead with full roll-out.

We were disappointed with the quality of the evaluation. It felt retrospective in its application, not founded on a clear evaluation process built into the model from the start. The conclusions reached seemed driven by a predetermined view that there was no option but to press ahead with the concept.

We conclude that this may have stemmed from a belief held by the senior leadership of the Met that a period of financial austerity required efficiencies and this was an essential part of the plan to deliver savings. Crucially, there was no 'plan B'.

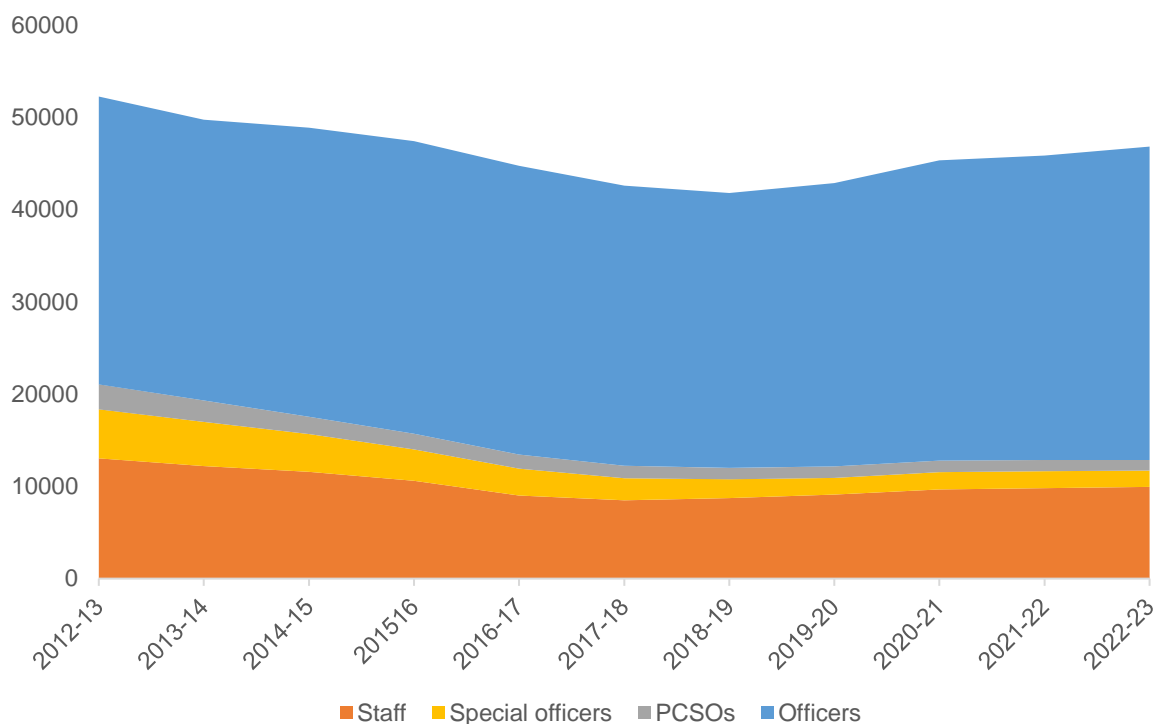
However, it was also typical of a wider 'HQ knows best' culture which we saw during the Review, with the Met being closed to learning or changing course.

2.6. The impact of changes in workforce numbers

Although the number of warranted police officers has been maintained over the past decade at around 30,000, and had increased to a high point of around 33,000 by 2022, the Met's total full time equivalent workforce decreased from 49,743 in 2013 to 46,804 in 2022, having dipped to just 41,757 in 2018. This is illustrated in the chart below.

It is likely that a direction by the Mayor to prioritise and increase warranted officer numbers would be considered popular, with a positive impact on public views and confidence. However, reductions in the numbers of contributions made, by civilian staff, PCSOs and Special Constables, together with the impact of other organisational changes, have contributed to additional pressures on warranted officers on the frontline, reduced efficiency in dealing with crime, and a loss of public trust and confidence. It has also constrained the Met's own operational discretion in deciding on the most appropriate balance of workforce disciplines to deliver an effective policing service for Londoners.

Figure 2.5: Numbers of officers, staff, PCSOs and Specials in the Met 2012-13 to 2021-22, full time equivalent numbers



It is notable that sharper decreases in crime clear-up rates, and in measures of public confidence and trust, discussed in chapter 1, coincide with the period around 2017 and 2018 when police officer, staff, PCSO and Specials numbers were at their lowest and changes in frontline policing were being introduced.

We have identified other potential indicators of additional strain on warranted officers and the front line which may be contributory factors.

- In 2012-13, every 6 warranted officers in London had the support of four civilian staff, PCSOs or Specials. By 2022-23, that ratio had changed so that every seven warranted officers had the support of fewer than three staff, PCSOs or Specials
- The use of overtime for police officers has increased. The bill for officer overtime in the Met increased by over 50% from £101 million in 2015-16 to £153 million in 2021-22.⁵⁶ It increased as a percentage of officer pay from 5% to 7%.⁵⁷
- This increased use of overtime was particularly stark amongst frontline and territorial policing units. Overtime for the frontline increased from 23.4% of the Met's overtime bill in 2015-16 to 44% in 2021-22, while normal frontline pay remained around 60% of the total pay bill.
- In the last decade, the number of officers resigning from the Met each year has increased from 443 in 2012-13 (1% of the workforce) to 771 in 2022-23 (2%).
- Frontline policing is reliant on officers with less than two years' service. In 2022, the average proportion of probationers working in Response teams across BCUs was over 30%, while the proportion of probationers in Criminal Investigation Departments was over 40%.

While, as noted earlier, the total number of warranted officers was maintained at between 30,000 to 33,000, not all of these are visible frontline officers. Around a third are assigned to specialist and central units of the Met.

Between 2012 and 2022, the proportion of officers on the frontline (defined in Met workforce data supplied to the Review as 'territorial policing' until January 2018 and as 'frontline' policing thereafter) has remained broadly the same, at 63% to 65% of all warranted officers. But the actual number of officers on territorial or frontline policing has varied over that period, with 20,139 in 2012-13 and 21,549 in 2021-22, but dipping down to 18,867 in 2018-19.

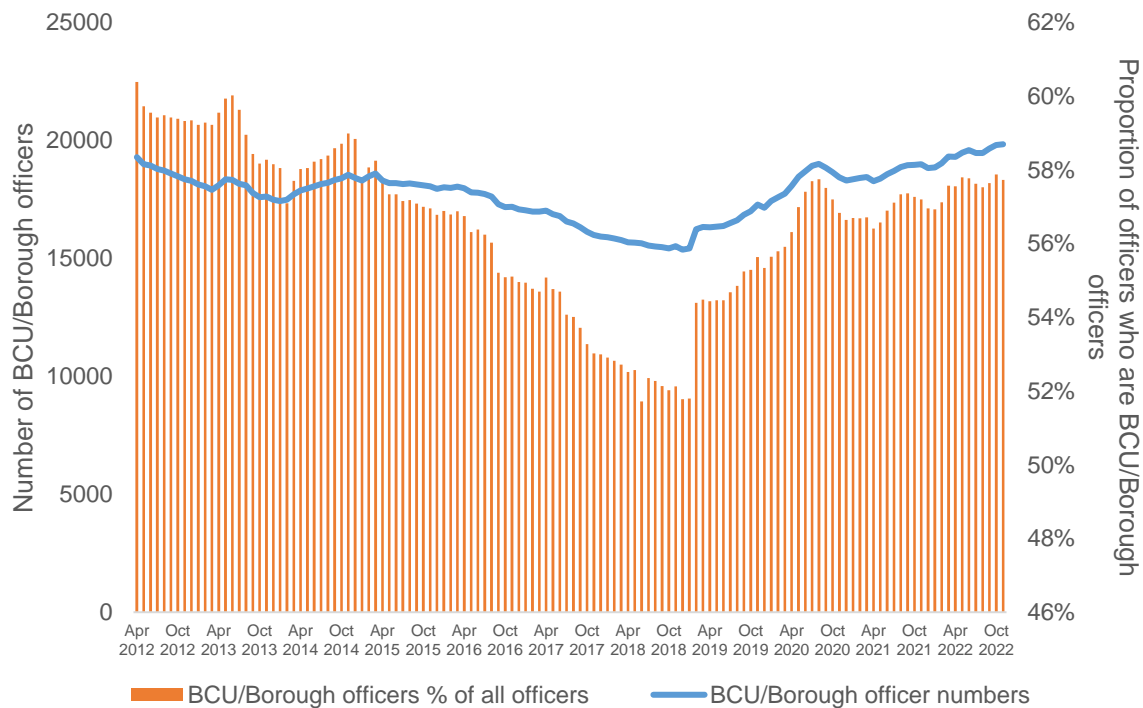
Furthermore, the number of officers assigned to Boroughs and, later, BCUs which provide Response and Neighbourhood Policing teams across London has been

⁵⁶ Outturn expenditure on overtime

⁵⁷ Actual overtime expenditure on overtime, not budgeted overtime spend

more variable at between 53% and 59% of all warranted officers. Numbers of officers dropped as low as 15,656 in 2018-19. The chart below shows how those officer numbers and percentages have changed over the last ten years. The dip in the middle period is stark.

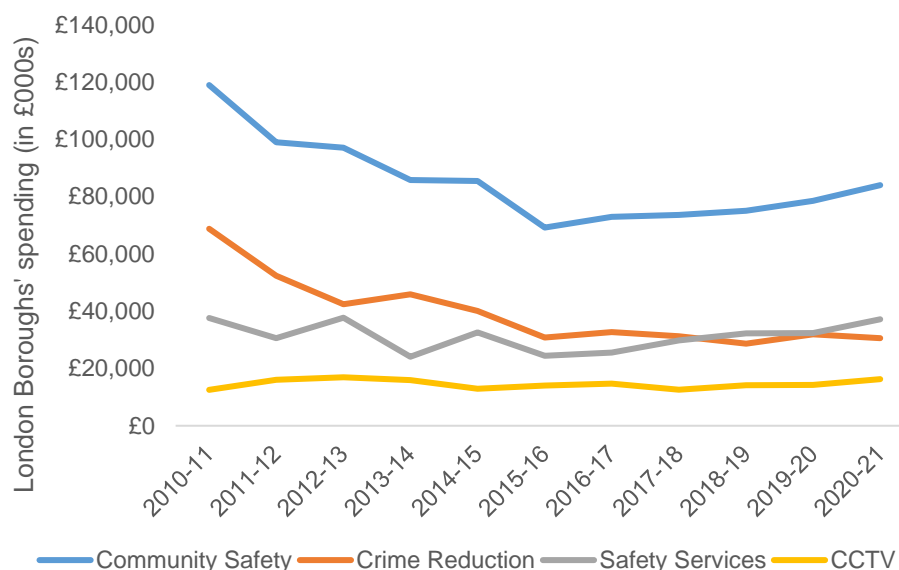
Figure 2.5: Borough and BCU officer numbers and percentage of all Met officers, April 2012 to November 2022



Combined with the significant reduction of uniformed PCSOs and Specials described earlier, a reduction in neighbourhood and ‘beat’ policing, and changes in the demand and approach to prioritisation of crimes, the visibility of police officers to Londoners seems to have reduced significantly. Some officers described such changes to the Review as key contributory factors in the decline in successful crime prevention and detection and the loss of public confidence.

This shrinking of the visible ‘blue line’ in London has coincided with, and in part, been exacerbated by, the London Boroughs having to reduce their spending on community safety by 42% between 2010 and 2016. To date, this has not fully recovered. London Boroughs’ spending on crime reduction within this fell even more dramatically – by 58% – as illustrated in the chart which follows.

Figure 2.6: London Boroughs' spending on Community safety (net costs - £000's), 2010-11 to 2020-21⁵⁸



It is difficult to quantify the impact this has had, but it may well have resulted in increased demand on the Met and, more likely, increased *unmet* demand. Either way, the partnership between London Boroughs and the Met in their approach to public safety has been seriously eroded, and the public has lost out.

2.7. Workforce planning in the Met: A missed opportunity

We saw no evidence that the Met had an evidence-based approach to its workforce planning that took account of past, existing or predicted demand. We found this particularly strange given the strength of views expressed by front line officers and the senior leadership of the Met that demand was changing, becoming increasingly complex, and that more time was being consumed dealing with wider societal and mental health issues.

The Mayor told the Review that he had asked the former Commissioner to provide an evidenced case for the number of officers required to police London but that the Commissioner had been unable to provide this. Yet in 2019, when the Government announced its Policing Uplift Programme to provide an additional 20,000 officers across England and Wales, the Met assessed their requirements and argued that they would need 6,000 officers.⁵⁹

⁵⁸ Local authority outturn (RO5 Returns)

⁵⁹ [GOV.UK, 9 October 2019, Home Office announces first wave of 20,000 police officer uplift](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-announces-first-wave-of-20000-police-officer-uplift); the MPS was subsequently allocated 4,557 officers by the Home Office.

That 6,000 would represent 30% of the national 20,000 uplift requirement. The Met's current officer complement represents 24% of all officers across England and Wales at 31 March 2022.⁶⁰

We asked the Met for an explanation of how the figure of 6,000 had been calculated and which parts of the Met would benefit, but were only provided with limited information on where new recruits had been allocated to date. This lack of foresight and planning is a feature of the Met.

The Review team observed this first hand at a meeting in June 2022. A senior officer was asked what the Met's requirement was for detectives, to which they replied:

"I don't have a crystal ball."

The Government's Policing Uplift Programme has placed demands on the Met in relation to the pace at which it must recruit new officers to benefit from additional funding. But overall, it has been a huge opportunity for the Met. To date this opportunity has been missed.

It is also evident that, while the Met regularly declares its intention to improve the diversity of its workforce, it has no credible plan to do so to a point where it genuinely reflects the diversity of London's population. We return to this point in chapter 9.

We found it worrying that such planning was absent when considering the amount of money spent by the Met on human resources, and its heavy and growing use of and expenditure on contracted out services and consultants:

- The total estimated cost of in-house and contracted HR services has nearly doubled from £35.4 million in 2015-16 to £68.5 million in 2021-22
- Spending on contracted services more than doubled from £24m in 2017-18 to £54.5 million in 2021-22
- Spending on external consultants, excluding HR, finance, and commercial services, more than tripled from £10.4 million in 2015-16 to £32.1 million in 2021-22. For the years 2017-18 to 2020-21 it was spending circa £50 million each year on consultants.

⁶⁰ [Home Office, 27 July 2022, Police Workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2022](#)

2.8. Conclusion

Over the last decade, the most significant changes in London to the Met's budgets and workforce, as well as the Met's organisational structure, appear to have been imposed upon them, driven primarily by a significant period of austerity, by financial uncertainty and political targets. Budgets are still some 18% lower in real terms than in 2010-11. However, clear and evidence-based analysis of demand and priorities against available resources has been absent.

The Government's Policing Uplift Programme is providing a very significant opportunity – the best in several decades – for the Met to address longstanding workforce issues around diversity. It could also fix some of the pressures faced in frontline policing that have resulted from the steps it took to manage a period of austerity in the last decade. But the Met has failed to plan for this.

The Met told us during 2022 that it intends to conduct a fully bottom-up budget review to ensure that investment is aligned with priorities and demand, and to test efficiency across all services. This is long overdue.

Chapter 3: How the Met is run

Chapter summary:

The Met's management systems have resulted in an organisation that is incoherent and unstrategic. Poorly implemented systems of recruitment, vetting, management, training and promotion, with specialist and frontline units competing for resources, allow a culture in which poor performance, behaviours and attitudes can go unchallenged. Attempts by leadership to improve the Met have been poorly implemented, landing as wave after wave of short-term initiatives rather than reforms that endure and take hold from top to bottom.

3.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out the Review's findings on the 'people' systems inside the Met: how the Met prepares and equips employees for the challenges of policing London, and embeds and reinforces its principles and values. It also looks at how the Met supervises, manages and promotes its staff, and approaches leadership and change.

Policing is one of a number of professions – those we entrust with power over our lives – which asks its members to swear and abide by an oath. Police officers swear such oaths alongside doctors, soldiers, judges and politicians.

Policing is a British institution, unique historically and globally because of its consent model, based on the Peelian principles discussed in chapter 1 of this Review.

It is all the more important, therefore, that the police are not just held to account for their use of such powers, but also that officers are given the right training, support and oversight to exercise those powers fairly and effectively, in order to live the values they profess to hold.

Many of the Met's management systems are based on national standards and good practice. But systems depend on effective implementation to deliver the right outcomes. Good intentions and words alone are not enough to make an organisation work well. We found the Met is run as a set of disconnected and competing moving parts; lacking clear systems, goals or strategies; unwilling to see, listen and learn from mistakes and wrong-doing; and substituting good leadership and management with optimism bias, communications spin and short-lived initiatives.

This leaves many officers and staff feeling unsupported, unprepared and undermined. There are so many gaps in structures and management, and the divides between different parts of the organisation are so wide, that the leadership

cannot know what is happening inside the organisation. Specialist functions in the Met have been protected and promoted as 'elite' units at the expense of frontline policing and the Londoners it serves. Many in the workforce therefore feel let down by poor practice, by the conduct of others around them whose behaviours are not in line with policing principles, and by the way many turn a blind eye when issues arise.

3.2. Recruitment in the Met

The Met is currently in an active recruitment phase. As highlighted in chapter 2, it aims to increase the size of its officer cadre by 4,577 over three years, to reach an officer headcount of 36,500 as part of the government's national Police Uplift Programme. As discussed in chapter 2, the uplift provides unrivalled opportunities to help meet the growing complexity and demands of policing in London, and to contribute to building a Met which reflects Londoners, including their diversity.

However, the pace and speed that the Government expects policing to deliver a significant uplift has contributed towards senior staff and officers in Met HQ (New Scotland Yard) seeming more concerned about hitting the recruitment target numbers for financial reasons (because they would only get extra funding from the Home Office for new officers if they got the new officers) than about meeting objectives to address demand pressures, broaden the skill base or improve the diversity of the Met, or how this uplift contributes to a workforce plan.

Another example of this problem is that in 2018 the Met dropped the London residency requirement for those entering through the main recruitment routes. This was originally introduced in 2014 in an attempt to make the Met more representative of the city it polices.

In our own survey of Met officers and staff, fewer than half (47%) of those who responded lived in London. Only 51% who were in frontline policing lived in London.

Londoners we surveyed also thought the Met still had a long way to go to reflect the capital's diversity:

- Three-quarters of Londoners (75%) think that the make-up of the Met police workforce should reflect all of London's different communities. Over half (58%) believe it is trying to achieve this, though fewer (42%) think it actually does reflect London's communities
- Only two in five Londoners think the culture within the Met is welcoming of all of London's different communities (39%) and that it provides a positive career experience for people of all backgrounds (39%).

In addition, the Met was criticised by other forces for offering a £5,000 ‘bounty’ to Constables transferring to the Met from other police forces in 2022. Officers who transferred were not required to move to London to join the Met.⁶¹

During the course of the Review, a series of new adverts on radio and television was launched to attract new recruits to the Met (and to policing nationally). We noted that the ads for the Met focused on an image of officers in a variety of roles which, while including officers ‘on the beat’, tended to focus more on specialist roles including firearms and bomb disposal. These were described in the campaign as ‘a career most people only see on screen’.

Several police commentators questioned the focus of these ads – whether they gave an accurate impression of life on the force for new recruits and who they might attract in that context.

A contributor to the Review said:

“It shows the job as being very technical and action oriented when people skills are the most important requirement. Like advertising for jobs at Tesco’s showing people tasting wine and sampling cheese.”

A Metropolitan Police Federation representative was reported as saying of the ads:

“If you look at the video, a new serving police officer will not be doing any of those things. It’s very exciting, I was quite impressed when I watched it, it is a theatrical masterpiece but it’s not reality unfortunately. It’s not what’s expected of new Constables who will be working morning, noon and night doing the most routine work there is and the hardest work there is in policing. What you’re seeing in the video is elite policing.”

While the frontline is struggling and public confidence at an all-time low, the culture of the Met drives them to spin excitement and promote elite policing roles, rather than emphasising the values of consent and integrity inherent in the Peelian principles and the oath of allegiance, and the importance of frontline policing and a real connection to Londoners.

3.3. Vetting

Very serious concerns have been raised about the vetting procedures being applied to Met recruits as well as the process for re-vetting serving officers.

⁶¹ [Metropolitan Police, *Experienced police officers – Transferring from another force*](#)

It is a sad fact that services which confer powers on employees that can be used for personal gain can be a target for individuals who wish to abuse those powers, as much as they can be a draw for individuals with a desire to serve society.

Most other public services that serve the public, and those that regulate or monitor them, are alive to the fact that such roles will attract both suitable and unsuitable people. For example, paedophiles want to be near children. In policing, there will be many people who are attracted by public service, and committed to justice and integrity. But there will also be others attracted by the power of the role who will want to abuse that power.

That is why robust procedures are essential to ensure that those joining and choosing a career as police officers understand the values and public expectations of policing, are capable of living by them, and of meeting the commitments in the oath to which they attest when taking up the office of constable. Such procedures mean officers can be held to account for doing so, and for failing to do so.

Issues of vetting are being looked at as part of a separate review: it is concerning that nationally, no serving police officer has ever been required to leave the service as a consequence of failing to maintain their vetting status.

But the Met should not wait for the conclusions of the review to introduce some simple and reassuring rules. It is vital that the Met and other police forces get this right, not just in the way they run their vetting processes but also in the way they manage officers through the recruitment stages, on the job, and in ensuring there are proportionate consequences for those who fall short of expectations. The Met needs better policies, systems, processes and a stronger culture to ensure this.

3.4. Arrival and initial training in the Met

There are several routes into the Met for new officer recruits. The majority come through the three work-based learning programmes under the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) launched in the Met in January 2021. These routes involve attendance at university for the first two years and a third year to obtain the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA).

The Met have contracted with Babcock, who work directly with a consortium of four London-based universities to host the training on their sites. The Met is the only force in the country not to contract directly with universities.

While the Met argues that the scale of their recruitment means they need to outsource to a third party, there are certainly risks in holding the arrangement at arms-length:

“The more distance between you and the service you’re providing the less likely you are to get what you want...it will only work if it’s a partnership.”

The Review team heard considerable criticism from new recruits on the new programmes. Beyond the strong moral purpose that had drawn most to the job, particularly the desire to make a difference for Londoners, it was hard to elicit positive comments from new recruits. However, detective student officers had found the equality and diversity components of the programme very valuable. On the whole, there was greater satisfaction with on-the-job training.

A big complaint was the interface between university work and working in the BCU. New recruits told us there was poor organisation and communication about assignments and deadlines, changes to deadlines by universities and the pressures of having to complete essays when working. It was hard to use ‘protected learning days’ as these were given arbitrarily, could not generally be planned to meet assignment deadlines, and were often cancelled completely to meet operational demands. After assignments were submitted, feedback was slow and poor quality.

When the Review spoke with new recruits, we were told that many felt, with a couple of exceptions, university tutors were not secure in their knowledge and understanding, and lacked the practical experience student officers felt they needed. This was evident in their teaching and their lack of confidence when using role play.

Those tutors who had police experience were highly valued. This mirrors one of the findings highlighted in the College of Policing’s evaluation of the PCDA: that student officers preferred content and tutors with a direct connection to policing.⁶²

Student officers did not feel connected either at university or on the BCU and told us they had little contact with their assigned personal point of contact:

“They’re who you contact if you need anything. But you very rarely speak to them.”

Several groups had tried to make representations about their concerns with the training but received no response. One group complained to the university who passed it to the Met who passed it to the training provider.

The absence of a Met police ‘hand’ across the relationship with the universities and the training created a sense that the employer was detached from the training:

“The first officer [new recruits] meet is when they do a photo for their pass.”

⁶² College of Policing Evaluation of the Police Constable Degree Apprenticeship (PCDA): First Interim Report, 2020

That feeling was expressed by several experienced officers. They felt that, in moving away from the Hendon police college and training recruits on university sites, an opportunity had been lost for early cementing of recruits' connection to the Met, its values, and the real experience of policing London.

While we did not find a strong consensus for a wholesale return to Hendon, there was a strong view that something fundamental had been lost – that 'the baby had been thrown out with the bath water.' This was a common and well-known criticism. It provided another example of the Met seeing problems but carrying on without pausing to reflect on what had gone wrong and how it could be corrected.

3.5. Management and supervision

We looked at the Met's supervision and management arrangements. These are fundamental cogs in the wheel of the organisation which drive performance, make sure things get done, and embed values and good conduct. They are also the means through which early problems can be identified and acted upon, whether they relate to an individual, the team operation or wider issues. Despite many leaders recognising that 'something needs to be done', supervision and management are both woefully lacking in the Met.

Part of this is down to how stretched officers are, particularly those on the frontline. We discuss this further in chapter 4.

As discussed in chapter 2, Met workforce data shows a growth in the proportion of officers who are Constables (from 76% in 2012-13 to 81% in 2022-23) while the proportion of officers who are Sergeants or Inspectors (supervisory ranks) has declined (from 22% in 2012-13 to 17% in 2022-23). This increases 'supervision spans': the number of officers managed by a supervisor.

Growing supervision spans are undermining the ability of Sergeants and Inspectors to supervise their teams effectively.

An Inspector mentioned a useful tool for supervisors to review the Body Worn Video (BWV) of their team as part of supervision, but said that supervisors don't have time to use it. He felt the Met were not giving Sergeants the opportunity to be leaders:

"They need the ability, resource and time to look after their officers."

"Everything is on a conveyor belt and we don't have time to invest in staff in the way we should. It's to our detriment. Before, older officers had time to tutor and stop officers from making mistakes."

Several Sergeants told us it had taken over ten months to access training. Some told us they had not had training at all. Several acting Sergeants told us they could not access training, and had no support to step into the role unless they found it for themselves from friends and colleagues. Embedded on-site HR support was also withdrawn under austerity, leaving supervisors relatively unsupported. They therefore supervised as they had been supervised, or improvised according to their own preferences and style.

Having difficult conversations, supporting officers under pressure, keeping a keen eye on performance, and developing individuals, are important skills. They don't just come naturally. However, the importance of these skills is not recognised. We did not hear from any officer we spoke to that such skills were discussed in any judgement of an individual's performance, such as part of an annual appraisal, or for promotion purposes:

“Line management in the Met is seen as a luxury, a ‘nice to have’ rather than an essential part of good leadership.”

“There is no training at all on becoming a line manager...I would have to look up what to do if someone came to me with a problem.”

“The biggest mistake was making HR self-service and outsourced via the intranet...You're always scrabbling the intranet for information, which isn't even fit for purpose when you find it. How can you do that if you're out on the streets?”

Expectations of leadership were not always clear. Apart from a period when the former Deputy Commissioner spoke to all new Sergeants in a virtual address about enforcing standards, we were told there was limited guidance or quality training for the role. We could not establish any clarity about the Met's supervision policy of the Met. When we queried this, the Human Resources team pointed us to guidance called *Sergeant in an E-Box*, a toolkit developed for new and acting sergeants, set out in 23 PowerPoint slides.

Problems of supervision are not a problem unique to the Met police or of the Uplift Programme, although its absence has become more keenly noticed as a result. A national analysis by the College of Policing found that insufficient supervision and leadership was one of the 'perennial policing problems' considered to be undermining the ability of the police to deliver good outcomes for the public.⁶³

⁶³ [College of Policing, April 2022, *Effective Supervision: Rapid evidence assessment*](#)

It is clear that this is the case in the Met. The absence of good training and clear expectations about supervision and management means people learn from what's around them, and will do things as they've always done them. This presents a significant risk because the existing culture, the 'how we do things round here', becomes more important than the stated values and intentions of the organisation.

The Met leadership has talked about the importance of supervision and management, but only backed this up with more short-life initiatives without wider embedding of improvements or systems to reinforce them.

Inadequate management allows those who seek to do wrong to continue their activities and affect other officers, staff and the public. But it also means mediocre performance goes unchecked, putting greater pressure on other officers to pick up the slack. It also seriously impedes the potential of good officers who are not given the support and challenge they need to progress in the organisation. Far too much is left to chance.

3.6. Performance Development Reviews

Reflecting the poor approach to management and supervision we saw, the majority of officers we spoke to said there was no Performance and Development Review (PDR) system. Indeed, in two BCUs that we visited, officers were therefore inventing their own system to discuss and assess individuals' performance, highlight areas that require improvement and development, and identify the support – such as training – available to meet these needs. When we queried this with central Human Resources, they advised us that there was a corporate system, but they accepted that it was poorly used and had been under review.

The general consensus was that the system was only used by those going for promotion, and that such reviews were often a retrospective paper exercise, with officers filling in a form to tick a necessary box for the promotion process.

An overview across the Met in March 2022, set out in the table below, shows only 18% of Met officers had completed a PDR. The second lowest completion rate was in frontline policing – the part of the Met most connected with Londoners and with the highest number of employees by far. Only 13% of frontline police officers (2,983 of 22,490) had completed a PDR. The lowest completion rate was Digital, which only had 169 people.

Figure 3.1: Met Performance and Development Review (PDR) completion numbers and rates at March 2022

PDR COMPLETION March 2022: OVERVIEW BY AREA					
Area	Total number of people in this area	Number of Police Staff	Number of Police Officers	Total number of PDRs completed by Police Officers	% completion by Police Officers
Frontline Policing	24,067	1,577	22,490	2,983	13.3%
Specialist Operations	5,222	1,198	4,024	1,648	41.0%
Met Operations	12,807	6,807	6,000	1,452	24.2%
Professionalism	1,919	773	1,146	222	19.4%
Digital & Technology	169	143	26	3	11.5%
Corporate Services	1,334	1,015	319	85	26.6%
TOTAL	45,518	11,513	34,005	6,393	18.8%

Another PDR scheme is being introduced. It is being promoted as less bureaucratic than the system it replaces, but with an emphasis on on-going and forward-looking development rather than retrospective assessment: a more rigorous system that allows poor behavior and poor performance to be corrected.

However, cynicism about PDRs is so strong that this will need to be addressed in order for the scheme to have more success than the current one. The current system went through a similar process of revision as recently as 2018, but does not seem to have instilled any more confidence in the system.

3.7. Promotion

We heard no praise for the promotion system, which is based on a national system. We heard from many officers who thought that it was having a deleterious effect on the culture in the Met.

More than half of employees (53%) surveyed disagree that promotion and career progression at the Met is clear and fair, while only a quarter (25%) agree. Black and Asian respondents are more likely than White respondents to disagree with this (59% and 58% compared with 51% respectively).

“My experiences are people tend to go for promotion for the wrong reasons. They tend to go for promotion to better themselves but in a negative way... They’re not very competent as Police Constables so they believe being a Sergeant will give them an easy out. My experience is it can be self-serving.”

“A lot of people I believe shouldn’t have been promoted are promoted.”

We heard that the promotion system was not fair or based on merit. Those who succeeded tended to be those who were good at 'working the system', or who were good at passing tests. This rewards the ability to learn the 'right' answers rather than recognising leadership qualities, track record or achievement in the job.

"In other fields, you get promoted as per your competencies and your experience. In the police, you need to do the homework and pass the tests, not real-life skills."

"I personally don't think the organisation looks for the right characteristics in people they're looking to promote. They don't look for leadership qualities or the morality of the individual. They look for people to be able to pass a particular matrix which is pre-set out based on someone else's idea around what they think 'good' should look like."

A 'who you know culture' provides the chance to act up, which in turn helps promotion prospects. This excludes those without those networks.

"I realise now that I was naïve about the [promotion] process and that it comes down to networking...and the need to use more buzz words."

"People never get promoted just for doing their job – you have to do something notable, 'off the wall'. This can be done either using your team as a tool, or by disappearing off somewhere [i.e. going to work on a prominent project]."

Short term projects generated by officers to meet their evidence thresholds for promotion are renowned among teams. There is little consideration about whether the projects make positive or sustainable change.

3.8. Training

In any successful organisation, learning and development are seen as important. In the Met, they should be vital tools in developing the professionalism of individuals, key to instilling the right organisational culture and ensuring that officers and staff have the right skills and capabilities to police London effectively and safely.

We saw a strong commitment to the development of people stated in all Met strategies, plans, campaigns and initiatives. But we did not see this commitment translating into reality for front-line staff.

The lack of comprehensive workforce planning and prioritisation highlighted throughout this report also makes for a weak approach to learning and development.

Officers regularly said that they had to keep their own records and that they were not held centrally.

For example, the Met could not tell us how many trained drivers they needed across the force, or how many detectives they needed.

In December 2020, a business case was put forward in the Met for large-scale investment in training and development.⁶⁴ It identified that arrangements for learning in the Met had been inadequate for many years. Although the business case pointed to incremental improvements in training, it judged progress had been too slow to keep pace with changing needs or to meet the ‘exponential’ increase in demand.

In making the case for an investment of £18.5 million to improve learning and development, the paper highlighted long-standing risks and ‘unaddressed Audit recommendations’. These included the lack of data on current, required and future capability levels, due to the lack of workforce planning. It stated:

We lack data on both our existing and required capability levels, including in some of our most core operational skills (e.g. no confidence in where our trained drivers are across the organisation and what our true level of unmet demand is).

We have no master learning record for our officers and staff. Data is not available in one place showing who is trained in what, or whether they have completed mandatory training. This prevents individuals and leadership teams from fulfilling their core responsibilities in relation to compliance and leaves the Met vulnerable, for example when coronial or other public enquiries rightly investigate the training background of those involved.

The business case highlighted that without adequate individual training records, there were significant risks of people being deployed without the necessary skills and mandatory training.

It also drew attention to the Met’s risks around the quality of training, including an inconsistent approach to levels of accreditation for instructors and some training products being sub-standard.

Finally, it identified that short-term, reactive training took capacity away from work to build longer-term capability. This is one of the consequences of the ‘initiative-itis’ described in several sections of this Review.

⁶⁴ Metropolitan Police Service, December 2020, Learning Operating Model, Full Business Case

These risks indicate that essential investment in the workforce has been neglected, and the investment that has been made has lacked rigour and impact. Inadequately trained staff and officers represent a risk to the organisation and to Londoners.

During the pandemic, the Met ran only 'essential' learning and development, including Officer Safety Training and Emergency Life Support Training. This has left a backlog particularly because, post-pandemic, the top priority for training has remained the Police Uplift Programme.

Responses to the Met's own staff survey indicate serious dissatisfaction with learning and development. Between 2015 and 2017, only 1 in 4 officers and staff agreed with the statement "I am able to access the right learning and development opportunities when I need to". In more recent years, the survey question has been broadened to "I have opportunities to learn and develop." This still only attracted agreement from just over half of officers and staff in 2019 (51%), increasing to 57% in 2020 and 2021, but falling back to 53% in 2022.

We heard on more than one occasion that virtual training was completed by deputing one team member to sit in a room and complete the training by ticking the boxes for all team members.

Several BCU Commanders recognised the importance of learning and development in building consistency and culture but didn't have the skills or the training tools at local level. Training was often cancelled at late notice because of operational pressures and officer abstraction.

In August 2022, to address the risks and issues identified in audit and other reports the Met launched a new Learning Management System (LMS), a single corporate system to deliver blended learning and to accurately record and report attendance and completion of training.

As well as giving the Met the ability to deliver blended and modularised learning, it is intended to:

[c]reate a single training record for all officers and staff; facilitate easy reporting (including proactive monitoring for disproportionality); support better corporate workforce planning and join up across Met Learning and Development and HR.⁶⁵

As the Met implements this system, it needs to ensure that wider systems of development assessment and workforce planning are used. These should inform

⁶⁵ Metropolitan Police Service, December 2020, Learning Operating Model, Full Business Case

decisions about the training that needs to be available and who should be accessing it. Line managers need to be empowered and active in this process.

The Met senior leadership need to take learning and development seriously, with a real focus on capability in roles rather than capacity.

3.9. Policing is a tough job

At the start of this Review, we noted the bravery and courage that police officers show every day, the readiness to run towards danger and put their lives at risk to protect others.

Most of the people, both police staff and officers that we met during the Review joined policing with a strong sense of moral purpose. They believed and took pride in that moral purpose.

“A strength of the culture [in the Met] is that, certainly at some point in their career, the overwhelming majority of people join the organisation because they want to do the right things. We do have people that do a remarkable job and go out there and do dangerous things.”

However, the day-to-day experience of policing can impact those good intentions. Police officers see the dark side of human behaviour. They see people at their most vulnerable, and they are exposed to tragedy and trauma. Many are injured or abused in the course of their duties.

Our survey asked about officers' experience on the frontline:

- Just over half (55%) of Met employees responding to the survey whose role involves interacting with members of the public say they feel safe when interacting with the public.
- The majority of respondents with a public facing role say they have experienced verbal or physical abuse from a member of the public (93% and 71% respectively)
- The data suggests this can be quite a common occurrence, with 75% of those experiencing verbal abuse saying it has happened more than 10 times. A quarter (24%) of Met staff survey respondents who have experienced physical assault report that this has happened to them more than 10 times.

Unsurprisingly therefore, we heard of officers' physical and mental health being negatively affected by the cumulative impact of their work and by individual traumatic events:

“Day in, day out, officers make difficult decisions, moral dilemma decisions, life-or-death decisions.”

“That constant drip-drip-drip cumulative impact of trauma has an effect.”

“My mental health has taken such a battering that I have been to the GP and prescribed medication – both for anxiety and depression and to assist with me sleeping.”

As we discuss later in the Review, research has shown that during the pandemic, Public Protection officers exhibited emotional exhaustion greater than frontline medics.

During the Review we spoke to Dr Jessica Miller, Director of Research at Police Care UK, and Research Associate and Principal Investigator at the University of Cambridge's Trauma Resilience in UK Policing project.

Her research has found that in a national context, over 90% of police officers report being exposed to traumatic events, defined as 'an extremely threatening or horrific event or series of events'.

Another piece of research asked more than fifteen hundred officers to identify and briefly describe the experiences that most trouble them.⁶⁶ Researchers then coded these experiences for frequency of mentions. The most frequently mentioned traumatic events were those involving children, road traffic accidents, murders, suicides and dead bodies.

Dr Miller identified situational contexts that can exacerbate these incidents:

- Gruesome experiences, such as disrupted bodies, gory injuries, or horror
- Organisational pressure, including lacking resources or support
- Cumulative exposure to trauma

⁶⁶ [Miller, J., Brewin, C., Soffia, M., Elliott-Davies, M., Burchell, B., & Peart, A in The Police Journal, April 2021, The development of a UK police traumatic events checklist](#)

- Personal resonance, such as when a victim is known, or resembles someone known
- Being first on the scene.

Dr Miller told us that:

“The reality of policing means that most of the time, police officers are in threat perception and threat management mode.”

Threat perception or threat management mode means that officers are less able to think in other modes. Dr Miller provides training to help officers switch between the part of the brain that manages threats and the part that deals with creativity, empathy and compassion. In practical terms, this means helping officers to move from job to job on duty and seeing each incident with a clear mindset.

During the Review, we heard that in specialist units, greater attention was paid to psychological and physical well-being. In Specialist Firearms Command (MO19), for example, there was an on-site physiotherapist and each team had mental health first aiders. In the specialist Online Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Unit (OCSAE), there is rapid access to counselling for officers due to the impact of viewing disturbing images.⁶⁷

However, Response officers, and those in local OCSAE units in child protection, did not seem to routinely have access to such support. A detective working on the local policing OCSAE recounted that they had to grade thousands of child abuse images downloaded by offenders. There was no counselling offered, and no test that they were still capable of doing the role.

“The things you see on Response will be traumatic...I have been to the death of a colleague...There was nothing afterwards, not an email...You [just] go to work the next day.”

Some BCUs had developed their own well-being measures to provide support for officers. Occupational Health (OH) services were seen as very bureaucratic and remote and not necessarily adapted for the kind of support that officers needed in their day-to-day work.

“We put in place a trauma tracker...It was a just a simple spreadsheet that would keep track of incidents. ‘You’ve been to three sudden deaths this month. Are you alright? Do you want a chat? How are you doing?’ ‘You’ve just

⁶⁷ [The Sunday Times, 13 February 2022, *The police officers battling online child abuse*](#)

had a baby and you've attended now an infant death. Let's talk about it.' Let's do those things...It comes back to my point, we say we have a brilliant OH setup but does it really deliver anything?"

The Met recognises that officers are often in grueling and traumatic situations, but as part of its responsibility to those officers, the level of care and support they are offered needs to be improved. This is a necessary part of their duty of care for officers but also to prevent the kind of desensitisation that can occur if officers are exposed to traumatic or threatening situations.

3.10. Leadership

We recognise policing is hierarchical, with its clearly defined rank structure which is important in an organisation with public safety at its heart. Even taking this into account, we were concerned by the disconnection between chief officers, senior officers and frontline officers.

Dame Cressida Dick adopted a more informal and personal style of leadership and was hugely admired by frontline and senior officers alike, who found her an excellent police officer and role model. But this does not obscure overall the strong 'them and us' culture within the Met. There is no 'One Met', the aspiration behind a previous restructuring programme. Instead, there are yawning gaps between:

- Junior ranking officers and their superiors
- Frontline policing in the BCUs and the leadership and HQ teams in New Scotland Yard and
- Specialist teams and BCUs.

Hierarchy does not have to mean disconnection. But we saw and heard across the organisation that senior officers are too distant from operational policing, and therefore from Londoners and their experience of policing in London.

"There is such a disconnect between the top and bottom. They are so detached."

The most important, but unquestionably the most difficult, part of being in charge of this organisation is knowing what is going on including about their officers' lived experience and the reality of the service to Londoners.

The gap between junior ranking officers and their superiors

There is clear and long-standing evidence of discontent with senior leadership in the Met's annual staff survey. This is despite changes to the survey questions introduced in 2018 which, if not designed to try to soften the questions and improve respondents' scores, certainly had that effect in some areas. Nevertheless, there is no disguising widespread dissatisfaction with leadership and organisational change, and many of these scores worsened in the 2022 survey.

The lowest scores in the 2022 staff survey tend to arise when answering 'agree' or 'agree strongly' to statements or questions about senior leadership, organisational change or the Met's mission.

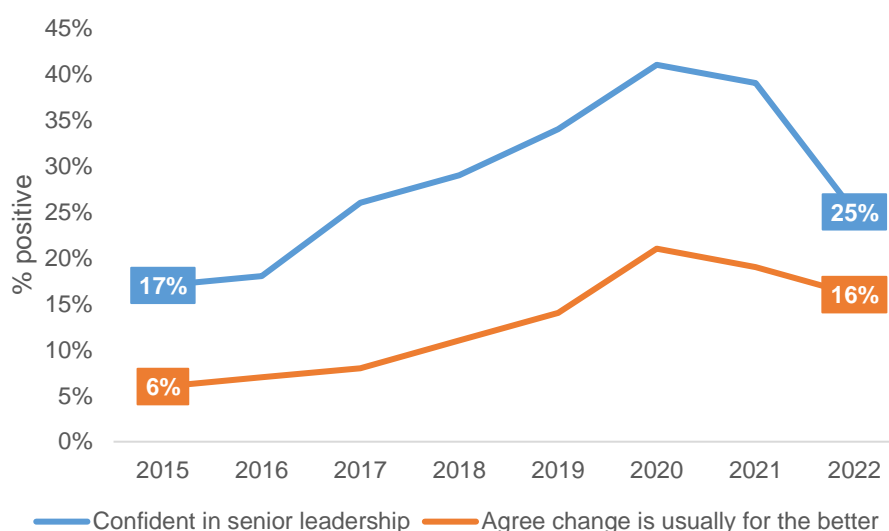
The table below shows that change is not managed well, that staff are not consulted on change, and there is a lack of honesty and openness from leadership. Only one in four employees are confident in their senior leaders.

Figure 3.2: 2022 Met staff survey: Lowest scores on senior leadership, change and mission

Survey Theme	Statement	Score
Supporting you to succeed	When organisation changes are made, they are usually for the better	16%
	Changes that affect me are generally managed well	27%
Working well as a team	We have made positive changes based on the last survey	20%
Your senior leaders	My senior leaders inspire me about the future of the Met	26%
	My senior leaders are making the right decisions to keep London safe for everyone	36%
	My senior leaders consult us on issues that affect us	37%
	My senior leaders are open and honest in their communications	40%
Our mission	I have confidence in the Met's senior leaders (Commanders / Directors and above)	25%

Low scores have been evident in these areas for a number of years. This is illustrated in the chart which follows. It shows percentage scores for statements on confidence in the senior leadership of the Met, which ran below 20% in 2015, rose to just over 40% in 2020 but fell back to below 25%. That means that in 2022, fewer than one in four officers and staff are confident in their leadership. Even fewer believe that 'change is usually for the better.'

Figure 3.3: Met staff survey results on confidence in senior leadership and agreement that change is usually for the better, 2015 to 2022



The low scores set out here are not found across the entire breadth of the survey. Officers and staff respond much more positively to themes that relate to them as individuals, to their teams and to their immediate line managers. This is not uncommon in many organisations. In 2022 the two highest scoring themes across the whole survey were:

- Your line manager (72% positive)
- Working well as a team (63% positive).

The distance manifested in several ways. One officer was deeply focused on the job of his team and operational issues but felt that the Superintendents had lost sight of the ‘job’.

“Everybody has vacated the frontline on a senior level.”

Elsewhere in the Met, an officer with supervisory responsibilities was talking to us about excessive workloads and so we asked whether there was an opportunity to raise this with the top management on the BCU. The officer said:

“I don’t really see top management. I didn’t see the Chief Superintendent for, well...I’ve seen them once in the whole two years I was there and that was in a big meeting with lots of supervisors.”

They added:

“The SLT [Senior Leadership Team] are complete strangers to me.”

We saw a vivid contrast between senior leaders on BCUs who were able to take decent periods of leave, or work compressed hours to fit around their childcare responsibilities, and junior officers and staff where neither of those options were available. A PC who arrived for an eight-hour shift was told that the shift was going to be 12 hours that same day. She also had childcare commitments but there was no negotiation.

The Review Team witnessed this disconnect between different teams and ranks in one unit on a BCU visit.

The Team met with the SLT at the start of the day who talked about empowering their officers and staff, the opportunities to move around, their high morale and how well they were managing probationers and trainee detectives.

We then met a group of Constables and Detective Constables. They felt trapped in their roles, close to exhaustion, unequal to the size and intensity of caseloads, and that they were not understood by their SLT.

They were followed by a group of Sergeants and an Inspector. In turn, they said they were too stretched to provide supervision, were critical of their new recruits for not being fit for the job, and said that they didn't know where and when probationers were arriving or what stage of their training they were at. They described having little control and no power to change things.

It might have been that these were unrepresentative groups on that BCU. But these were not volunteers, they were officers who had been told to attend the group. Their experience was so similar to the experiences of other frontline officers, we had no reason to conclude the disconnect we witnessed was unusual.

“Staff surveys have been screaming this for 10 years, and they say they listen, but nothing's changed...it's wilful.”

This disconnect can also be seen in the staff survey questions related to leadership at a local (OCU/BCU) level.⁶⁸ The chart below shows a marked difference in positive responses to a leadership index at junior and middle ranks.⁶⁹ Constables, Sergeants

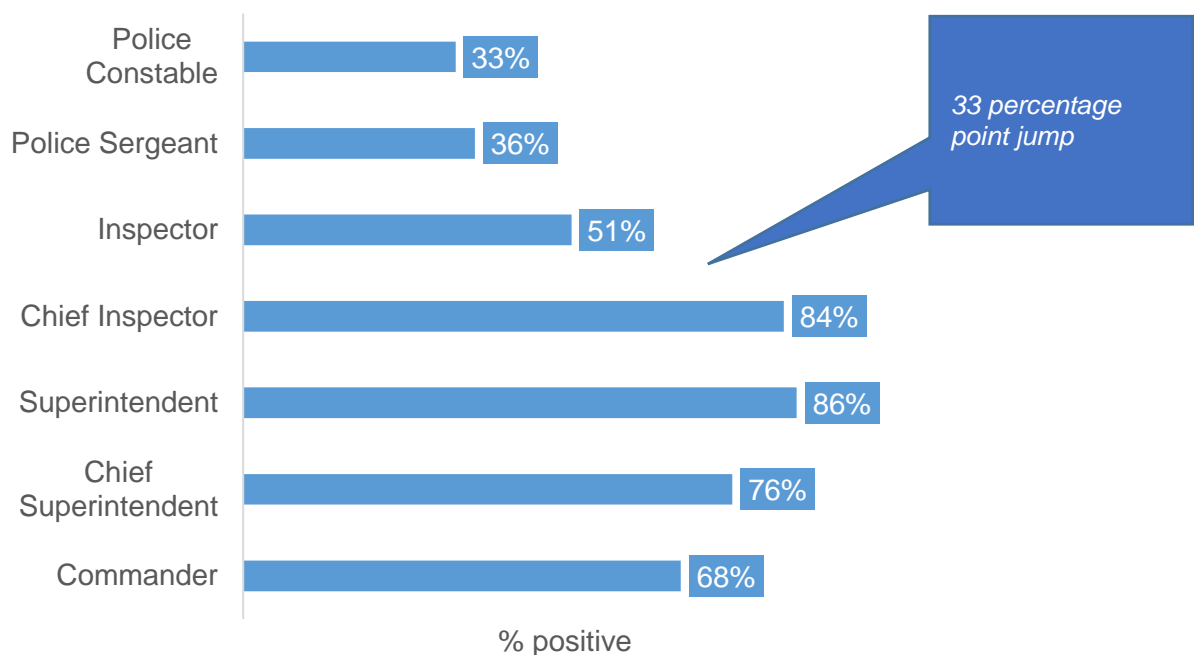
⁶⁸ An OCU is an Operational Command Unit

⁶⁹ Comprised of 4 statements: *My OCU / BCU Senior Leadership Team (e.g. Chief Inspectors / Band B to Chief Superintendent / Band A): ...Consult us on issues that*

and Inspectors gave less positive responses when asked about their local senior leaders. There is a 33 percentage point gap between the views of Inspectors and Chief Inspectors.

The trends shown here for uniformed officers are mirrored broadly amongst detectives, although detectives at the junior ranks (up to Inspector) are slightly more positive than their uniformed counterparts, while at Chief Inspector and Superintendent levels, they are less positive.

Figure 3.4: 2021 Met staff survey, results for positive responses to the 'leadership index', about local senior leadership (OCU/BCU SLT) by rank



One explanation we heard for this, was that Chief Inspectors had moved from an operational focus and were instead looking upwards to support their Superintendents. A Chief Inspector is only paid slightly more than an Inspector, but there is a very significant pay reward for making Superintendent. This could then have the effect of making Chief Inspectors more beholden to their Superintendents as they look for promotion.

The gap between BCUs and New Scotland Yard

We go on to describe a 'beleaguered' frontline of policing on BCUs in chapter 4, as the poor relation in the Met. The Met leadership have let the frontline deteriorate

affect us; ...Are open and honest in their communications; ...Are making the right decisions to keep London safe for everyone; ...Inspire me about the future of the Met

when they ought to recognise its critical role in tackling crime and building confidence with Londoners.

This gap is magnified by the lack of autonomy available to BCU Commanders to 'own' their patch and set a local tone and strategy. The 'centre' at New Scotland Yard always trumps the local. Covering three or four boroughs, BCUs are both too big to connect with their local communities and too small in the sense that they lack the authority to set their own strategies or take key decisions that affect how they police their area.

Part of the rationale for the restructure of BCUs was to create greater consistency across frontline policing. But this needs to be weighed against the consequential lack of power BCU Commanders have to shape services to reflect local demand and the workforce in the name of pan-London consistency. We do not think the balance is right. Pan-London consistency may make for an easier organisation to manage, but it fails to recognise that London is hugely varied, eclectic and faces different challenges.

Leaders in the BCUs described the relationship with the centre as one-way, where the centre takes from the BCU, but nothing they perceive as helpful flows back.

BCU Commanders are responsible for an officer and staff cadre comparable to the size of many police forces outside London. It was striking, then, that Commanders were not part of the Commissioner's weekly meeting held with senior leaders. Between the BCU Commander and the Commissioner, there are five tiers of command.

Staff at all levels in the BCUs told us that the centre did not want to hear feedback on proposed ideas. One BCU Commander told us it was *"virtually impossible to push back."* Others said that the organisation is far too geared to a 'command and control culture', which pushes messages and orders down, and does not want to hear feedback, challenge or even suggestions for improvement. This was a common refrain.

"What we do a lot in this organisation is to tell others how we think they feel but they don't listen to people...Because of the rank-led organisation, it is assumed because you are at the top and in a space high up, you should know everything. The fact is you don't."

For example, when the rotation system for probationers was proposed, which moves new officers every six months was proposed, BCU Chief Inspectors highlighted that this was a terrible idea. Tracking performance and progression of probationers would get lost, along with the opportunity to pick up on any issues of concern.

When the Violence Suppression Units were created, BCU Chief Inspectors said that they should not be the first posting for an officer just out of college. We were told the centre didn't listen to this realistic advice. It was pushed through because *"violence was big for the Met; they want to say we have 500 officers out on the street."*

Both these policies were implemented. The centre was in charge without properly listening to, or consulting, those having to implement the changes.

Subsequently though, the Met partly changed its stance. From March 2021, new recruits have not been allocated to Violence Suppression Units for their first rotation, although six-monthly rotations remain in place.

It is clear that the BCUs' position and influence in the Met is weak. On top of the challenges and poor resourcing, much of which are a result of central decisions, they are also directed by the centre and face a raft of demands. BCUs are treated like satellites of New Scotland Yard, rather than being able to set their own direction.

"The thing that's really struck me, is those Chief Superintendents who feel so disempowered – they need to have space as leaders to be able to make those decisions and be accountable for them. That has really struck me in the Met. When I think about what I was able to do in [another force], and really lead as a leader. Their wings are just clipped."

Several questioned why they had such little decision-making power. One referenced an example where they wanted to move some officers from one function to another but did not have authority to make that decision and when they asked for permission, were refused.

"I've put in several requests for 40+ officers in non-operational roles so we can get staff back on the streets, but they've been refused."

As we reflect a number of times in this report, the frontline is treated by the Met as the least important part of the organisation. The BCU Commander is often stretched across several boroughs and is largely disconnected from local authority partners. Certainly, the speed with which local senior police officers move off to new jobs also undermines many relationships. No one locally is asked or consulted about these key BCU changes.

The gap between BCUs and OCUs

In a place the size of the Met, with its many functions, neither uniformity or homogeneity would be expected or appropriate. Commands, departments and teams are the product of the individuals who work there, their histories, the professions

within them (such as forensic technicians, analysts, or accountants as well as PCs or detectives), the job roles they perform, the environments in which they operate, the challenges they face, and their responses to those challenges.

However, the overstretched frontline sits in direct contrast to the situation in some of the specialist commands. There, we saw well-resourced and valued teams, with expensive specialist equipment and uniform, modern facilities, and time to spare.

We go on to examine this gap in more detail, looking at frontline policing in chapter 4, Public Protection in chapter 5 and specialist teams in chapter 6.

3.11. Initiative-itis: activity rather than action

Many of the officers and staff we met during the Review spoke of their frustration about waves of initiatives that are launched from Met HQ. They were not always challenging the intention or aims of the initiatives. But they had become sceptical about the value of such schemes, feeling they were not sustained – here today, gone tomorrow – and added pointless bureaucracy with reporting requirements to their workloads, because they would not lead to meaningful change.

These are not uncommon symptoms in large organisations, and the Met is a very large organisation. However, the bombardment of initiatives, from Human Resources, IT, strategy, finance, through to communications and culture, feels relentless to those attempting to implement them. Lines of sight and accountability do not run coherently or consistently, either from top to bottom or across the breadth of the organisation.

Initiatives launched from the centre have insufficient traction by the time they reach the front line. Senior officers pull levers that do not shift anything outside New Scotland Yard.

We heard a constant refrain, particularly from officers on the front line, about this culture of ‘initiative-itis.’ This was about showing some action was being taken, but failed to deliver enduring change:

“The reason the Met has so many plans is because the Met by nature is reactive. If there is a problem, they immediately seek out a solution. This takes the form of an action plan. Eventually you get a multitude of action plans covering very similar things.”

“They [the Met] have a plan, operation names, a lead and then next week it is something else and that plan is in the rear-view mirror and the next week is another, so you forget.”

"There is no long-term thinking in the Met. In a reactionary rush to solve problems, they end up sticking plasters over things. This creates a patchwork of uncoordinated activity."

"The Met substitutes action with activity."

The sense of initiative-itis felt even more pronounced in relation to activities designed to bring about culture change:

"The goal is always about perception, optics, and being seen to be doing something – so it is not very effective as it is motivated by trying to achieve quick results. There is an illusion of impact but nothing is changing."

"There's something about the fact that internally everything is an emergency call. Everything is a priority. The Met knee-jerk to everything...It's something we need to think about as an organisation. How do we get away from the feeling that everything is urgent? As it's not sustainable at any level."

A senior member of Met staff commented that:

"There is so much change going on in the Met that sometimes things get lost."

We found no shortage of initiatives to address culture change in the Met, but these generated more activity than action. We looked at a few such initiatives launched just since the announcement of this Review in October 2021. There were numerous examples but little evidence of sustained or coherent implementation or follow-up. Some of these are diarised in the table which follows:

Figure 3.5. A diary of initiative-it is

<p>O O O O O O O O O O O O O O</p>	<p>5/10/21 8/10/21</p>	<p>On 5 October 2021, days after the officer who murdered Sarah Everard was sentenced, the Met published its 'Rebuilding Trust' strategy to win back the trust of Londoners. It contained 12 priorities including a root and branch review of the Command he had served in, and a commitment for every officer to be spoken to by their line manager about the standards of behaviour expected in the Met.</p> <p>Days later, on 8 October, the former Commissioner also announced that this Review into culture and standards would take place, and would be led by Baroness Casey of Blackstock. On the same day, the then-Deputy Commissioner launched his 'three asks' of Met officers and staff: 1) absolute adherence to professional boundaries 2) appropriate social messaging 3) actively intervene and challenge. Each of the three asks also had three or four sub-principles or explanations.</p> <p>Line managers were required to speak to every officer and staff member to talk about 'the asks', with Command Units ordered to complete and return a spreadsheet to document every time a meeting, briefing, or action had been taken relating to or mentioning each of 'the asks'.</p> <p>The Review team were told that the 'three asks' appeared to lose momentum until eventually people stopped chasing the spreadsheet returns around January 2022. The Review is not aware of any further action taken to repeat the briefing or further talk about the 'three asks' after this time.</p>
<p>O O O O</p>	<p>12/21</p>	<p>In December 2021 the Met published an update to the Rebuilding Trust Strategy, marking progress on the strategy so far and setting out a further eight priorities. They also launched Signa, an internal, anonymous recording tool they committed to launching in the first Rebuilding Trust strategy. Set up and run by volunteers in the Met, Signa allows officers and staff to anonymously share experiences of sexual harassment and misogyny outside of the misconduct or grievance process.</p>
<p>O O O O O O O O O</p>	<p>1/2/22 4/2/22 4/2/22</p>	<p>On 1 February 2022, the IOPC published their Learning Report on Operation Hotton, containing examples of discriminatory WhatsApp messages sent by officers based at Charing Cross police station.</p> <p>This triggered the Met to release a further 16 point action plan on rebuilding trust and confidence on 4 February. New commitments included an agreement that this Review would initially focus on internal misconduct.</p> <p>On the same day, the former Commissioner emailed all officers and staff with a message titled 'Enough is Enough' where she said 'there is no room in the Met for discrimination or prejudice: racism, homophobia, sexism' and asked officers to 'leave now' if this applied to them.</p>

<p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p>	<p>5/2/22</p> <p>24/2/22</p>	<p>The next day, 5 February, the former Commissioner set out a requirement for leaders to again speak to every team in the Met to spell out the standards expected, ensure they had read the 'Enough is Enough' email and remind officers about the requirement to report wrongdoing. Again, leaders had to report back on whether the briefing had been completed and when.</p> <p>While these briefings were still taking place across the Met, on 24 February 2022, they launched the internal 'Not in my Met' campaign encouraging officers and staff to 'show there's no room in the Met for discrimination or prejudice.' Officers and staff were encouraged to use 'Not in my Met' e-signatures and posters and to report racism, sexual harassment and homophobia. Campaign materials gave examples of unacceptable behaviour to be called out. One poster gave an examples of racism as someone saying 'you live in the ghetto.' Another gave an example of homophobia as someone saying 'that's so gay.'</p>
<p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p>	<p>7/3/22</p>	<p>On 7 March, as part of the 'Not in my Met' campaign, the Met internally launched a series of animated, short 'Dilemma of the Month' videos, posing ethical questions for officers and staff to consider and discuss. One video asked officers to consider what they would do if they were part of a messaging group chat where officers were inappropriately nicknaming new officers (the examples given were 'Sheila' for an Australian officer, and 'Chow Mein' for a Chinese officer). Dilemmas were released in March, May and September before moving to a quarterly structure.</p> <p>Around the same time as Dilemma of the Month was first launched, the Review team were made aware that the Met was procuring consultancy firm Ernst and Young (EY) to carry out a 'culture audit of Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP)'.</p>
<p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p> <p>O</p>	<p>4/22</p>	<p>In April, the Review team then became aware that EY had in fact been procured at a cost of £477,206 to develop a 'culture enquiry across the whole of the Met'. PaDP would be an 'early adopter trial', but the full programme would be rolled out across the rest of the Met before the trial was completed.</p> <p>The Review team, commissioned less than a year prior to look at standards and culture across the Met, were not asked to input into the work being carried out by EY, and it is unclear how EY's findings around the culture of the Met will be used alongside the findings from this Review.</p> <p>The PaDP pilot has since been completed. The Review was informed that the Command were "disappointed" with the product from EY which did not assess whether there was misogyny in the Command or provide results</p>

O		broken down by gender, which were seen as key by the Command to understanding their culture.
O O O O O O O	6/22	<p>In June, the Met announced internally that they were launching a 'Culture Programme' 'to drive and sustain a healthy and inclusive Met culture, that's underpinned by our values and professional standards.' The programme included an assessment of the number of initiatives taking place across the Met related to culture. They found this to be a 'crowded landscape' with 74 initiatives directly impacting culture and 105 initiatives indirectly impacting culture.</p> <p>The Culture Programme also includes work to understand how far officers and staff understand the Met's values, and the work being carried out by EY to assess culture.</p>
O O	1/23	Internal message confirming that 'Not in My Met' initiative should be dropped from e-mail signatures.

3.12. The views of Met officers and staff on culture in the Met

The views of officers and staff about the culture of the Met could be seen in the results of our survey of Met employees undertaken during the Review. These echo many of the points we discuss in this chapter. They could also be seen in the responses of Londoners we surveyed about their attitudes towards the Met as a place they would encourage family members or friends to join.

Culture in the Met

Internal perceptions of the overall culture of the Met are divided. 40% of staff survey respondents think the overall culture is positive, while 46% think it is negative.

Respondents from certain minority groups are more likely to think the internal culture of the Met is negative. Over half (55%) of ethnic minority respondents cite a negative culture (compared with 43% of White respondents), as do 52% of LGBTQ+ respondents (compared with 44% of those identifying as heterosexual).

Less than a third of Met staff survey respondents (31%) would encourage a close friend or family member to join the Met. Just over half (54%) say they would not be likely to encourage a friend or family member to join, while 15% are neither likely nor unlikely.

These results are echoed in the responses of Londoners we surveyed:

- A third (35%) of Londoners say they are unlikely to encourage a close friend or family member to join the Met, while a comparable proportion (34%) are likely to encourage a friend or family member to join the force
- Of those Londoners who wouldn't recommend working in the Met to a friend or family member, concern about the internal working culture of the Met police and concern for their safety were the most common reasons (60% and 59% respectively).

Around one in three (32%) Met employees responding to the survey agree that the Met encourages a workplace culture where you can suggest improvements or challenge how things are done up the chain of command. Those in frontline policing (27%) and/or Constable respondents (25%) were less likely to agree compared to respondents overall.

Around four in ten Met officers and staff responding to the survey say they have felt pressured or expected to do something at work in the Met that went against

their better judgement (41%) or was contradictory to their own personal or professional values (37%).

In addition, around one in five respondents say they have felt pressured or expected to do something in contradiction to the Met's own rules or guidance (22%) or to the Met's values (20%).

In all of these situations, respondents from ethnic minorities are more likely to say they have felt such pressure or expectations compared to White survey respondents.

In nearly all of these situations, those in frontline policing are also more likely to say they have experienced such pressure or expectations compared to respondents overall.

3.13. Conclusion

The overwhelming conclusion of this part of the Review is that there are too many holes in the Met's basic structures and systems, and this leaves too many places for people, behaviours, poor practice and attitudes to hide.

The Met is a large organisation but this is not an excuse. The larger the organisation, the harder it needs to work at embedding values, standards and expectations. These need to be seen and felt and owned by all staff, and integrated into coherent and robust plans, strategies and structures that drive the organisation.

There is currently no plan for the workforce beyond bringing people in, and no sense of how the thousands of new recruits will breathe fresh life into the force after years of austerity. The vetting system is broken, there is minimal supervision, training and development is not taken seriously, there are no training records and the Met do not know what their workforce needs. People are doing jobs they are not trained to do. Initiative after initiative keeps everyone busy, creating new teams and moving people around but ultimately gets in the way of the core job of keeping Londoners safe and prevents the development of fully developed plans for change.

Leadership is not taken seriously and people are not promoted according to their talents. If they are, it is despite, not because of, the promotion process. The absence of clear structures, systems, expectations and two-way communication in an organisation the size of the Met, allows poor cultures to grow.

Chapter 4: On the frontline of policing in London

Chapter summary

Frontline policing in London was restructured in 2018 in response to austerity, creating 12 Basic Command Units in place of 32 Borough teams. The restructuring has coincided with growth in more complex crimes and increases in other demands on police time, such as mental health assistance, as well as a shrinking of other public services and the Met's partnerships with them. At the same time, police stations have been closed; workforce numbers and neighbourhood teams have been reduced (and are exacerbated by 'abstractions' that take officers away from frontline duties); teams are experiencing high levels of 'churn' with large numbers of officers leaving and joining; there are high proportions of new and relatively inexperienced officers and wider management spans for Sergeants and Inspectors; and support services have been centralised or contracted out placing additional burdens on officers. This has resulted in a collection of dedicated but over-stretched and under-supported frontline teams, less visible to, and less connected with, Londoners.

4.1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on local, frontline policing: those officers and staff who are based in the Met's twelve Basic Command Units (BCUs) across the whole of London. Frontline policing is the part of the Met that connects most with Londoners day-to-day, responding to 999 calls, and preventing, tackling and investigating most crimes.

This chapter explains the current structures which were introduced in 2018. Having examined overall Met workforce changes in chapter 2, this chapter sets out in more detail what has happened to the numbers of officers and staff on the frontline.

It highlights the views and feelings of a committed, dedicated but overstretched service which we saw and heard on our visits during the Review. It examines some of the issues which are exacerbating these difficulties. These include changes in demand, large numbers of officers being diverted away from the frontline, shrinking levels of experience amongst frontline officers with higher numbers of probationers, Sergeants and Inspectors having to manage bigger teams, loss of support staff and wider geographical spans increasing burdens on officers, complex interactions with pan-London specialist teams, and disempowered local leaders.

All of these issues contribute to, and provide some of the reasons behind, the poor culture identified in this report. But they do not excuse it.

4.2. Reorganisation of frontline policing in London: Basic Command Units

As outlined in chapter 2, a significant restructuring exercise took place in 2018, changing local policing from the long established 32 Borough Operational Command Units (OCUs) to 12 BCUs, as part of a series of austerity measures to save £400 million by 2020.

Five BCUs cover two London boroughs, six cover three, and one BCU covers four. Each BCU has the same structure and levels of resourcing, with some limited variation. They follow a 'blueprint' created by the Met and trialed in two areas in 2016.

Each BCU has five teams:

- Emergency Response and Patrol Teams (ERPT, often known as 'Response' or 'Team'), providing emergency response to 999 and local patrols
- Neighbourhood Teams, which are the community policing function, providing beat officers dedicated to particular wards, safer schools officers, and youth engagement. These are frequently referred to as Safer Neighbourhoods Teams, the name of their predecessors
- CID (Criminal Investigation Departments), which are the detective units investigating crimes including burglary, robbery, serious assaults, gangs and organised crime, and which run offender management and youth offending programmes as part of multi-agency Youth Offending Teams
- Public Protection, which are also detective units, covering crimes of domestic abuse, child abuse, online abuse, sexual exploitation, rape and sexual assaults. Chapter 5 examines Public Protection in more detail
- HQ, which provide the non-operational work on the BCU, including professional standards, co-ordination functions, facilities and communications.

Town Centre Teams were introduced in each BCU area in 2021 to provide a visible and reassuring presence in areas of high footfall. They operate within the Neighbourhood team function. Initially one operated in each area: a further nine were introduced in 2022 in areas of high demand.

In addition, the Met has specialist pan-London teams who respond to particular incidents, subject to their nature, and who can also be tasked to undertake proactive

work locally. These include the Violent Crime Task Force (VCTF), the Territorial Support Group (TSG), Armed Response (MO19) and Dogs Support Unit. The Met's 18 Major Investigation Teams take over the investigation of suspicious deaths and murder.

BCUs are the part of the Met that public, victims of crime and suspects of crime are most likely to come into contact with on a day-to-day basis. They are seen on the 'beat' and investigate local crime. They undertake local community engagement, and are the key interface for partners such as the local authority, health services and local charities. The BCU is the face of local policing.

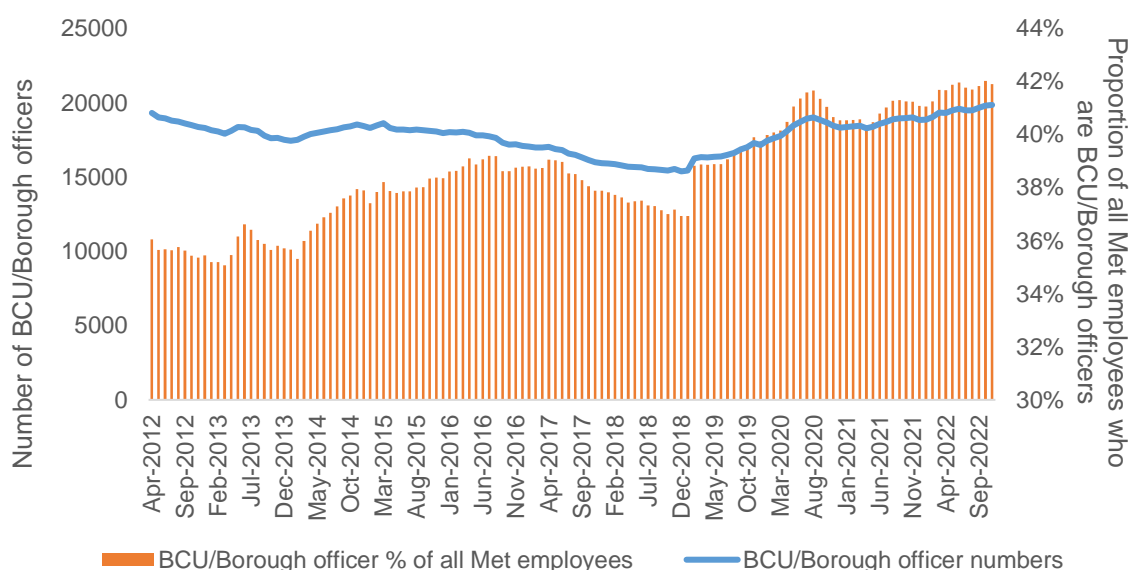
4.3. The numbers: Who's on the frontline?

In 2021-22 an average of 18,818 officers worked on BCUs. This is just over 40% of Met employees. This means that, with some variation, each BCU has around 1,500 employees.

BCUs are consistently more likely to have higher numbers of women and members of ethnic minority communities compared to the rest of the Met's workforce. 33% of BCU officers and staff are women, compared with 23% who are in non-frontline positions. 19% are from ethnic minorities, compared to 13% who are in non-frontline positions.

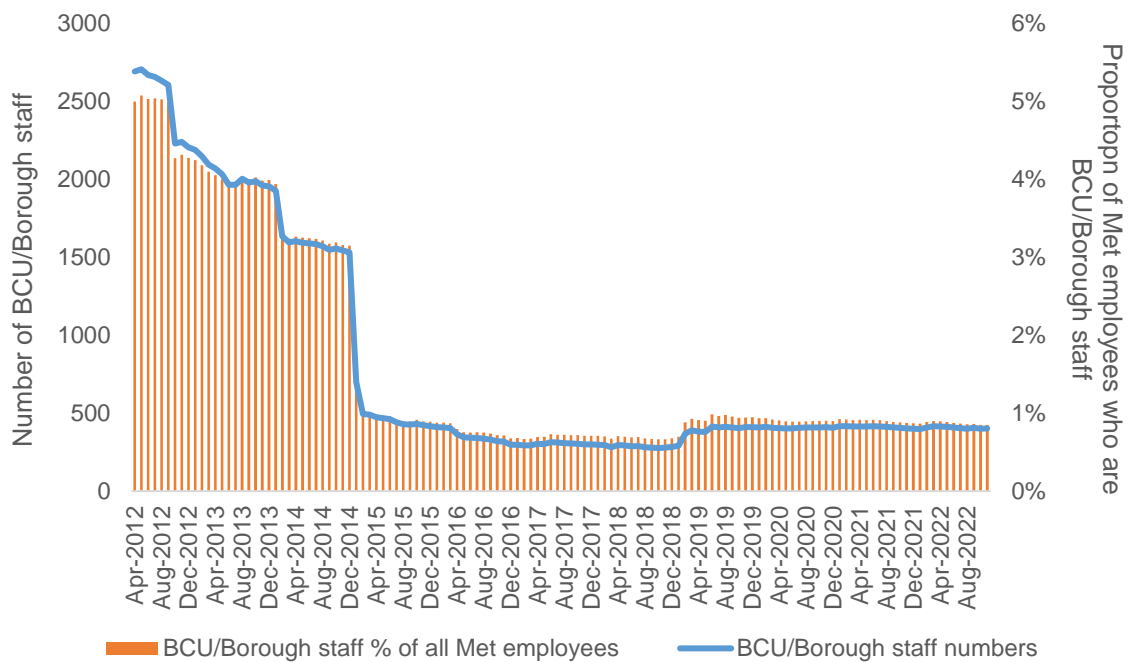
The number of frontline officers is around the same level as it was ten years ago. It fell to 15,656 in 2018-19 before increasing to today's levels, as illustrated in the following chart:

Figure 4.1: Borough and BCU officer numbers and percentage all Met employees, April 2012 to November 2022



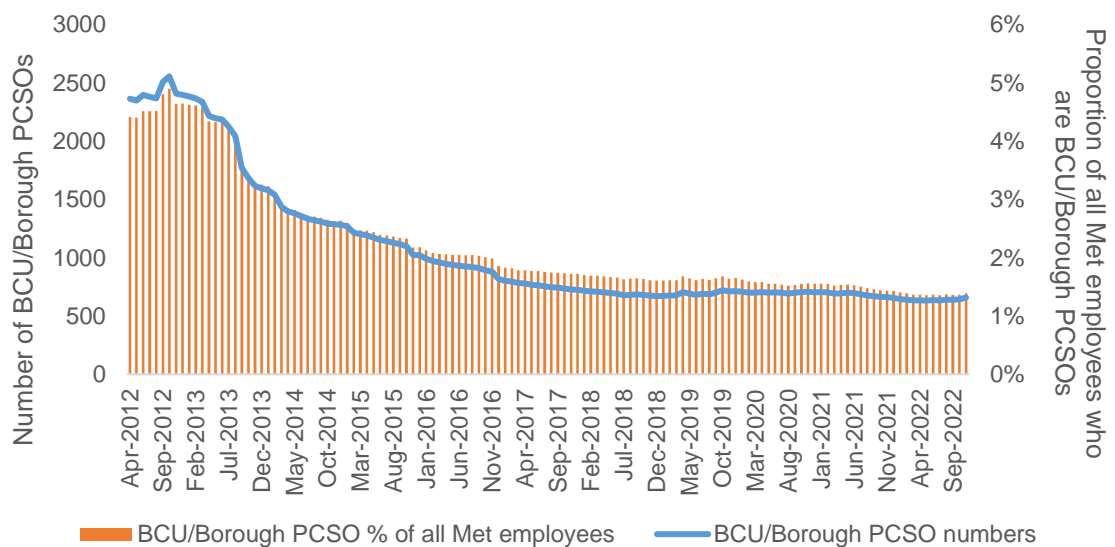
There have been dramatic reductions in the number of frontline, civilian staff who work in roles such as finance and IT as well as on front counters and at scenes of crimes, from 2,422 in 2012-13 to 409 in 2022.

Figure 4.2: Borough and BCU staff numbers and percentage all Met employees, April 2012 to November 2022



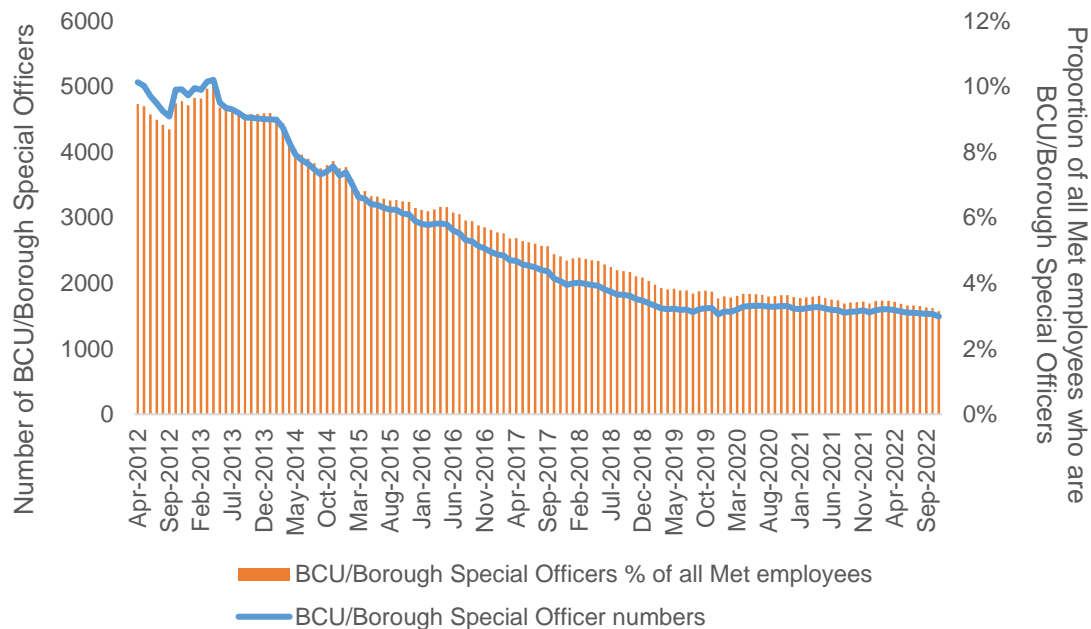
Similarly, the number of frontline PCSOs has fallen from 2,401 in 2012-13 to 668 in 2021-22.

Figure 4.3: Borough and BCU PCSO numbers and percentage all Met employees, April 2012 to November 2022



And frontline Met Special Constables reduced from 4,882 in 2012-13 to 1,587 in 2021-22.

Figure 4.4: Borough and BCU Special Officer numbers and percentage all Met employees, April 2012 to November 2022



So while the number of officers on BCUs is much the same as it was ten years ago, the overall number of people working in local policing has fallen by 6,772 (from 28,254 to 21,482) or the equivalent of around four BCUs worth of people.

In the period around 2015, there was a particularly sharp decline in officers on the frontline and overall frontline workforce numbers continued to fall until 2019. It should be noted too that, prior to 2018, staff investigating child abuse and rape and sexual assaults were in a specialist command and were therefore not included in the officer count.

A proportion of the civilian posts (such as crime and performance analysts) were centralised in order to save money rather than being lost. But due to the subsequent outsourcing of functions such as human resources, we have been unable to assess what that proportion was.

The graphs above show that officers on the frontline are now standing on far weaker foundations and are struggling to deliver a good service for Londoners. A leaner leadership and supervision model is supporting a similar number of less experienced officers. They lack the support of skilled civilian staff such as crime analysts, HR specialists and facilities managers. There are also fewer frontline PCSOs and Specials.

4.4. BCUs: the beleaguered frontline

The Review visited every BCU to hear from officers and staff what working in local policing was like.

There we found a part of the Met that was unloved, under-resourced, and creaking at the seams. Neighbourhood Policing teams have been decimated. Response teams, CID and Public Protection are totally overstretched.

Local policing, however, has to keep going 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and 365 days a year. Frontline officers showed pride and resilience in their work and wanted to do a good job for the public. We met officers who had always worked in local policing, loved the variety of Response, and were committed to Neighbourhood Policing. They felt a strong commitment to safeguarding children and young people from exploitation, investigating and prosecuting violence against women and girls, and driving down violence.

A Response officer couldn't contain his sense of pride:

"I still can't believe that this is my job. I love my job every day, I've gone from a job I hated to a job I love. I'd rather be in than be at home, on my days off I don't know what to do with myself."

However, there was a not-so-underlying recognition that to get on at the Met, people need to move away from BCUs, where they would enjoy a much easier life.

"We have to accept that they all know that if they go somewhere central, their workload will be half what they have here. There's a bit of a stigma to working on a BCU, but this is the most important bit of the organisation."

We agree it is the most important part of the organisation.

For the Met to deliver its mission of keeping Londoners safe, the BCUs should be the showcase of the Met – its shop window – where policing by consent is nurtured, and trust and confidence is forged by addressing local concerns and priorities.

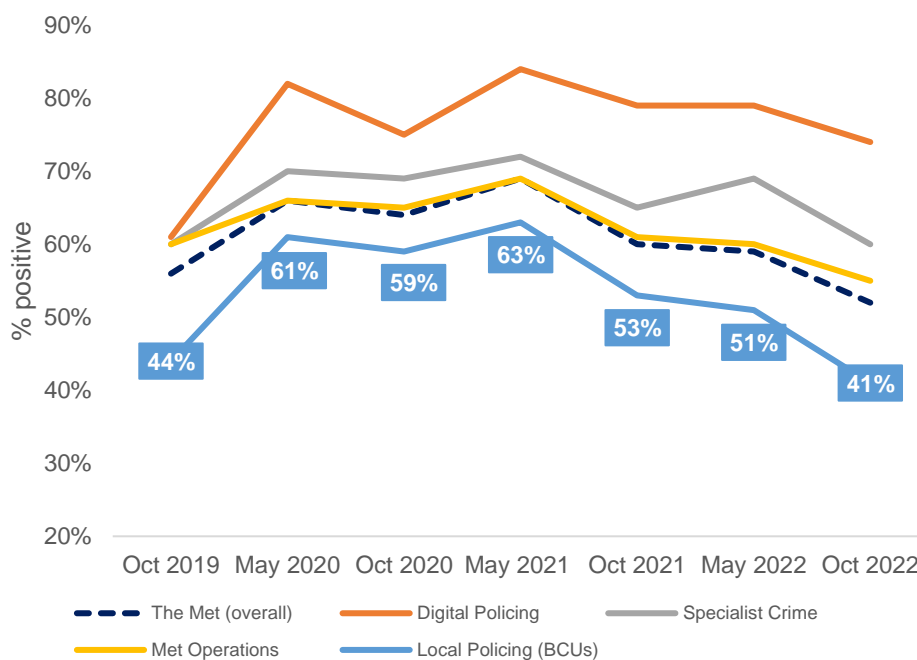
Instead, we found a frontline struggling with lack of resources and lack of support. Long standing officers said that BCUs have always suffered from the comparison with specialist functions, but that their status as the poor relation had become more pronounced over the past five years.

There are no longer staff canteens across the Met to provide hot meals on shift. Rotas are constantly changing. Officers arrive for their eight hour shift to be told they will be doing a 12 hour shift instead. PCSOs wait six months for a uniform. Public

Protection officers buy boxes of tissues for victims. Fridges and freezers containing rape forensic samples are iced up and taped shut.

Staff on BCUs are less satisfied with life at work than other parts of the Met. In the Met’s own staff survey, there is a 33 percentage point difference between frontline policing and digital policing in their response to “overall I am satisfied with my life at work”.

Figure 4.5: Met staff survey, ‘Overall I am satisfied with my life at work’. Proportion answering ‘agree’ or ‘strongly agree’, by business group, 2019 to 2022



"The Borough is at the bottom – it's the worst place to be...training and supervision is poor, and you get hammered. Response has the most junior or most jaded staff. It's a structural thing. It doesn't make sense for the public to be most exposed to these people."

The contrast between BCUs and in particular the specialist Operational Command Units (OCUs) – such as the Major Investigation Teams, Taskforce and Firearms – was striking. These specialist units remain comparatively well-resourced, well-trained and well-supported, with good facilities, and experienced officers and staff. On arrival in one specialist OCU, the Review team were shown around to see the set-up, admire the kit, the gym, and the special operations rooms. This never happened on a BCU visit.

This contrast was summed up by an officer who had experience of both BCU and the specialist squads:

“These [firearms] guys are the best, they get the best training and equipment. On Borough, the first thing I did starting as a detective was look for a chair that wasn’t broken.”

Austerity was imposed on the Met, but the leadership made choices about where these cuts fell, and local policing has suffered most.

In public statements, the leadership have always backed their frontline officers and praised their heroism. But the lived experience of many officers and staff we spoke to did not match the verbal backing.

Officers on the frontline feel forgotten about and neglected. They see a lack of emphasis on and recognition of the work of the frontline, and morale and commitment to the organisation suffers as a result.

They also explained the impact this culmination of issues has on their service provision and, therefore, on victim experience.

“If an officer is shattered, has no welfare [support] and then goes to [a] call where a victim of crime needs one hundred per cents commitment, they won’t get that.”

“They get to a call and know they have loads waiting for them – so they’re not thinking about the quality of service for victims. They’re just thinking about another day without a meal.”

Officers reported that they felt able only to fight fires, rather than to do any proactive work.

“Response officers have 25 crimes to investigate and are then told by victims they are not doing the job well; how can we ask officers to be loyal, when the organisation is not looking after them?”

“There are constantly shifts being changed, no meal breaks, no predictability, and yet they have to take the responsibility for things going wrong. If a victim complains about a case, that officer gets questioned on the failures.”

A CID detective said:

“We come in every day and are just having to manage risk. The investigations aren’t moving because we don’t have time. We’re a reactive unit. We deal with the new things coming in, and as long as we’re managing the risks, then if we get to the investigations, we get to them.”

In an intranet comment as part of a conversation about frontline pressures, one officer wrote:

“We're nowhere near meeting our call demand. We just about cover the 'i' grades. Lately, we have been handing over upwards of 30 's' grades to the next team. Imagine you're a victim, taking months/years to build up courage to ring Police. Your call is placed on an 's', and you are told the target time is an hour. Imagine then having to wait 8/10/12/24+ hours to see Police, and the impression that gives.”⁷⁰

Levels of stress and overwork were compounded by fellow officers who did not pull their weight, avoided taking calls and were not undertaking sufficiently thorough investigations. In some workplaces, this had become the norm.

Officers reflected on having to cover the work of lazy officers, so they ended up with additional calls or cases and of common work avoidance techniques.

Officers might just point-blank refuse to take a call, or pretend to still be on previous calls so they could take a break. This was known as ‘dodging the CAD’ (computer-aided dispatch):

“I would say: ‘should I update the CAD’ [Computer Aided Dispatch] and the officer I was working with would say ‘no then they’ll know we’re free.’”

We heard about officers on Response ‘squaring it up’, meaning that calls would result in ‘no further action’.

“Although not every investigation or call requires a thorough police response, cultures...develop where it is almost celebrated to reduce your workload.”

We were told about the lack of scrutiny around decisions not to take further action which facilitated such practices. The absence of routine supervision makes it more likely that officers can get away with it.

“My team were known as ‘the laziest’...when I worked in [base] I went into the office on night duty and every officer was asleep at their desks...the radio was still going constantly.”

“You'd bring someone in and the custody officers would be on their phones and would put their hands up to say ‘I’ll call on you when I’m ready.’”

⁷⁰ I grade: ‘immediate’ (high urgency); S grade: ‘significant’ (low urgency) – [Metropolitan Police Service, Call handling grading system](#)

The absence of basic management and supervision created cultures where poor practice is tolerated and those who do work hard are not recognised.

“I’ve seen officers be late to work by over an hour and a half and nothing’s done.”

“There’s no performance management...[I]don’t know if I’m doing a good job or not.”

This environment of pressure and difficult working conditions has left officers looking for people to blame. At every visit we heard officers apportioning blame to a range of organisations and people, including their local leaders, the central leadership of the Met, the governance and scrutiny bodies, the Mayor’s office, the media and the public.

Experienced officers are therefore seeking to avoid frontline roles and junior ones are trying to leave them as quickly as possible, despite the widely-held views that they are the best training ground. People don’t want to be there.

“However bad it gets, it’s worse on Borough than here.”

We examined Met data on ‘churn’ – that is, the total number of people leaving and joining teams across the Met as a proportion of the total officers and staff in each team. This is significantly higher on BCUs than in other Commands. This creates extra pressure for the BCUs, dealing with both the loss of experience and knowledge from people leaving, and the need for new people to gain both.

In 2022-23, there were 20,399 officers and staff in the BCUs. Over the course of the preceding 12 months, 4,910 officers and staff had come into the BCUs and 4,191 had left. In other words, a total of 9,101 officers and staff had joined or left the BCUs over the year. This is a churn rate of 45%, or nearly one in two.

In other units, the churn rate was much lower, at 18% or more than one in five in Firearms Command and 21% or just under one in five, in MO7 (Taskforce).

What has happened for the frontline to be so beleaguered?

4.5. Demand is not matching supply

“The blueprint model dictated how many cops we could have. But it doesn’t reflect experience, demand, or abstraction due to sickness or someone being on a course.”

The local policing model for BCUs rolled out in the 2018 re-organisation (the 'blueprint') used a resourcing model that was pretty much flat, dividing local policing resources approximately 12 ways.

This meant the same set up in each area. Therefore, staffing and resources could not fully reflect local crime profiles, demand levels, or population density.

For example, the resourcing model in South East (Bexley, Lewisham, Greenwich) is much the same as Central North (Camden and Islington). But there are over 50% more sexual offences in South East as there are in Central North and more than twice as many domestic abuse offences. Population numbers also vary significantly between BCU areas, with the population of North West BCU (Brent, Harrow, Barnet) nearly twice that of Central West (Westminster, Kensington and Chelsea, and Hammersmith and Fulham).

Differences like these are not reflected in the numbers of officers, nor does the blueprint allow the BCU to make the necessary adjustments.

These local variations must also be seen in the context of increases across the board in reported crime, particularly serious, violent, and complex crime (such as domestic and sexual abuse offences) which, as the tables in chapter 1 of this report show, are increasing in terms of sheer volume and as a proportion of the caseloads held by officers. With a resource model which hasn't changed for five years, it is clear that demand and supply are out of kilter:

“Resourcing is the problem, everywhere you look. Rape teams, child abuse teams, response teams, [are] all feeling that they can't do the job to the best of their ability because there's too much demand and not enough resource. Resource modelling done 5 years ago is massively outdated. We need to take this function of frontline policing more seriously in how we serve the public... We need the organisation to carry out demand modelling from scratch.”

In 2021-22, HMICFRS highlighted a similar issue in London around this mismatch of resources with need, focusing on rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO):

Some BCUs investigate higher numbers of RASSO than others but have similar supervisor numbers. The force recently created an additional RASSO inspector post for every BCU regardless of the demand each unit was facing. This isn't matching resource to demand or providing the right support to staff.⁷¹

⁷¹ [HMICFRS, September 2022, PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy](#)

This reflects a wider issue of poor resource and demand understanding across the Met highlighted in this report, but in practical terms it means that on BCUs, Response teams are being run beyond their real capacity.

"I know several times where we've had four outstanding immediate response calls with no officers to deal with it. Our charter time is up to 15 minutes. Our resourcing level means we've got no-one to go. That's events from children-at-risk, violence against women and girls, knife-point robberies...it could be all sorts."

"Last week on one late-turn, I was the only officer on my team with a Taser...my team believe the only way that will change is when one of us gets hurt seriously."

"[One] night we needed officers on constant watch, at one point myself and one other response officer were the only two officers for [a borough]. We were flagged down for a nightclub incident, there was a crowd of 100 people, if they had been more hostile...we could have been seriously hurt, officers from neighbouring boroughs had to join us."

One officer told us of a late-turn shift with one trainee detective on shift to cover two London boroughs.

"On Friday and Saturday, we had 15 PCs and two RVs (response vehicles). There is no urgent assistance around: if the public knew how few cops there were they'd be shocked."

"Being on Team [Response] is about the number of people you have: if we have to deal with a crime scene it's game over...there's no one to help."

The range of tasks Response is required to perform has also grown. In 2018, Response team officers became responsible for all non-complex crimes. This was designed to encourage officers on Response to 'get it right first time', meaning to undertake the necessary inquiries and paperwork to deal with a crime, and not hand it over to another team. Mi-Investigation, as it is called, was well intentioned but not thought through and has become universally unpopular.

To reduce the pressure on individual officers, quite a few BCUs created a DIY solution to this, and carved out Mi-Investigation support teams (MIST) within Response to do investigations. This reduced the overall complement of officers available for traditional Response tasks, meaning other teams were called upon to help when shortages arose.

The tendency for the Met to set up new teams in response to delivery gaps or to show action is being taken on a particular issue created further pressures. Whenever a new team or taskforce is set up, the officers to staff this are drawn from BCUs.

Such teams can provide focus for particular issues. But this approach can also merely create problems elsewhere, creating a case of 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'. Better resourcing of core functions would surely reduce the need for such targeted teams.

"We were told to create a Town Centre Team to increase confidence. It required 42 officers in all teams. Now we have two whole teams down in numbers – why are we creating new teams, when we have elements of core business not being met? We pulled officers from Response teams."

An intranet comment noted:

"The Met's solution to crime has always been to create these squads to appease the government with 'this is what we are doing' 'setting up another squad' to tackle an issue when it's never a real solution."

The imbalance in resourcing for the frontline is well known and felt within the Met. In our survey of Met officers and staff for the Review, most feel there should be a rebalancing of resources from other specialist commands across the Met to the BCUs.

- 58% of Met employees who responded think that more resources given to specialist functions need to be allocated to BCUs.
- Respondents from frontline policing (76%) are the business group most likely to think resources should be allocated to BCUs. Among police officer respondents, Chief Inspectors (78%), Inspectors (78%) and Sergeants (73%) are more likely to think this compared with Constables (63%)
- Just 13% of respondents think the balance of resources is about right. Respondents working in specialist operations (25%), specialist crime (23%) and Met operations (17%) are more likely to think this compared to respondents overall
- Only 5% think specialist functions need greater resources. This rises to 14% of respondents from forensic services and 11% of respondents from specialist crime.

4.6. Officers are not where they should be: Aid and abstractions

As we highlight above, the number of officers on BCUs is now actually slightly higher than it was 2012. However, on visits we were concerned to find that the numbers they were supposed to have on paper rarely matched who was actually available.

During an early visit, an officer on Response said that there were 50-60 officers on the roll, but at parade there were actually only about 30. When officers doing Mi-Investigation were taken into account, there were just 20 or so officers out on the street in one of the busiest areas. We decided to look in more detail at this issue.

“We're bigger than we've ever been, but where are all the police officers in the Met? Has anyone asked?”

One major reason is that staff on BCUs are abstracted for 'Aid'. That means they are providing policing elsewhere in London for demonstrations, football matches or large public events. Aid can also be local, to respond to incidents in the area. This is a long-standing practice. But the now-threadbare resourcing model, along with the impact of changes in demand, leaves a lot of understaffing for the day job while requests for Aid are met.

The blueprint model states:

“Response teams will resource all central and local Aid requirements, where required, allowing other strands to concentrate on providing their areas of policing.”

However, Response teams are unable to resource all Aid requirements. Once Response are short-staffed, other teams get called upon to staff up Response. In practice this is now an Aid 'hierarchy'.

“We are short of 150 officers which is the equivalent to a whole Response team. This impacts on everyone else across the BCU.”

Neighbourhood Policing teams were specifically ring-fenced in the blueprint from being removed from their duties. But they are constantly taken for other teams.

Officers from Neighbourhood Policing teams talked about not being given a chance to get to know their ward. An officer described having no time to arrange meetings on her patch because she was so often pulled to Aid and to other teams that had already been abstracted.

“We're here to do our jobs, to serve, but give us a chance.”

Another said that, in the year he spent nominally on Neighbourhoods, he only spent about two and a half months actually working on a ward, as he was always sent to staff up other teams.

On another BCU, we were told that Neighbourhood teams were 'hemorrhaging'. An officer said he felt that the team were:

"[A]lways being taken off to do other things...this isn't an SNT [Safer Neighbourhoods Team] anymore."

"I've got 520 shifts to backfill – most are coming from my strand (Neighbourhoods). We're losing staff to backfilling and hidden workloads."

Another said a 'dedicated' ward officer:

"[D]oesn't really mean that anymore."

A Neighbourhoods Superintendent said:

"In the last three weeks, 50% are abstracted each day."

An Inspector said:

"SNT officers are breaking."

She said backfilling other teams and abstractions meant the cancellation of key Met priorities:

"Women invited as part of the Walk and Talk initiative had their event cancelled as officers had to be used on Team."

She also said abstractions are getting worse:

"This week, I have no SNT officers. Our night-time economy team, they're all abstracted for Aid as opposed to being where they should be. It's uncomfortable...we're letting our communities down."⁷²

In practice, far from being ring-fenced, neighbourhood teams were described as a "resource."

⁷² Night-time economy teams are part of Town Centre Teams, set up as part of the uplift growth: [London City Hall, Safety in the Night-Time Economy](#)

The Aid hierarchy means very few officers on a BCU are not affected. Detectives in Public Protection are at the bottom of the list to protect investigative work.

“We’re bottom of the hierarchy...but they get to the bottom a lot!”

“You might have somebody with 20 CRIS reports [investigations] on an Aid bus. It’s not that often, but it does happen.”

“Local investigations [CID] get hit quite hard.”

The Review was given an example where a Detective was mid-way through a long and difficult rape trial in Crown Court lasting two weeks. Over the weekend in the middle, they were instructed to report for Aid duty and spent the weekend in a police station waiting to be called to action. No one had seemed able to see how this would potentially undermine the Detective’s ability to work well during the rape trial. To her, no one seemed to care.

A theme which we found time and time again in this Review is that frontline policing fares worse than other parts of the Met. There was frustration in local policing that BCUs are always the first point of call for central Aid, rather than other parts of the Met where many of the specialist teams (such as Counter-Terrorism policing) are actually ring-fenced. Officers agreed that the principle of Aid is right and that people on BCU need experience of public order policing. But there was resentment that ‘we’re just the easiest target.’

There are also other abstractions that reduce the numbers of officers who are fully deployable. These include long term sickness, those restricted due to misconduct allegations, those with a condition that affects their ability in the short or longer term on adjusted or recuperative duties, and those on recruit training.

It is currently estimated that there are 1,500 officers undertaking recruit training, all of whom will be on BCUs. In their first year, recruits spend 50% of their time training. There are also staff on secondments to short-term posts to cover Met initiatives (such as the Rebuilding Trust programme) or other new areas of work. For example, over 300 police officers are in the Transformation Directorate at the Met.

A recent paper for the Management Board estimated that across the Met, around one in four officers are not fully deployable.⁷³ It indicated that the impact is particularly acute in local policing. We commend the new leadership for getting to the bottom of this issue.

⁷³ Metropolitan Police Service, January 2023, Internal paper

The paper explained that this information is not recorded on management systems, so BCUs will appear to have the right level of resource, when they are actually operating at around 20-25% below this figure.

This means that the BCU Commander cannot see who is available and who isn't in reality. As the Met's Management Board paper states:

This makes it hard to align resource to priorities...because often the resource reflected on the system is not really there.

Overtime is used to staff up teams. As we saw in chapter 2, spending on overtime in frontline policing has increased significantly, nearly doubling as a proportion of the Met's total overtime bill between 2015-16 and 2021-22.

"The Met solution is to throw overtime at the problem. But there are only so many cops and you're knackered, text constantly pinging about overtime. When I joined Response there were 40 people on Response at any one time – there were loads of us, [loads of] cars etc. Now on a good day we have 20 people – there are abstractions all the time."

"We were told about the Uplift that Response would be getting boosted, we'd get 40 people. Sounds really good on paper but in practice it's not like that."

"Overtime is constant. You're asked if you can do OSE (operational support and events) 3 or 4 hours before each duty starts. You'll get a message on the overtime group and told there's overtime available. They're pretty much relying on people to do overtime to cover shifts."

Many officers find that working unpaid, late and on their days off, is the only way to even come close to keeping up with their workloads. Although this was particularly the case for detectives, many officers on Response would remain at work late to complete their paperwork or ensure a case was handed over properly.

"If you want to do a good job on a BCU...you have to put a huge amount of your own time into it. There isn't enough time to deal with it at work."

"From my own experience as a Sergeant, to try and be conscientious and do a good job, it would be a very conservative estimate to say I did within the region of 5-600 hours unpaid extra just to keep the wolf from the door...to keep the ship sailing in the right direction...I tended to go in an hour early and stay an hour late and then at least one of my rest days, I would work 5-6 hours to catch up."

A survey of those investigating rape and serious sexual offences (RASSO) found that 80.3% had ‘often’ worked in their free time to meet work demands.⁷⁴

4.7. The impact of inexperience

Resourcing challenges are exacerbated by the lack of experience of many police officers. The Uplift Programme is bringing higher numbers of officers than ever onto BCUs. But while increased numbers are welcome, those who are still in training are not able to be as effective.

"On paper we have the highest number of police officers, [but] we lost more experience in the four years than I have ever seen in CID...while on paper there are officers on seats, the lack of experience is noticeable."

On average, in BCUs, 25% of all Constables and 45% of Detective Constables are probationers (Police Constables and Detective Constables with less than 2 years' experience). This is shown in the following table.

Figure 4.5: Proportion of each BCU which are probationers, January 2023

BCU	Total Percentage of PC Probationers	Total Percentage of DC Probationers
AS – Central South	25.0%	47.9%
AW – Central West	28.2%	39.5%
CE – Central East	25.2%	49.5%
CN – Central North	27.6%	50.2%
EA – East Area	26.4%	37.8%
NA – North Area	25.1%	47.4%
NE – North East	25.8%	47.0%
NW – North West	22.6%	46.2%
SE – South East	24.6%	42.5%
SN – South Area	23.9%	41.8%
SW – South West	18.5%	48.5%
WA – West Area	25.4%	39.9%
Averages for all BCUs	24.9%	44.7%

There is a knock-on effect. As fast as new recruits come in, more Sergeants are needed to supervise them and so they too are increasingly less experienced.

⁷⁴ Operation Soteria Bluestone

An Inspector described his team:

"46% were probationers within their first two years of service; all Sergeants but one were in their first year of Sergeant's service. It was my first Inspector's job...[There was] a staggering lack of support, a staggering lack of experience."

Supervision is often provided by Sergeants with not much more experience than the Constables they are in charge of.

"I went out with experienced officers and I learned on the job. If I didn't do something, they told me. That's not happening anymore. You're getting new people in service taught by people new in service."

This inexperience is clearly destabilising for people on BCUs and there was a lot of frustration expressed. We heard blame being placed on new recruits themselves, with complaints about their performance, or their values and morals including:

"This is a disciplined service but there's no discipline as we're employing complete idiots."

"You have to lower the level to get people in, but that lets in the bad apples."

But not everyone agreed:

"A common belief is that everyone that joins the job now is rubbish and we were all great when we joined. It's not true at all, there's loads of really great people joining the job, they just get a much worse deal."

There were many officers we spoke to who recognised that new recruits needed practical training, consistent supervision and support.

In some respects, the Met almost seems to have been taken by surprise by the arrival of new recruits. The active recruitment drive should have prompted the Met to review how they could best support new recruits, embed good behaviour and standards and treatment of the public, and generally maximise supervisory and management oversight. Given that recruits all arrive in the Met via a BCU, we would have expected this to be a focus for preparation.

However, some policies and practices seemed to actively counteract support and oversight for new recruits. The system of staff rotation has probationer PCs moving around every six months to give them an opportunity to experience different areas of frontline policing. We heard that this time period was neither sufficient to get experience nor, crucially, for the supervisor to learn enough about the person.

“I could be moving on bad apples constantly. I have individuals coming in with action plans [improvement plans] that are not followed through.”

“We’ve had someone on Borough for years who hasn’t completed probation; they have just extended their probation for another six months. The problem has been the change of supervisors; nobody has seen [them] through to the end.”

“My concern with that is we [need to] learn about that person [in] that period, they might be on annual leave during that time. We’re not getting the misconduct side – we don’t know how to judge them. You don’t see someone’s behaviour, then they move onto another team.”

This lack of preparation by the Met also affects trainee detectives. In the past, detectives used to start their training on Response, to gain experience of working with the public. Today most direct entry detectives go straight into investigations:

“It’s like a baptism of fire going in. You’re likely to be dealing with a prisoner in custody every day; engagement with social services and dealing with high risk. A lot of officers had a very tough two years. It was very weird at the start, all these shiny keen people were suddenly fighting to keep their heads above water.”

When asked how the direct entry detectives were received by substantive detectives:

“The reaction was largely negative – while grateful for numbers, they worried we had come from nowhere, no grounding on Team. They were right – I now understand how it was so, so important to be on Team first.”

“We didn’t get sufficient preparation – we should have been on Team first. Also didn’t get sufficient support: Three Sergeants for 12 Detective Constables with 25 crimes apiece.”

“This is where the inexperience shows. You have a 20-year-old trying to convince a 50-year-old with everything to lose to leave their partner.”

4.8. Supervision

Chapter 3 discussed issues around poor supervision and management. These are particularly evident on the frontline of policing in London.

The number of PCs who were to be managed by a Sergeant – ‘supervisory spans’ – was increased in 2018 as part of cost saving measures from 1:8 to 1:10. When the new policing model was adopted, these ratios were one of the ‘red lines’ with no flexibility.

This clearly presents risks, but may be manageable if there are experienced Constables, Sergeants and Inspectors above them. But with 4,557 new recruits coming in over three years, those risks clearly increased. Yet no change was made to the supervisory spans. If anything, they have expanded further, with several officers telling us the ratio was now more often 1:12. This has left Sergeants and Inspectors carrying greater and greater risk.

“You cannot both supervise staff and do the operational and investigation role at the same time because the demand and work flow is impossible.”

The Met has made a concerted effort to increase the number of Sergeants but this has not been sufficient to reduce supervision ratios.

The lean management model had left just two Chief Inspectors covering Response across a whole BCU with 700 staff beneath them.

“The supervisor is up against the cosh in terms of what they are expected to do. The number of supervisors for [Response] officers is scary in terms of the expectations put on them. Lots of supervisors are inexperienced or operate in a limited supervisor function – how can they be confident to be an effective supervisor and say something is wrong?”

We were told repeatedly that the Sergeant rank is the most critical for instilling and enforcing culture and values. But at a time when culture and values are being questioned, supervisors are not being given the tools to deliver this important role.

The primacy of hitting number targets at both PC and then Sergeant levels – emphasising quantity over quality – and the apparent absence of strategic planning in meeting the supervisory needs of new recruits has left officers at all levels under-prepared for the jobs they are expected to do.

The consequent lack of day-to-day support manifests at more human level. Supervisors are *“never around when their officers need them.”*

It is noteworthy that supervisory spans in specialist units were much lower. Both on visits and by senior staff, we were told that the Territorial Support Group (TSG), had a ‘strict’ one Sergeant to three Police Constables ratio due to the risks they carry. There are no probationary officers on TSG.

This is one of many examples where those parts of the Met that are closest to Londoners are not valued in the way that the more specialist teams are.

4.9. Loss of civilian staff and support services

The stripping out of support and civilian staff roles and functions was one of the most significant consequences of the impossible juggle of cost-saving while keeping officer 'boots on the ground'. As chapter 2 showed, staff numbers across the Met fell by almost a quarter, but the graphs earlier in this chapter show that on BCUs, the numbers fell by an astonishing 83% from 2,422 in 2012-13 to 409 in 2021-22.

Many told us about the huge loss of experience and skills from civilian staff. In practice, they provided much of the 'glue' that makes policing effective. The crime analysts, the HR support and those providing administrative, business and facilities support had as much of a career in policing as warranted officers.

Behind the frontline of policing, intelligence analysts provide analytical and research support to BCUs and specialist units across the Met. They are involved in proactive and reactive operations and tackle emerging areas of risk and harm. Over the last decade, however, analysts have been subject to drastic efficiency cuts as a result of austerity.

The removal of frontline BCU (or formerly Borough) based intelligence analysts had the most noticeable impact on operational policing. For instance, in 2010, approximately 320 intelligence analysts and over 70 lead analysts worked for the Met. Of these, 185 analysts and 32 lead analysts worked on individual boroughs. The remainder worked in the Serious Crime Directorate and the Met Intelligence Bureau.

In 2022-23, BCUs now rely on 48 intelligence analysts with 12 lead analysts, one per BCU. The Review Team have been told it is rare for all 12 posts to be filled. The remaining intelligence analysts work in Intelligence Support Hubs (serious crime), Central Intelligence teams (pan-London threats), digital intelligence teams and sensitive or covert intelligence units.

With BCUs now stripped of intelligence analysts, the result is a loss of fine-grained analysis at the local level. Previously, analysts on Borough could scrutinise every crime incident reported on a daily basis and all entries on the Met's database of criminal intelligence (Crimint). This analysis translated into intelligence products and briefings to inform BCUs on priority crimes, suspects, victims and locations, as well as crime trends, hot spots and threat assessments.

Now, analysts can only achieve a fraction of what they used to. This has resulted in a loss of information to local BCUs. One former senior described internal responses to this cut:

“There wasn’t a professional in the room who thought it was a better way to run policing, it was just cheaper.”

HR and welfare services, occupational health and finance have been centralised and then in many cases outsourced. But, the new ‘offer’ provided centrally has not filled the gaps. Officers felt that remote HR support lacked the context to support officers managing locally. As a result, some BCUs had developed their own services, using warranted officers to perform roles which used to be undertaken by civilian staff. These roles could be better performed by a trained specialist while warranted officers might be better deployed on the frontline.

At least one BCU Commander had set up a programme to try to bring officers who had been on recuperative duties for some time into more suitable roles. No help had been forthcoming from the centre. A Superintendent co-opted a PC who had previously worked in HR to use her skills for the project.

The centralisation and then outsourcing of HR functions was felt by many BCUs (and other Operational Command Units) to have limited their ability to support officers at a time when they most need it.

Sergeants and Inspectors with inadequate training and heavy workloads found themselves responsible for a lot of HR issues. They are overwhelmed with people work, and are not doing it very effectively due to a lack of guidance and confidence.

“Most [supervisors] cannot find the time to have a coffee with a struggling staff member. And, even if you do, there are no canteens [or] breakout rooms to take them to.”

4.10. Geography

The increase in the size of the areas and populations each BCU is now responsible for and the reduction in Met buildings and loss of facilities discussed in chapter 2 was a seismic change in Met frontline policing. Many are still recognising and absorbing the consequences. Five years into the new policing model, there remain significant concerns. These might not be insurmountable but they are not being sufficiently acknowledged, accepted or addressed.

Dispatch staff don’t recognise road names. Areas have vastly different crime issues, and local crime analysts no longer have the resources to develop intelligence about them. Alongside the loss of neighbourhood policing resources, this is increasing the

distance between police and the communities they serve and making it harder to know the areas.

"[Each of our three Boroughs] have very different criminals, gangs and crime types."

"I spoke to all Superintendents of Neighbourhoods, none of them knew their own demographics...one of them asked me where they should find their mentally ill disabled communities, so you have officers that walk the streets and you don't know? You don't know local organisations?"

Partnerships with the local authority now involve partnerships with two, three or four local authorities. That inevitably makes the work harder to do well, as officers at strategic and operational levels have less time and ability to work with partners. This applies across shared statutory responsibilities such as safeguarding or community safety, day to day issues of policing in the area, strategic management of a major incident or routine community engagement. Most local authorities we spoke to had noted the distance between themselves and their BCU Commander grow.

These relationships are vital for better local policing, for integrated working and for transparency and accountability to communities. The relationships are weakened by a larger footprint to manage. Measures to mitigate this are needed. We return to this in later chapters.

Greater distances to travel have likely impacted response times. Logistically, the closure and loss of buildings such as custody suites has left police officers having to drive further to take prisoners to custody. There are personal impacts too, with officers having to walk considerable distances in the early hours of the morning to pick up cars after a change of shift. Officers described the 'drift' back to base, even avoiding calls and arrests, at the end of a shift.

"No one wants to go to a call and make an arrest, then have to go to the custody suite, right at the end of a shift...that's the mindset, and it's been caused by getting rid of buildings."

In Neighbourhood Teams, the larger distances between wards and central bases particularly in larger areas, led to a commitment that no dedicated ward officer (DWO) would be more than a twenty minute away from their patch. This commitment was found to be unrealistic.

"It was changed to a 20 minute journey on public transport and then a 20 minute cycle ride. This supposed there are sufficient bikes for officers to use, which is not the case and also that all officers can use a bike and be made to cycle, which is also not the case."

The issue of bike availability was then compounded by the need for the bikes to be serviced on a yearly basis, regardless of use, by the provider Babcock. The service costs were prohibitive, which caused the fleet of bikes held to be rationalised. The contract is now with Halfords.”

There is an increased reliance on cars to get about, for attending calls and visiting victims. The majority of Londoners only see police officers in vehicles and part of that is about logistics.

4.11. Drivers

The issue of driver shortages was a running sore across BCUs. It was raised on nearly every visit to local policing, and seen as illustrative of poor Met management. The issue was largely related to the lack of officers who had been able to get response driver (level three) training. But we also came across areas with a lack of cars and even basic level drivers.

“I’m a basic driver, so you end up stuck driving in the same loop because no-one else is trained.”

The position was particularly acute due to a bottleneck caused by training being curtailed during the Pandemic. But essentially, there was a major shortage of drivers who could drive a response vehicle. This was exacerbated by calls for Aid, where response drivers were often abstracted for public order events.

Response teams said they were constantly reliant on a very small number of level three drivers. One officer told us he’d handed back his level three ticket because he was always on call. Another said he was the only response driver in his team of 30.

“This morning we came in to two marked police cars available, 12-15 officers on parade. We’ve borrowed 2 from Ilford, we can’t use the minibuses and carriers because of Aid, events in London.”

“Yesterday, we had 3 response cars for the whole of Richmond and Kingston. If something big happens, there’s no chance to get there. It’s officer safety too, if an officer needs help, there’s no-one that can come and help you. It’s the norm now.”

The numbers of local instructors have also dwindled which has resulted in the Met spending a lot of money sourcing driving courses and instructors from across the country. Currently, officers are being sent to Wales to do a level three driving course.

4.12. Specialist Teams

The start of this chapter mentioned the pan-London specialist teams who respond to an incident or undertake proactive work in support of a particular issue. These include the VCTF, TSG and MO19. These aren't based in BCUs and are largely central teams.

While they can be tasked to carry out policing functions in a BCU area, they are not accountable to the BCU chain of command. This can undermine a BCU's attempts to own its very extensive patch, and to be fully accountable for policing there, both to the Met and to the public.

"It's the BCU that is held to account on performance for things that VCTF sometimes come in and wreak havoc on – not them."

We were told that specialist teams tended to have rigid attitudes to their style of policing.

"Theirs is the right way and they do not want it questioned. This is particularly strong in firearms and public order where they are oriented towards national guidelines and 'the way that they do things'. The impact on the community is immaterial."

Officers described these teams as 'parachuting in'. They argued TSG and VCTF are deployed on their boroughs without adequate liaison, without knowledge of local issues, and without sufficient sensitivity.

"TSG come here not knowing the area...they come late, allegedly go to the gym on job time...they annoy the community, and arrest people who probably didn't need to be arrested anyway...My colleagues think it suppresses crime. I don't think it's worth the community upset, it poisons the relationship with the community."

We heard that their work always came back to the BCU to deal with:

"I don't think anyone enjoys them coming on borough. Violence Suppression Unit bids for them on our borough. They're brought in for a day, cannot fulfil their tasked role, so the problem goes back to a borough team."

"The quality of their [TSG's] primary investigation, I would not get away with it: it's a couple of lines on CRIS, miserable spelling – it's primary school kids with crayons. You also can't get hold of them – they blank you, don't reply to emails."

Local authority Chief Executives also voiced concerns about specialist teams creating difficulties in their area.

“Any sensitivity, any ability to connect locally, can be wiped out instantly by TSG or MO19 or whoever it is.”

When concerns arise, the public and partners will go to the BCU as the police in charge of the area. However, they are not in charge of the specialist team and are unable to hold them to account. The Review was told of a ten-year-old Black boy who was removed from his garden and pinned to the ground by VCTF. When the boy’s family complained to the BCU Commander, we were told it took the BCU eleven working days to establish who had undertaken the search *on his own BCU*. There was no accountability and nothing the BCU Commander could do.

“When I was unhappy with how any of my officers served the public, I was able to remove them from operational duties until I was happy that they would police in the style that I wanted. I did not have that ability with specialist units”

Another officer called for VCTF to be broken up and drawn back into local policing:

“There’s local BCUs and the omnicompetence the Met wants them to have then there’s the specialisms: counter-terror, professional standards and anti-corruption, murder teams and public order...then there’s a middle ground: a classic example of this is VCTF. The Met should reflect on this middle ground when there’s an incident of violence. Decision point...do we invest in and build competence in local teams [that could solve this violence] or create another middle ground pan-London team and extract resources further? In the middle layer, that’s our problem.”

4.13. Commanders not in control

When the BCU model was piloted as the ‘Strengthening Local Policing’ programme, the report on the Pathfinder areas claimed that the move would improve consistency across policing in London and ‘generate a strong sense of local ownership of design and implementation’.⁷⁵

However far from this being the case, BCU Commanders find it very difficult to run policing in their area. While consistency of standards and practice are important, BCUs have almost become satellites of New Scotland Yard, albeit under-resourced and under-supported.

⁷⁵ [January 2018, BCU Pathfinder Review: Strengthening Local Policing Programme](#)

The Met's model of delivering policing operations is 'centrally controlled, locally delivered'. The reality of this on the ground is that BCUs are frequently asked to deliver operations which are rolled out without building an understanding of the practical challenges associated with delivery, and how they might work for the local area.

"We're learning policies on the hoof and we're the people who are supposed to make sure those policies land on the workforce. The whole structure makes it hard to be a good senior leader – it's geared to almost being the antithesis."

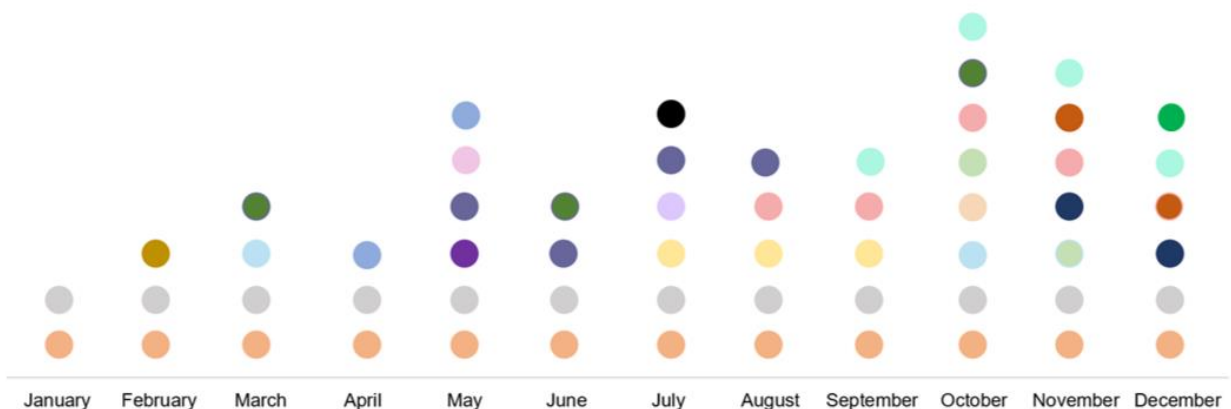
There are often multiple operations, competing for similar resources, at similar times. Each operation is often accompanied by multiple meetings, frequent data returns and other administrative demands which put an added strain on BCUs, before disappearing soon after.

"Attempting to centrally control this increases the administrative overhead and... disempowers people locally."

Frequency of Operations

The following chart illustrates the various policing operations a BCU has to promote, respond to and record results from on a monthly basis throughout the year. This is for illustration purposes only. This chart does not represent all operations; only those for which we have been given or identified a 'frequency.'

Figure 4.6: Infographic showing the policing operations for BCUs organised by month



Key:

- | | | | | |
|--|---|---|--|--|
| ● County Lines Intensification week | ● Winter Nights | ● Op Goldjuno | ● 16 Days of Activism | ● Burglary Q Car |
| ● Op Halloween | ● Op Nightingale | ● Op Momentum | ● Op Pelaton | ● Op Sceptre |
| ● Autumn Nights | ● ASB Week of Action | ● Op Arawn | ● Firearms Intensification Week | ● Op Calibre |
| ● Summer Nights | ● Op Aegis | ● Op Sweep | ● Op Tenacity – 100 days of action | |

The Review was told that, as well as this, BCUs are also asked to meet short-lived initiatives. We heard that there would often be a sudden, central push to gather intensive amounts of information and data to send to New Scotland Yard.

For example, the Review heard that at one point, BCUs were being pushed to gather data and information at short-notice on uniform standards internally. BCUs were unclear why this had become an urgent priority and what was being done with the data New Scotland Yard was gathering. The initiative quickly petered out.

"It became a quantification exercise and it was all about numbers."

"They even set up competition between BCUs on their performance in these spreadsheets...there was a real drive for 'update this spreadsheet, update this spreadsheet'...then it all went quiet."

There was consensus from most BCUs that they could manage much better if given more operational freedom to be creative as they were closer to local needs and concerns.

This level of central direction in local policing, and a patchwork and centrally-directed approach to addressing resourcing gaps, impacts on a BCU Commander's ability to truly 'own' their local area, and to set their own direction and tone with their community. Commanders are constantly looking upwards, rather than downwards, and it becomes easy for public trust and confidence to be ignored.

4.14. Conclusion

All parts of the Met are important, but the BCUs have the greatest interaction with the public, and the majority of the core business of the Met is managed by them. However, frontline policing is the poor relation in the Met. Their voices have not been heard sufficiently at senior levels and they are running with deficiencies in numbers, skills, experience, and support.

The closer the Met get to Londoners, the more beleaguered the service is. One sad aspect of this is that we frequently met officers who said they would worry if their fellow officers had to attend the homes of their parents, deal with their children or if they had family who were victims of crime. That in itself spoke volumes.

This essential part of the Met's business for Londoners has been compromised by the neglect of the senior leadership over a very long period of time, with inevitable impacts on the trust and confidence of the public, and on the legitimacy of policing and consent. As a result, Londoners are at greater risk and in some respects, so are their officers.

The demands of frontline policing in London's communities should be the main driver for the whole service and the number one focus for the Met's senior management. Instead, it has allowed the frontline to degrade. However, despite an improvement in the Met's finances in more recent years, and an uplift in police officer numbers, the Met has not yet taken sufficient measures to mitigate some of the most damaging consequences – in particular ensuring that those working on the frontline with the public are sufficiently trained, resourced and supported to do a good job and to listen to what they need.

"We need good people. This is the toughest job. You might deal with a rape, domestic...these require a whole multitude of skills, empathy, policing, experience...we might as well all go home if we don't have good frontline officers – they are the most important people – we rely on them."

This was aptly summed up by one person we spoke to, who felt the leadership needed to make the frontline a genuine priority:

"Work out what your resources are, properly map them, and if they're not servicing the frontline, why not?"

Chapter 5: Public Protection

Chapter summary:

Despite dealing with some of the most serious crimes affecting the most vulnerable Londoners and committed by highly dangerous criminals, including violence against women and girls which is a stated priority, the Met's Public Protection Teams have suffered the most severe reductions in support that have affected wider frontline policing in London. Many aspects of this work were moved from a specialist team into frontline roles that any officer could be expected to pick up. Caseloads per officer have grown, training and support facilities are lacking and levels of experience have fallen. Serious criticisms of the Met's approach to child protection by the inspectorate have been passed over. Dedicated officers are hampered in their support for victims.

This chapter includes findings from intensive research undertaken in the Met by the team at Operation Soteria Bluestone in 2021. These were shared with the Met, who gave us access to them. Operation Soteria Bluestone is a collaborative programme between academics and the police. It was launched by the Home Office to help increase the number of adult rape cases reaching court, with pathfinders in the Met and four other forces in England and Wales.

5.1. Introduction

Public Protection Teams investigate a range of serious crimes that often affect the most vulnerable people in a community, and protect adults and children who are at risk from harm. Their responsibilities include investigating child abuse, rape and serious sexual offences, domestic abuse, and stalking.

Some of these crimes disproportionately affect children and vulnerable adults. Indeed, criminal and sexual exploitation is purposefully targeted on the most disadvantaged. Crimes such as domestic violence, rape and sexual offences also create vulnerability for all women, as they are more likely to be affected.

Such crimes have profound and long-lasting effects on physical and mental health, and on future life chances. Victims are often afraid to come forward or fear experiencing stigma if they do so. Some victims become more vulnerable to being both victims and perpetrators of other crimes as a result.

The criminals involved in these crimes pose some of the greatest risks to society. Their crimes often occur in private spaces where others cannot see or intervene.

They tend to repeat their crimes, and control their victims to prevent them reporting. There is also evidence that these crimes are linked to organised networks.

Public Protection teams therefore face some of the highest risk and most complex crimes in policing. These crimes should be addressed with specialist skills, excellent training, integrated partnership working and experienced officers and staff.

Despite the best efforts of many outstanding and hardworking detectives, it is clear – and has been for some time now – that the Met has struggled to tackle these crimes. Instead, Public Protection has been actively de-prioritised.

This chapter shows that although the Met knew it wasn't doing a good enough job in respect of these crimes, it made a strategic decision to turn Public Protection into a job that 'anyone can do'. It moved the investigation of these crimes into the BCU structure, while simultaneously removing the vital infrastructure and resources from BCUs needed to tackle these crimes effectively.

Until 2018, the majority of rape, sexual offences and child abuse investigations (but not domestic abuse) were undertaken in Sapphire and Child Abuse Investigation Teams, within a central specialist command. This was de-centralised and de-specialised as part of the BCU restructure and was co-located with community safety units (principally domestic abuse) within the Public Protection strand.

The Met included triaging, victim care, consistency, efficiency, quality and reduced bureaucracy as drivers for change in its design considerations for decentralising. But everyone we spoke to about this issue confirmed that it was primarily a financial decision. It contributed to the overall savings the Met needed to make. It certainly has not met the design aspirations.

5.2. Child protection

The Met had been well aware of the inadequate service they were providing on child protection since a 2016 HMICFRS (then called HMIC) inspection.⁷⁶ In that year's annual State of Policing report, the Chief Inspector of HMICFRS, Sir Tom Winsor described this report as:

The most severely critical that HMIC has published about any force, on any subject, ever... There is no place in civilised society for the police to neglect their duty towards children in this way, and it is deeply troubling that it has

⁷⁶ [HMIC, November 2016, *National Child Protection Inspections: The Metropolitan Police Service*](#)

been happening to such a significant extent in the largest force in the country.⁷⁷

Due to the severity of the report, the then Home Secretary commissioned HMICFRS to provide quarterly reports into the Met's progress in 2017.⁷⁸ They were inspected again in 2018 and in 2021.⁷⁹

The course of HMICFRS's inspections is set out below. It is notable that despite startling findings, recommendations continue not to be addressed, problems become more severe each year and improvements are not sustained. The common threads – of lack of specialism, lack of training and under-resourcing – can still be clearly seen in the frontline Public Protection system today.

Key findings from the 2016 HMIC report:

The Met is the first force that HMIC had inspected which had no single chief officer with responsibility and accountability for all child protection matters across the force, resulting in an 'indefensible absence of strategic oversight of this very important issue.'

There was limited force-wide oversight of how well the Met understood or responded to demands and outcomes in relation to child protection.

Almost three-quarters of child protection case files examined (278 out of 374) demonstrated policing practice that either needed improvement or was inadequate.

Staff who respond to and investigate challenging and often distressing cases need to be competent, trained and supported. This was not consistently the case in the Met. Training and supervision were poor.

The lack of connection across IT systems, databases and spreadsheets meant information on victims, offenders and risks was isolated in pockets across the force, in contrast with the free movement of both victims and offenders around the capital.

Significant gaps in information led to missed opportunities to act quickly to protect children and prevent offending. Urgent remedial action was necessary.

Borough officers were often unaware of the registered sex offenders in their areas.

2017 quarterly follow ups:

HMIC published updates throughout the year.

⁷⁷ [HMIC, 2016, State of Policing Report](#)

⁷⁸ HMIC: [Quarter 1 update](#), [Quarter 2 update](#), [Quarter 3 update](#), [Quarter 4 update](#)

⁷⁹ HMIC: [2018 Post Inspection Review](#), [2021 Inspection of Progress](#)

In June, they found the force was demonstrating 'a much greater understanding of the issues'.

In August, they stated 'critical improvements are not making enough progress.'

In November, they stated that 'prompt and effective action' was required.

2018 follow-up:

It was noted that there was now senior level oversight resulting in better and more effective oversight of child protection practices.

But performance in the areas of investigating indecent images of children, online child sexual exploitation (CSE) cases, and management of registered sex offenders had deteriorated since the 2016 and 2017 inspections.

In some areas, sex offender managers were managing more than 100 offenders each. This was significantly more than in 2016, when they were managing between 50 and 60 offenders each.

29 out of 34 cases related to indecent images of children and online CSE were assessed as either inadequate or requiring improvement. 15 of these were sent back to the force because they contained evidence of a serious problem, such as a failure to follow child protection procedures and/or a child potentially at risk.

There were ongoing resourcing problems and backlogs. Cases being dealt with by non-specialists were resulting in notably poorer outcomes than those dealt with by specialist teams.

Processes for examining devices suspected of containing indecent images of children were ineffective. Some were not being checked at all. This was resulting in poor investigations, with victim confidence undermined and safeguarding opportunities missed.

An examination of 303 cases where the police had identified children at risk found that child protection practice was good in 93 cases (31%), required improvement in 127 cases (42%) and was inadequate in 83 cases (27%).

Many of the elements that required improvement or were inadequate were similar to those identified in 2016. The Inspectors referred the same percentage of cases back to the force (17%) during this inspection as they had in 2017.

Overall, these results indicated that practice remained inconsistent. Opportunities to act quickly and decisively to protect children and to prevent offending were being missed.

HMICFRS continued to find poor-quality supervision of child protection cases. This was described as an enduring problem for the force. It noted a recent decision not to proceed with providing training to improve frontline supervision was therefore disappointing.

The post-inspection report into the Met's child protection services noted that 'outcomes for children at risk of harm have not consistently improved.'

2021 report findings:

The most recent report finds improvement. But five years after the initial damning report, similar problems persist. The inspectorate now identified better oversight and 'a feeling of change'. Senior safeguarding leads showed focus and oversight in improving child protection across London. But there had not been 'sustained improvements in all areas of work or decision making'.

Changes made immediately after the 2016 inspection had not led to consistent improvements. This problem was compounded when the introduction of the new BCU model led to 'dips in performance'.

Despite earlier recommendations, concerns remained about how the force managed registered sex offenders, used the child abuse image database, and examined digital devices. The report identified online abuse and exploitation investigations as 'an acute concern'.

There were cases where investigators delayed alerting children's social care to the fact that children were living in a house with someone who was potentially uploading images of child abuse, because they did not want safeguarding interventions to jeopardise the investigation. This potentially leaves children at risk.

Concerns remained about workloads and capability.

Information sharing was seen as an administrative process rather than an important way of protecting children.

Some officers and staff still did not have the right experience, and hadn't had specialist child abuse investigation training.

Six years on, the force themselves know they are still not gripping child protection. Despite continually finding significant problems, HMICFRS have only been able to keep returning and commenting. The Met has not listened and it has not learned. Nor has it suffered any consequences for running services for children about which HMICFRS continue to have serious concerns.

5.3. Violence against women and girls

"If you look at our performance around rape, serious sexual offences, the detection rate is so low you may as well say it's legal in London. It's kind of

reflective of how we treat and view our female colleagues. You get victim blaming, looking at a situation and not believing [them].”

The Met has repeatedly said that violence against women and girls is a top priority for the organisation. Those close to the service tell a different story:

“This could be my family, me, a friend...would I be happy if someone I knew had to engage with a Met investigation? No...[Senior leaders] scream about VAWG [violence against women and girls], but look at what they’re doing.”

“You don’t want to be a victim of rape in London. Anyone who relies on policing in London for anything I’m scared for.”

There are many people in the Met who care deeply about Public Protection but this is not reflected strategically and operationally.

These issues were reflected in the views expressed by Londoners who we surveyed during the Review:

- Half (51%) of women in London do not have confidence in the Met to keep women and girls safe (compared with 41% of men) and 35% of Londoners are less confident of this compared with 12 months ago
- While over half of men (53%) in London think the Met treat women fairly, only 40% of women agree

5.4. Who’s in charge of Public Protection?

There has been a longstanding lack of strategic grip of the issue.

“Public Protection has almost been that thing everyone knows is there, carries really high risk and is important – there are loads of difficult and high-risk issues in it like rape and child abuse. It’s all the stuff we know we absolutely need to get right – but it’s not the headline grabber that robbery and counter-terrorism are. And it’s not something the public wants to see in full detail. This is not just about the police pandering to public perception – that’s not what it should be. But Public Protection has been the poor sibling or cousin for a significant length of time.”

There is a sense in which senior officers over long periods have become desensitised to these concerns, or have decided not to listen.

“People in Public Protection have been saying 'it's really busy here', 'we're carrying a lot of risk' for a long time. [But] it becomes background noise, elevator music. People ignore it.”

The Met had been working with a Public Protection Improvement Plan from December 2020. When presented to us, its progress indicators were almost entirely ‘green’, meaning complete or on track. While this plan had been well-intentioned and carefully aligned to HMICFRS recommendations at its inception, it suffered from the ‘tick-box’ approach to improvement which we have identified elsewhere in the Met. It was treated as a list of actions to tick off, and did not seem to be informed by any real on-the-ground feedback or intelligence.

The Met’s team which leads on Public Protection as an overall Profession recognises this and is seeking to address these shortcomings. But they acknowledge that there are significant issues, and this is *“a huge ship to turn around.”*

The leadership structure, and matrix management system means that even senior officers have a very limited ability to influence services on the ground. Senior officers responsible for the Public Protection Profession in the Met are not in charge of any officer working on Public Protection. This is a particular challenge working in an organisation based on rank. Heads of Profession generally are not responsible for the staff, resources, or funding for their areas of work. As the management system is currently configured, they have very limited control.

We found significant incoherence in estimates of caseloads. Various data sources providing different figures over different time periods, with different levels of granularity. There was no one reliable measure of the number of cases held by Public Protection officers at a given time, or even which officers were assigned to Public Protection teams.

The Force Management Statement, provided annually to HMICFRS, states caseloads of over 18 per officer in 2021 and 2022 but does not reference the source of these figures. We were given other data that showed completely different caseloads.

All were higher than the caseload for a Sapphire Officer (those working in the predecessor central specialist team dealing with rape investigations in the Met). The optimum caseload was set at 13 cases per officer when the new BCU model was piloted.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ [Metropolitan Police Service, January 2018, BCU Pathfinder Evaluation](#) - the evaluation states caseloads averaged 11 in the two areas during the period

While some areas could try and keep a handle on their rape and sexual assault data, no one centrally – where the strategic decisions are made – could provide an accurate figure.

Meanwhile, on the frontline, victims are not being heard and are not getting the service they should expect. Work by the London Victims Commissioner, commissioned by the Review to look at experiences with the Met, found a victim of sexual assault repeatedly requested a female officer to speak to, and yet was continually contacted by male officers, including a Sergeant who was “*rude, sarcastic, and entirely callous*” and “*mocked*” her request for a female officer.

“There is no hope in hell I would ever tell other women [to report]. If a woman came to me and said ‘this is what’s happened...do you think that I should report this to the police?’ Why would I [say yes] after the experience I’ve had for the last three years?! I have been diagnosed with PTSD not only from the assault, but a therapist doing an assessment says this mostly stems from my experience in dealing with the police.”

This upward pressure on Public Protection caseloads, discussed in more detail later in this chapter, is one consequence of a resource model which has not been changed, despite increased reporting of crimes relating to violence against women and children, and increasing delays and pressure in the criminal justice system which slows case progression.

Together with a national shortage of detectives, and an exodus of experienced staff following the reorganisation into BCUs, this has created the conditions for a changed and much worsened service.

Despite many outstanding and dedicated officers, today Public Protection has become probably the most beleaguered of all frontline policing services. This stands in stark contrast with the other specialist commands, despite having previously been a specialist command itself.

5.5. Staffing and workloads

“I’m smiling out there all the time. I’m Mr Positive. We can do this. We’re part of a team. In here, I have my head in my hands most of the time. I stare at a sheet that’s full of vacancies or people on secondment and attachment and think, I don’t know how we can do this.”⁸¹

⁸¹ Operation Soteria Bluestone research findings

The 2022 PEEL report from HMICFRS states:

The force appears to see public protection as a role that anyone can perform, and one everyone should gain experience of early in their investigative career. We found that roles in public protection aren't valued for their high levels of risk management or for the nuances of dealing with the most vulnerable victims. Experienced staff are generally quick to leave them. And public protection leaders are powerless to stop them leaving, despite the overwhelming demand they face.⁸²

We heard of teams running at half the levels of staffing they should have. As with other parts of the BCU, there are high attrition rates. People leave teams as soon as possible due to workload pressures.

"My Child Abuse Team...has 62% occupancy [roles filled]. We can't get anyone to fill the gaps."

"I've had four resign in six months because of workload demands."

Some cases in Public Protection might last for months or years, and when they are passed on to other staff it causes major disruption to victims.

"You get a lot of handovers, people leave, have to pick up rape allegations, no verbal handover."

A particularly painful moment reported by several Public Protection units came in 2022 when many officers recruited to the uplift for the Department for Professional Standards (DPS) came from Public Protection:

"15/16 officers were taken from our department in one week. You can't blame them for going."

"We lost two people to DPS; officers on the same team: we found out on Wednesday and they were leaving on Monday. They've got a case with seven victims, waiting for the defence case to come in. One of them we managed to retain for another month...They'd never been to court as officers in case for a crown court trial! We said 'you're not handing this over...it's not the right thing for...victims.'"

⁸² [HMICFRS, September 2022, PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy](#)

5.6. Caseloads

Caseloads among Public Protection officers – particularly in Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) and Domestic Abuse teams – were unmanageably high. This reflected a key finding from the recent PEEL inspection:

Staff and supervisors in units dedicated to dealing with vulnerable victims, such as domestic abuse investigation teams, told us that their caseloads were often unmanageable. We found that overtime was being used routinely to keep up with demand. And there was evidence of staff working on rest days to complete tasks.⁸³

Workloads were unrelenting.

“It’s impossible, it really is [...] I think juggling wise, I always drop something. I cannot do this impossible workload 100%. I would have to drop something to manage something else.”⁸⁴

In each RASSO case, a detective investigates the allegation, working with a SOIT (Sexual Offences Investigation Trained) officer. There are usually between one and three SOITs per team. Their role is to liaise with the victims, undertake the video recorded interview (VRI), and maintain the relationship between police and victim. The detective interviews suspects and witnesses, takes statements, examines CCTV, and undertakes forensics such as phone downloads and toxicology.

The 2021-22 Annual Report from the Victims Commissioner for England and Wales showed that once someone is charged with rape, a victim will likely have to wait for the best part of three years from reporting before a trial.⁸⁵ Cases therefore take a very long time.

“On some big jobs [e.g. where it’s a stranger rape, or there are live forensics or several suspects] the whole team will pull together. But then it falls back on one detective for two or three years.”

Detectives regularly work extended hours and on weekends and rest days to try to keep up with their workloads, but were still not able to. An Operation Soteria Bluestone survey of staff working on RASSO crime found 80.3% ‘often worked in their free time to meet work demands.’

⁸³ [HMICFRS, September 2022, PEEL 2021/22: Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy](#)

⁸⁴ Operation Soteria Bluestone

⁸⁵ [Victims’ Commissioner for England and Wales, June 2022, 2021/22 Annual Report](#)

“I’ve got 40 rapes; one of my colleagues is on 57. Within four months of arriving here I had 47, I had to speak to someone, this is getting too much, a lot of these people are self-harming and suicidal. You’re supposed to check in at least once a month...if you miss something.”

“A few months ago, I stepped aside from being a full-time SOIT officer. I went to therapy...I had 65 victims [caseload]. I had suicide notes posted through my door. 24+ hour shifts.”

“The average in the office is about 20-25 separate child abuse investigations managed by each person...physical chastisement makes up the bulk of our cases, sometimes rapes of children.”

There was clear pressure to close cases as early as possible. Detectives were constantly making difficult decisions about which cases to prioritise, focusing their limited resources where the chances of an outcome were higher, and managing their own capacity and energy to keep their caseload manageable, maintain wellbeing and avoid ‘breaking’.

“The incentive is get it NFA’d [no further action] because we have to do so much work to get it up and then the CPS [Crown Prosecution Service] will NFA anyway.”

5.7. Facilities and resources

Officers’ ability to provide a good service was further impacted by lack of training, resources and facilities. There was a lack of skills, critical administrative and analytical support (one of the main casualties of austerity measures), weakened infrastructure, and delays from essential services, like forensics and toxicology.

On training:

“There are so many people who need to do the interview course who haven’t had it. So, it either falls on those who have had the course to do more, or people without the course have to do them without training. There’s a CAIT [Child Abuse Investigation Team] team where none of the people are VRI trained... The training is...gold dust to get on.”

In 2021, the Met estimated that 50% of its child abuse officers had not attended the advanced safeguarding course.⁸⁶ This can only be an estimate because as we noted in chapter 3, there were no central training records for officers in the Met at that time.

⁸⁶ Metropolitan Police Service, June 2021, *Force Management Statement*

We heard of freezers crammed full of evidence samples, which were overflowing, frosted over and taped shut. Another officer told us of year-long waits for toxicology results and forensic examination of phones. This is known as a national issue but the day-to-day reality of this was brought home by one detective:

“An allegation was made in February, the suspect was arrested in April, the phone went for examination and it had deleted material. I received an email today (October) that the submission I did has just been accepted by the lab. It will take another six months for full download – well over a year for what is quite a straightforward case.”

The SOIT added:

“For a victim, they think is ‘just downloading a phone’. You have to explain the different levels and why it takes so long, but you understand their frustration.”

A child abuse detective said lack of administrative support was increasing the burden on each of her 20 cases:

“It feels like we’re admin staff 90% of the time and investigators 10% of the time. So much is forms, emails, chasing things, don’t need to be trained to be an investigator to do it all. It’s just admin, just paperwork.”

“Overwhelmingly, officers told us they feel unable to do a ‘good’ job in victim engagement and RASSO investigations due to severe resourcing constraints.”⁸⁷

5.8. Inexperience and lack of specialist knowledge

There is now good evidence that effective policing in the area of rape and sexual assault, as well as child abuse, requires specialist knowledge and training.

However, the Operation Soteria Bluestone team found a ‘[shocking lack of appreciation of the need for specialist knowledge](#)’ about rape and serious sexual offences.

The move of Sapphire and child abuse teams to BCUs marked a strategic shift from seeing the investigation of rape, child abuse and sexual assaults as a specialist, central role to one of ‘omni-competence’: a role that anyone can do. This occurred as demand for Public Protection grew during a time of national detective shortages.

⁸⁷ Operation Soteria Bluestone

This strategic shift may not have been intentional but it became inevitable. This was partly due to the loss of organisational prestige associated with working in a centrally funded resource, and then reinforced by an exodus of experienced Sapphire detectives to join neighbouring forces or different roles. There was no proper assessment of the risk to the services they provided or the consequential impact on women and children victims in London.

It is a sad irony that this happened at the same time that so many leaders, in politics and beyond, were committing to ending violence against women and girls.

Prior to the introduction of the direct entry detective scheme in 2017, new detectives spent their early months on Response teams. This no longer happens. Now, most people enter the Met as a direct entry detective and go straight into detective roles while studying. Once there, there is a 6-9 months rotation for trainees. This is ostensibly to give detectives a chance to develop knowledge across investigative roles. In practice, it has become necessary to ensure sufficient staffing on Community Safety (domestic abuse teams) and rape teams.

It was reported that there was simply not sufficient time to develop adequate experience. This also meant that officers who did not want to work in Public Protection had no choice.

The consequence, as the recent PEEL inspection found, is that:

Public Protection teams had the least experienced staff of all the force – mostly people still in their initial detective training period.

One Detective Chief Inspector described it as the “*worst it’s ever been*”, saying Public Protection is being:

“[P]ropped up by probationer TDCs [trainee Detective Constables] who are carrying 30 high risk crimes a head.”

Many teams had only one substantive detective in a team of five or six.

“Training is inadequate but that’s ok if [there’s] experience around you. No one on my team is substantive. We’re all on rotation, no one sticks around for more than 6-8 months...TDCs do 8 month rotations but no one goes back to CSU [Community Safety Unit]. Everyone is constantly having to learn new stuff, no one to learn from, interviewing you need to learn from people but I’ve never had the chance to sit in and learn from people. I’ve never had my interview course...You’re going to be more likely to take risks, do things you shouldn’t be doing, and that relies on supervisors to pick up on it.”

“Because CSU, safeguarding, public protection is something that all detectives are rotated through as a matter of course you get a very high proportion of officers of all levels who just don’t want to be there...I have worked with CSU officers who have no empathy or understanding of domestic abuse at all and probably shouldn’t be allowed anywhere near someone who’s suffered it. Not bad officers, just not right for that role.”

A further concern is that many new detective entrants have no experience of policing at all before picking up cases and dealing with very vulnerable members of the public.

“The direct entry scheme hadn’t started when I joined. When they opened it up, I thought I wish I’d waited, but now having done two years of uniform I’m very pleased I did it.”

“We weren’t given enough exposure to working with the public – dealing with complaints, that sort of thing, the workload, the fact that you are a police officer, and you have a level of responsibility that you have to meet, and I personally take that very seriously, all those things you are expected to know immediately.”

A very experienced Detective Chief Inspector described direct entry detectives as being *“members of the public really.”* Another described supervisors, who are often rapidly promoted to support these new officers coming in: *“they’re not leaders, not managers, they’re barely officers.”*

In a reflection of the consequences of the strategic shift from specialisation to ‘omni-competence’, one officer reminded us that a Met murder investigation will receive a whole team of experienced and specialist trained detectives, whereas a woman raped and left in a coma would likely be dealt with by one trainee detective constable.

“What message does that send to the living victim?”

5.9. Impact on staff

The impact of all of these factors on officers is perhaps unsurprising. Officers are exhausted and overwhelmed.

Operation Soteria Bluestone research concluded that there is ‘no centralised analysis of institutional capacity – workforce, officer wellbeing, sickness, retention.’⁸⁸

⁸⁸ Operation Soteria Bluestone

Officers working on RASSO have burnout rates that were worse than frontline medical staff during the COVID-19 pandemic:

- 63.1% have felt unwell due to work related stress in the past 12 months
- 65.6% feel their workload is unmanageable
- 79.8% feel they don't have enough time to get the job done

During Operation Soteria Bluestone *'the researchers were shocked by the level of burn-out and total fatigue in officers – most are running on fumes.'*⁸⁹

We heard of the impact of viewing disturbing content for hours each day in the Online Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation team:

"There was no counselling or test that I was still capable of doing my role. I found it hard to talk to friends. I recall going for walk and seeing a young kid cycling and all I was thinking is, 'I wonder if he's being abused? Is that man an abuser?'...I realised I have to switch off."

Despite the Met confirming that a support offer has been in place over the last five years, officers are afraid to ask for help because they don't want to burden their colleagues. Those around them shy away from offering support because their own workloads are too overwhelming.

"Just as I was breaking it was, 'no, we're going to ignore you because if you break, we know we're going to get all your work.'" ⁹⁰

Others faced an astonishing lack of support from managers:

"I asked for support and assistance for three years. My DCI responded: 'You just need to make the decision to not be stressed.'"

Carrying caseloads so large, and being forced to make such difficult decisions about priorities, is a huge responsibility. This is too great a burden for the officers and supervisors bearing the risks, especially when the majority are new in service, not specialists, and don't have sufficient supervision.

This is a particular concern bearing in mind the very high-risk levels associated with Public Protection. The workforce is inadequately resourced and poorly prepared. This impacts on both the public and the officers:

⁸⁹ Operation Soteria Bluestone

⁹⁰ Operation Soteria Bluestone

“[There’s a] constant fear that one of your victims will be murdered and that will be on you. So you work until 2am on your spare days.”

“There are people who’ve not started long when they come to Sapphire with not a single extra course to deal with rape or serious sexual offences...We do have people six months into the TDC scheme, not given much guidance on how to begin to deal with the breadth of the investigation and the amount of detail you need if you want to get a conviction.”

This cannot but have an impact on justice for victims.

Several officers referred to ‘victim fatigue’ where consistently high caseloads resulted in losing the ability to empathise, and connect, with victims.

This has implications for the Met’s ability to prevent and tackle male violence against women and girls.

5.10. Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse is both a high risk and a high volume crime, making it a particular challenge. Those working in CSUs highlighted that no one is prepared for this combination when they join.

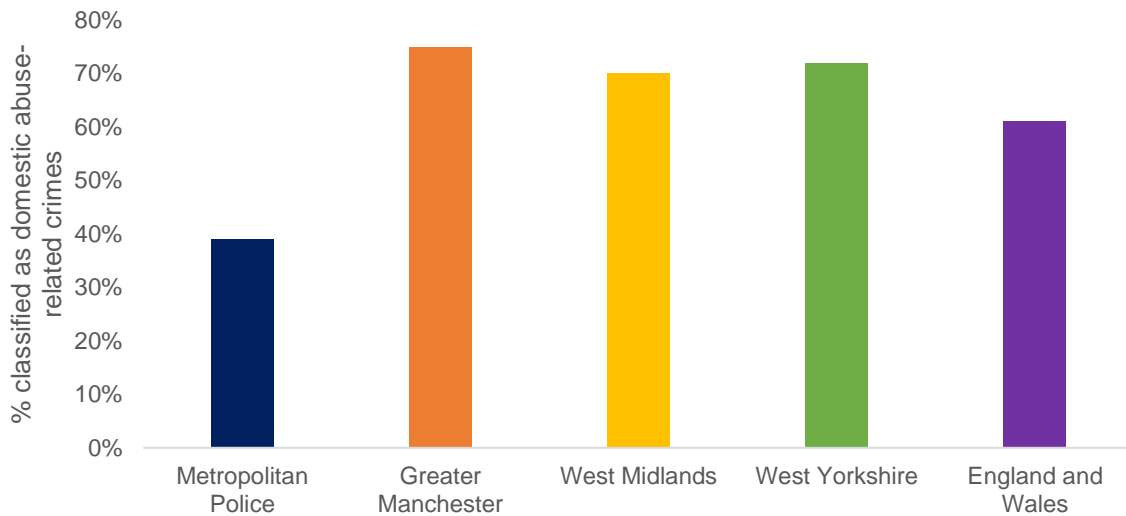
- Domestic abuse related crimes accounted for 11% of total recorded crime in the Met in 2022-2023, up from 9.6% in 2017-18⁹¹
- The volume of domestic abused-flagged crimes rose to over 95,000 in 2021-22, having doubled since 2012-13⁹²
- As shown in the chart below, the proportion of domestic abuse *incidents* that were classified as domestic abuse related *crimes* was substantially lower than other comparable forces. This is a cause for concern, suggesting that domestic abuse incidents were not treated with the same seriousness in the Met as in other forces.⁹³

⁹¹ MPS Crime Data Dashboard

⁹² MPS Crime Data Dashboard

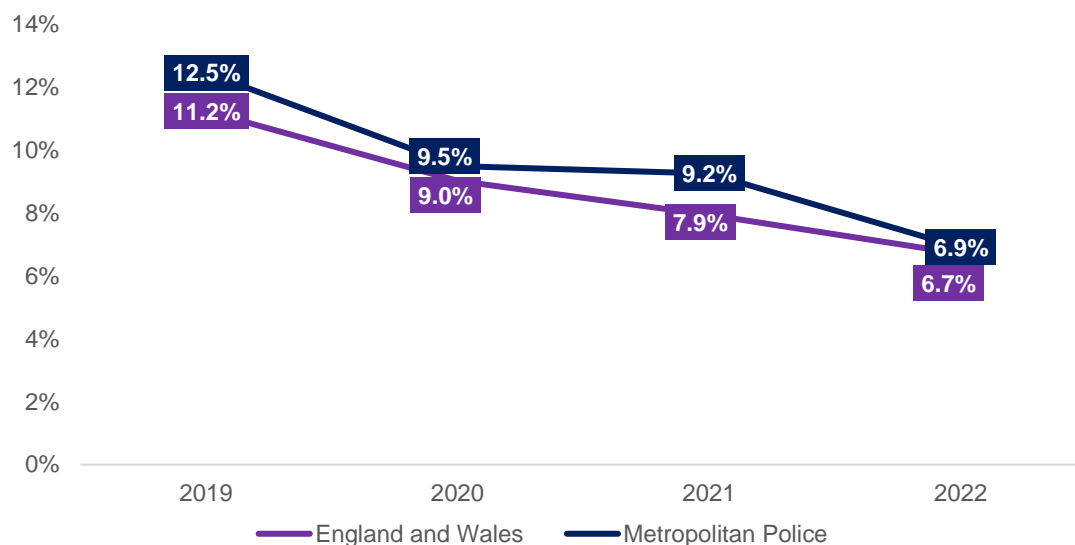
⁹³ [ONS, November 2022, Domestic Abuse in England and Wales Data Tool](#)

Figure 5.1: Percentage of domestic abuse-related incidents and crimes that were classified as domestic abuse-related crimes in 2021-22



- Yet fewer than 7% of these crimes got as far as a charge in 2022, as illustrated in the chart below:⁹⁴

Figure 5.2: Proportion of Domestic Abuse flagged crimes that resulted in a charge/summons in the Met and in England and Wales, 2019 to 2022

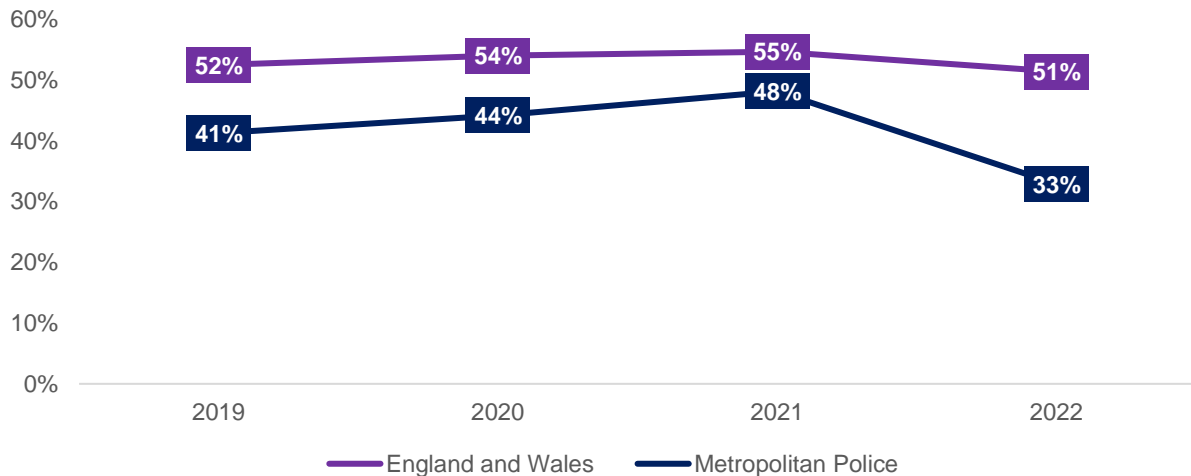


- Since 2014-15, the average number of days taken to charge suspects in domestic abuse related cases in London has increased substantially from 4 to 22.5.

⁹⁴ All data in the following three charts is taken from the [ONS, November 2022, Domestic Abuse and the Criminal Justice System dataset](#)

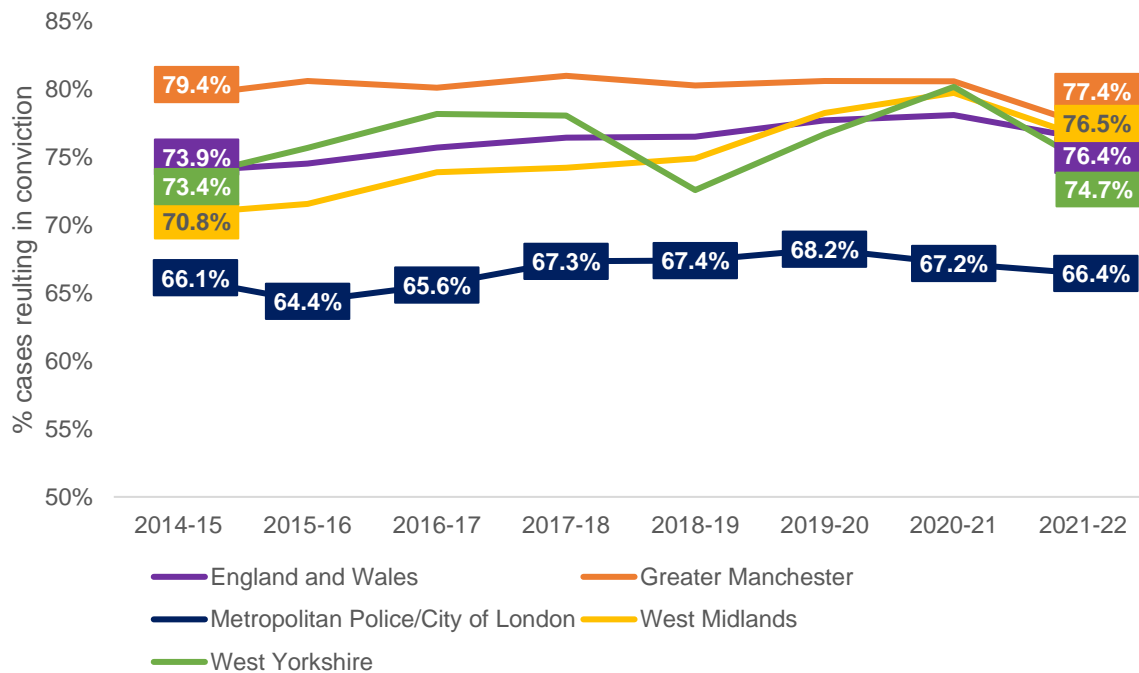
- In 2022, a third of cases were closed because the victims did not support action. The Met has made significant progress to reduce the number of cases closed for this reason, and its performance is much improved compared to the average of 55% across England and Wales, as shown in the chart below:

Figure 5.3: Proportion of Domestic Abuse flagged crimes that resulted in Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action) in the Met and in England and Wales, 2019 to 2022



- In 2021-2022, 66% of domestic abuse cases which reached London courts resulted in a conviction. The majority of forces have a conviction rate of over 75%, as shown in the chart below:

Figure 5.4: Proportion of domestic abuse-related cases that resulted in a conviction in the Met/City of London and most similar forces, 2014-15 to 2021-22



Today, as well as societal changes and expectations about the policing of domestic violence, there is widespread evidence about its nature, prevalence and impact, and the support required for victims.

However, the evidence we saw indicates that the Met is not matching its policing approach to the evidence – particularly in not taking a specialist approach. This was also highlighted in previous reports and investigations.⁹⁵

Clearly, addressing domestic violence is not only a policing matter, with many other services both required and responsible. However, the Met has a responsibility to respond in a way which maximises their contribution.

“From what I’ve seen, many officers struggle to understand why the victims get back with the abusers, why they take a long time to report. We cannot give our victims [the] care that they need if the DV subject is not understood properly. I always cringe when I see on a CRIS something on the lines of ‘victim let the suspect back in’ (that was regarding a woman who was nearly beaten to death by her ex-partner), that is victim blaming and it is happening because DV is just not understood by many.”⁹⁶

An extremely experienced Superintendent summed it up:

“The volume is high but the risk is high – we sometimes talk low risk in DA, but there’s no such thing as low risk, it’s unknown risk.⁹⁷ What it means is the victim is not confident to come out. In domestic homicide often there’s very little background. If it’s happening in the street it’s reported by a member of the public, or a neighbour calls – the victim hasn’t come forward herself. When you’re asking a woman to come forward and prosecute her partner, it’s risking financial security, status in the community. Then you’ve got children, and additionally it’s status in the country – she might have no recourse to public funds. It’s a really complex picture, and we give it to our most inexperienced staff.”

⁹⁵ Multiple HMICFRS reports (PEEL 2017, 18/19 and 21/22) since the thematic report on domestic abuse in 2014 have highlighted the under-resourcing and subsequent impact on service in teams working on domestic abuse (CSUs), weaknesses in awareness, understanding and training, and failure to make full use of available powers such as Clare’s Law and protective orders

⁹⁶ MetX x Network of Women, 2021, *Creating an environment where women feel safe*

⁹⁷ Officially, risk ratings for domestic abuse in the Met are set by a DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence) model, which uses the terms standard risk, medium risk and high risk

Domestic violence related incidents have indicators or tags so that previous incidents or vulnerability can be identified prior to a call-out. However, due to a loss of support staff, officers are now largely responsible for their own intelligence checks pre-attendance, drawing on support from MetCC or the local Operations Room. HMIC reported in 2016 that these initial intelligence checks tend to focus on officer safety concerns.⁹⁸

Due to the volume of cases, officers told us that they didn't have the time to use protective measures such as Domestic Violence Protection Notices and Orders, Sexual Risk Orders and Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, or 'Clare's Law'. Clare's Law enables the police to reveal information about a domestic abuser's history on request or to protect victims. The Met gave disclosure in a lower proportion of both cases than the England and Wales average.⁹⁹ This is a particular concern given the volume of domestic abuse in the capital. We heard of delays and backlogs in the processing of these requests.

These measures, hard fought for by campaigners, including police officers, can be used to provide protection for victims without their active support, or even against their wishes, if it is considered necessary for their safety. Crucially, these orders are designed to remove the responsibility on the victim for taking action against their abusers. Previous HMIC investigations have highlighted the lack of use of these powers.¹⁰⁰ Police officers were aware of them but said they just didn't have time to use them. A CSU officer told us:

"The best outcome is closing a report to reduce your workload, rather than really thinking 'where can I go next with this.'"

Understandably, the current victim satisfaction survey undertaken by MOPAC does not routinely include victims of domestic abuse or sexual violence. But the Met have not asked victims of domestic abuse about the service that is provided to them and how they could improve. This was recommended in the HMICFRS PEEL report in 2018-19:

The force doesn't routinely collect feedback from vulnerable victims of domestic abuse on their experience of the police. It has started work on a victim survey, but this isn't yet in place. The force uses satisfaction surveys from MOPAC to obtain feedback about their services. Without asking

⁹⁸ [HMIC, March 2017, PEEL: Police effectiveness inspection 2016: An inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service](#)

⁹⁹ According to HMICFRS data, the Met granted disclosure in 37% of Right to Know cases and 33% of Right to Ask cases compared to England and Wales average of 45% in Right to Know and 37% in Right to Ask

¹⁰⁰ HMICFRS reports 2016, 2018-19

vulnerable victims of domestic abuse about the service they receive from the force, it can't reassure itself that it is offering the most appropriate services and it may miss opportunities to improve. The force should accelerate its work to produce a vulnerable victim of domestic abuse survey.

The Met still does not undertake a victims' survey.

MOPAC launched a voluntary Victims Survey in July 2022, which is open to victims of sexual and domestic crimes. The findings will be fed back to the Met, and the Met have agreed to use this to note and share good practice. So far uptake has been low, and as of January 2023, no findings had been shared with the Met.

5.11. Sexual violence

"I wouldn't encourage a friend to report a rape."

"My experience of the police has put me off ever engaging with them again."¹⁰¹

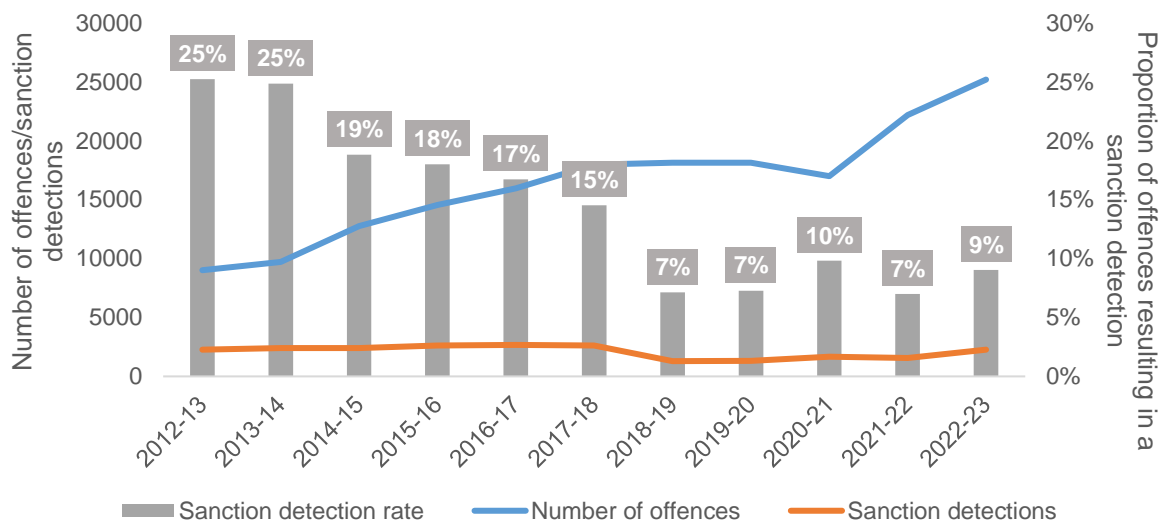
The data on sexual offences makes for grim reading. It should be noted that while this data refers to London, the patterns and outcomes of recorded sexual offences is similar across the country. In some areas, the Met performs better in its response, albeit this is from a low base. However, the Met is unique in the sheer volume of sexual offences in London and in its ability to set the national agenda.

- Sexual offences make up 3% of total recorded crime in London with 25,209 recorded offences in 2022-23¹⁰²
- There were over 9,000 reported rapes in 2022-23, up 244% from 2012-13, and nearly 16,000 other sexual offences reported, rising 152% over the same period
- The clear-up rate for these crimes (known as sanction detections) was 9% in 2022-23, having fallen 16% since 2012-13. This is shown in the chart below:

¹⁰¹ [MOPAC, December 2021, The London Rape Review 2021](#)

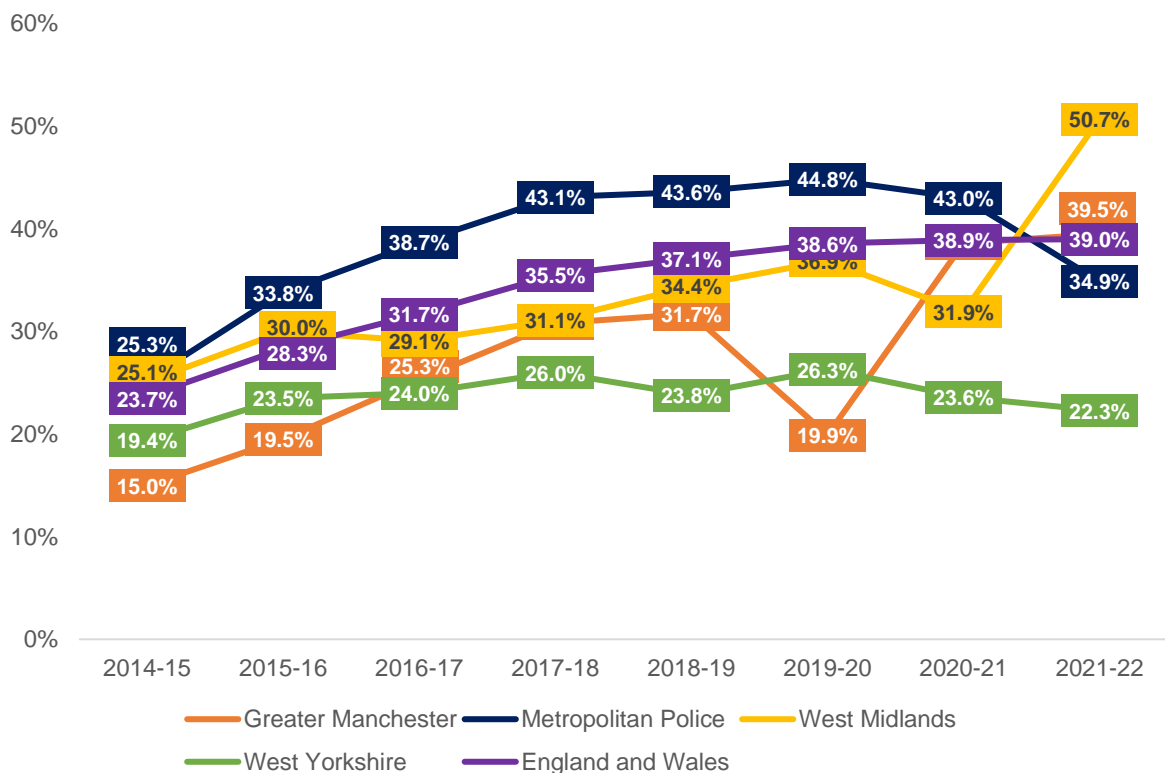
¹⁰² [MPS Crime Data Dashboard](#)

Figure 5.5: Sexual offences in the Met, volume and sanction detections, 2012-13 to 2022-23



- For a number of years, the Met has had a higher victim attrition rate for sexual offences than the national rate, but performance is improving significantly. In 2021-22 just over a third of cases were closed because the victim did not support further action, as shown in the chart below

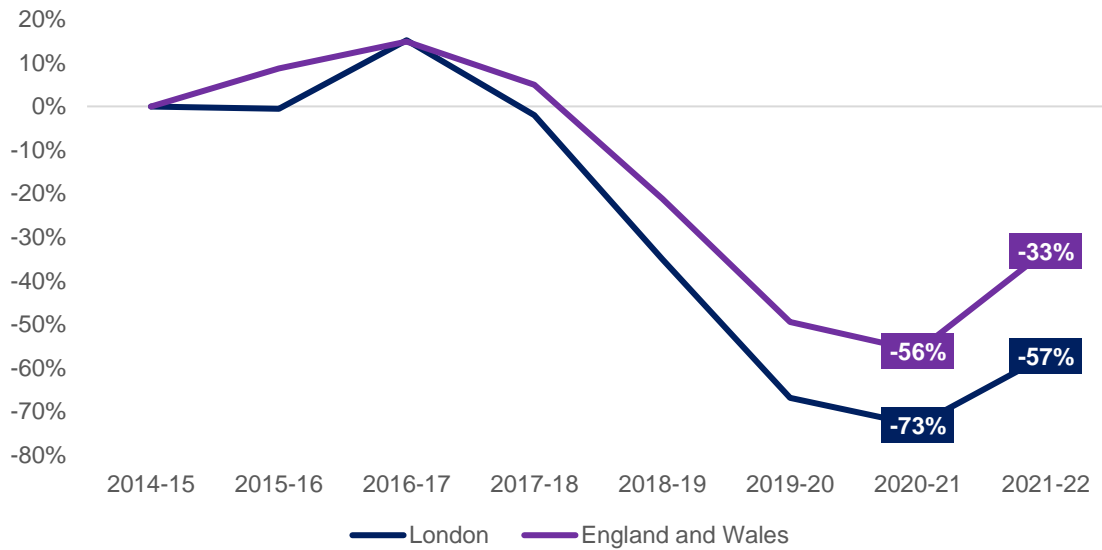
Figure 5.6: Proportion of sexual offences in the Met, closed with evidential difficulties due to victim not supporting action, 2012-13 to 2022-23¹⁰³



¹⁰³ Due to the crime recording issues for Greater Manchester in 2019/20 caution should be applied when drawing conclusions

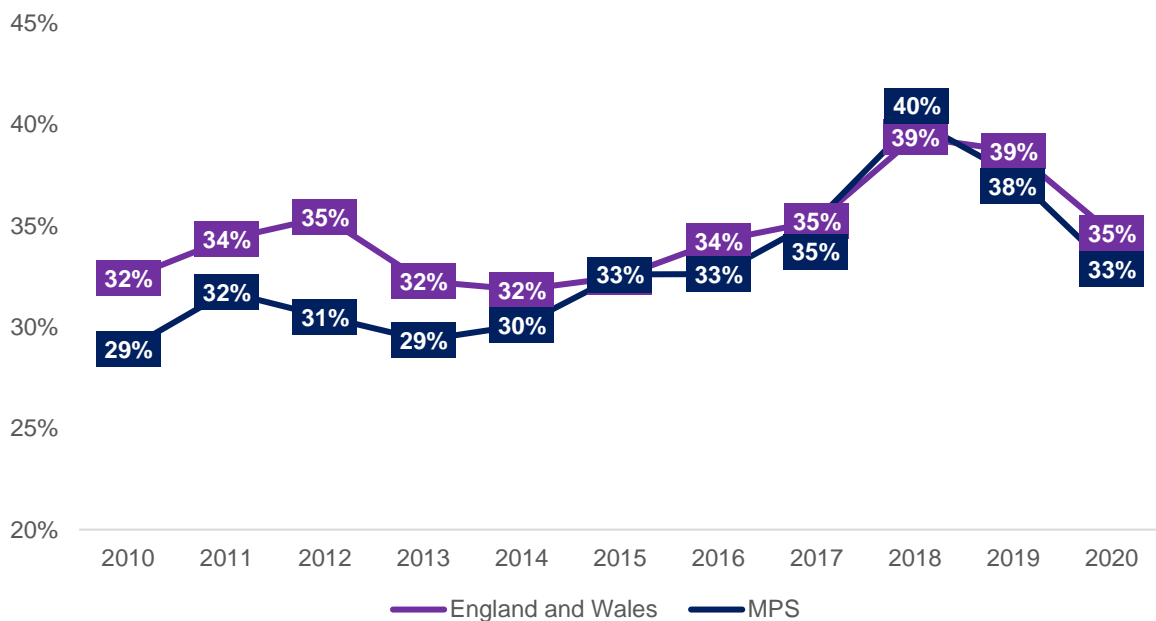
- Despite increases in recorded sexual offences, the volume of trials reaching court has collapsed. It is down 57% since 2014-15, as shown in the chart below.

Figure 5.7: Percentage change from 2014-15 of volume of sexual offences trials at criminal courts in London and in England and Wales to 2021-22



- The conviction rate is also in decline from a high of 40% in 2018 to 33% in 2020, as shown in the chart below. This is in the context of much lower numbers reaching trial. So fewer trials are reaching court *and* convictions are falling.

Figure 5.8: Percentage of sexual offences trials resulting in conviction in the Met and England and Wales, 2010 to 2020



5.12. The responsibility of the rest of the criminal justice system

It is important to note that other parts of the criminal justice system – the Crown Prosecution Service and Courts – are integral to the overall performance of the prosecution of these crimes, and therefore have an impact on charge rates, delays in getting cases to court and conviction levels. While whole system improvements are needed, each part of that system is important.

It is crucial to ask what part the Met has to play when, despite a growing willingness to report rapes and sexual assaults by victims, clear-up rates are so poor, fewer cases are getting to court, convictions are falling and there are such high attrition rates among victims. But even if the Met were performing brilliantly in this area in public protection, they would currently still be let down by the rest of the criminal justice system.

The Review invited London's Victims' Commissioner to facilitate two listening events with victims of crime for the Review. Through those events, we heard from 15 victims of a broad range of crimes including rape, stalking and domestic abuse.

In all cases, the victims felt grossly let down by the service they received. We record below the key themes we heard which have contributed to an acute 'trust deficit' in the Met.

Communication by Met officers was poor

All 15 victims spoke about how poor communication eradicated the trust they had in the police to handle their case effectively. For example, after reporting a crime at a police station, no contact details were provided in order to subsequently follow up or speak to the officer handling the case, or only a first name was provided.

"I felt very unsupported and I didn't know who to contact."

"[I was] not updated and fearful of my life."

When victims were contacted by Met officers to follow up on their case this was rarely via a scheduled call. Rather they were 'cold called' from a withheld number which could cause distress. One stalking victim was regularly contacted by her perpetrator through a withheld number.

Victims spoke of "*erratic*" calls from officers asking the victim to remind them of the details of their case.

They spoke of a lack of continuity with cases being handled by multiple officers which made communication challenging and also meant they had to provide information *“all over again”* to the new officer.

One victim described Met officers mixing her case up with another, and being provided with personal details that were not related to her case.

Not all victims were seen by a Met officer in person. One victim, who was hospitalised as result of an attack, had not had an in-person visit about the case.

Victims spoke of a *“complete barrier”* when a case was closed with no route to respond or communicate further.

Rights and support

None of the 15 victims we spoke to were told about their rights under the victims' code of practice.

“I was never told what support existed, to this day I am unclear on my rights.”

Those who sought independent advice found it very helpful:

“SOLACE [a charity supporting victims of violence against women] has been brilliant.”

“Having an advocate was a game changer for me.”

Tone of communication

Many of the victims we spoke to felt dismissed by the officers they spoke with.

Officers were inattentive and lacking empathy. For example, one officer who sat on the phone through the interview:

“I was made to feel an inconvenience.”

One victim spoke about the impact of her case being labelled *“historic”*. She felt dismissed. The term made her think of a *“dead end case that was open 20 years”* whereas her case had been open 12 months, and she believed that once the case was labelled 'historic' there was no urgency and no rush, despite her telling the officers that she spoke to that she remained in danger.

When making contact with the police, victims were told that the officer assigned to their case was unavailable and *“dealing with something really urgent.”*

“It made me feel my case wasn’t urgent.”

“I felt like I had done something wrong or been over dramatic.”

Many of the victims we spoke to described feeling *“gaslighted”* by officers who invalidated their feelings and that what they had experienced was not a crime.

Victim blaming

Victims felt that the language used by officers left them feeling that they were at fault. One victim who was assaulted was asked if he did anything to provoke the attack. A rape victim was told that she *“should and could have done more”* to protect herself. Victims also spoke about Met officers excusing the behaviour of perpetrators:

“This is his first offence...you’ve got to remember they are really young.”

One victim was told she was paranoid, and was asked whether she had a mental health condition.

Service not meeting expectations

The victims we spoke to all felt severely let down by the service they received which fell well below their expectations.

Victims described having to do their *“own investigation”* and feeling that *“the police act as gate keepers to justice”* rather than following the law. For example, victims having to fight to get their case put forward to the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority.

“What they are supposed to do is gather evidence, but what they do is decide what evidence is relevant.”

Victims described the *“huge trust deficit”* that results when officers do not follow through on promises and spoke about the *“gross difference”* between promises, standards and expectations made publicly by the Met versus the reality.

Complaint and misconduct process eradicating trust and confidence

As a result of the negative experiences that victims had received in reporting a crime, many made a complaint. However, the complaints process, and the level of service received, further eradicated their trust and confidence in the police.

“It is not a system that works.”

Victims felt their complaint was not fully and comprehensively addressed and that the officer responding *“picked the points they felt they could respond to”*.

Victims also relayed their dissatisfaction and profound sense of let down by how their complaint was received and addressed:

“There is no accountability for raising concerns about lack of information/ rights. No trouble shooting processes.”

“I have PTSD, I have fear of the police and I don’t trust the complaint system.”

“I was made to feel distrustful even though I knew it was factually correct. It’s your word against theirs and they [the Met] will always back each other up.”

“I spent two years of time and energy on that. You feel you want to share your story to impact change but it comes at a huge cost.”

When asked if they would ever report an incident to the police again, 14 of the 15 victims said no.

5.13. How the Met deals with rape and serious sexual offending: findings from Operation Soteria Bluestone

As noted, Operation Soteria Bluestone is a Home Office-backed collaborative programme of research and transformation. It is developing a national operating model for rape investigation to increase the number of cases reaching court.

The Met acted as one of the pathfinder forces for this research. In 2021, a deep dive looked at three years of data on rape and serious sexual assault, and undertaking case file reviews, observation of teams at work, surveys, interviews and focus groups with officers and with victims and survivors.

The Operation Soteria Bluestone team shared their findings with the Met at the end of 2021, and we were given access to them. The five main findings are:

1. Systemic organisational failure – including a ‘shocking’ lack of appreciation of the need for specialist knowledge about rape and serious sexual offences:

- The research highlighted the corporate failure to understand the importance of a specialist approach to sexual offences. The researchers do not propose a return to a central Sapphire Command. Instead they emphasise that this can work on BCUs, as long as rape and serious sexual offences are investigated by specialists using well-evidenced approaches
- There was no centralised analysis of institutional capacity – workforce, officer wellbeing, sickness, or retention¹⁰⁴
- The matrix management structure makes it hard to drive change on the frontline
- Charge rates vary widely by BCU

2. De-professionalisation and incompetent investigations:

- The research highlighted inexperienced staff, including supervisors, significant resourcing gaps, ineffective training material, and impossible caseloads. We have noted these issues earlier in this chapter
- It found a lack of understanding of sexual offending behaviour and its impact on victims, and a lack of evidence-based specialist practice for investigation. These affect both the quality and outcome of investigations
- It also highlighted ‘sloppy investigations with multiple missed opportunities and under-identification of repeat offenders.’ This included failures in identifying and managing repeat offenders, with instances of intelligence checks not being completed, a lack of access to systems that enable identification of other offences, poor understanding of repeat offending, and a lack of resources for proactive targeting
- The researchers identified a large disparity between the cases they would classify as potential repeat offending (45% of the sample), and those actually being classified as such by the Met (4% of the sample). They were told that offences are not considered linked if a suspect has been named but not charged or convicted for previous offences.

¹⁰⁴ Operation Soteria Bluestone

3. Endemic culture of disbelieving victims:

- At the outset of investigations, judging a victim's credibility appeared to be the over-riding factor, more than pursuing the suspect. The RASSO workforce survey found:
 - 43% think some victims are more deserving of their time than others
 - Only 26% agreed with the statement that 'very few reports of rape are false'
 - 36% think they can tell whether a case will progress based on their early assessment of victim credibility.
- These attitudes inevitably influence the way investigators proceed, including fishing for discrediting evidence. Cases which contained minor falsehoods or inconsistencies, are referred to as 'false', ignoring the fact that inconsistent accounts can be a natural consequence of experiencing a traumatic event
- Factors which also might lead to a lack of credibility included having mental health issues, having multiple sexual partners, or having reported previous assaults

"People with learning disabilities often do not even get to court as they are seen as unreliable witnesses."

- Investigators also gave weight to the cooperativeness of a victim, rather than just the evidence in the case. In some instances, the view that a victim was uncooperative affected their actions, such as whether victims were considered for referrals to other services
- These attitudes led to missed opportunities, including missing the forensic window, failure to follow up witnesses, failure to identify potential linked offences and undertake suspect background checks, and failure to undertake risk assessments and safeguarding procedures
- Researchers found prejudiced assumptions, stereotypes and rape myths, often unchallenged, expressed openly by officers. Problematic understanding, attitudes and judgments underpinned victim credibility assessments, thereby creating a self-perpetuating system.

4. A toxic work environment:

Mirroring the Review findings:

- Caseloads are unrealistically high, leading officers to self-manage their workloads by delays and inaction. As previously noted, 80.3% have worked in their free time
- There is high churn, and an inability to recruit to RASSO or SOIT roles
- There is a lack of training opportunities, and in any case, officers feel they do not have the time to attend training
- Burnout, lack of learning and development and low confidence all take a significant personal toll on investigators.

5. A lack of strategic understanding and poor use of data to inform performance:

Researchers found under-staffing of performance and intelligence analytic teams significantly affecting data analysis. A lack of learning and development also limited the Met's ability to develop new and more sophisticated use of data.

There is a lack of strategic understanding of sexual offending, resulting in missed opportunities in investigating cases. For example, investigators are missing key information such as the different features of rape and other serious sexual offences, or fail to recognize the fact that one in three rapes have a domestic abuse context. The lack of strategic analysis led to siloed investigations. Analytic products focused on stranger rape offences.

5.14. The victim experience

Operation Soteria Bluestone researchers also spoke to victims of sexual violence. Their despair at their treatment is the consequences of the corporate failures of the Met to prioritise these crimes of violence:

"I was made to feel that I was an inconvenience, and that there was something wrong with me, for being so anxious. As opposed to this being completely normal in an abnormal situation."¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Operation Soteria Bluestone

“We should not be work experience. We are traumatised and we need officers that understand this. It is a step backwards to have inexperienced officers supporting us.”¹⁰⁶

“Mobile phones were not even invented when I was abused but they had my phone for seven months and messages were used against me in court. I felt as if I was under investigation.”¹⁰⁷

The Met has not done enough to assess or understand victims’ experience of their service. Although, as discussed, MOPAC have started a survey for victims including for sexual offences, this has yet to yield any feedback. The victim experience is only measured in terms of complaints.¹⁰⁸

5.15. Met response to Operation Soteria Bluestone

The Operation Soteria Bluestone findings are sobering. They indicate a strategic and operational failure to tackle rape and sexual offences within the Met which compounds the harm for victims.

The Soteria Bluestone programme supports a way to transform services in a collaborative venture, where the Met and the researchers co-produce a development plan to address the findings.

We were therefore concerned to hear that in response to the presentation of the findings, the Met wanted to be given a list of recommendations for them to implement.

“We shared the findings, they are in charge of extracting the recommendations. They are trying to turn it into a checklist and make it transactional.”¹⁰⁹

We have seen this transactional approach to the findings of research and investigations again and again in the Met. They develop a RAG-rated spreadsheet, rather than engaging in a strategic and significant change programme.

Furthermore, there has been a lack of continuity of leadership for many areas of the programme, with new people are coming in and starting over. As many of these leads are doing this work in addition to their day job, there is concern that additional stress is being placed on them.

¹⁰⁶ Operation Soteria Bluestone

¹⁰⁷ Operation Soteria Bluestone

¹⁰⁸ Operation Soteria Bluestone

¹⁰⁹ Operation Soteria Bluestone statement to the Review

In the view of the Operation Soteria Bluestone team, over a year after the findings were made available, the Met has not yet begun to change.

We were told that all police forces have found it challenging to hear and come to terms with the findings of the deep dives, and have taken time to reflect before developing an improvement plan. In the case of the Met this has taken longer, and it is yet to be seen whether they will deliver transformational change in the way they respond to victims of rape.

“We’re asking them to properly change, not just implement some things that Soteria tells them to do.”

5.16. Conclusion

There has been a significant increase in the willingness to report crimes against women in recent years. However, the response by police is not good enough. Victims will be less likely to report such crimes unless their response improves.

The Met has had six years notice to improve child protection services, but progress has been limited.

Despite saying violence against women and girls is a priority, it has not yet enjoyed the same priority as the surge in ‘serious violence’ connected to drugs and knife crime in recent years.

The failure to see violence against women and girls in the same category as ‘serious violence’ means it has not been treated as seriously. We have not witnessed a ‘violence against women taskforce’ or ‘violence against women suppression unit’ in London in the way we have for other forms of serious violence.

The Met’s Public Protection service contains dedicated staff facing enormous structural challenges to succeeding in their job. The Met has landed them in this situation without support. They are overworked, overwhelmed, under-supported and lack specialist services.

The combination of high stress and responsibility, overwhelming workloads, and lack of experience and support in Public Protection has been one of the most concerning findings in our Review.

“The majority of people on these units really care. Everybody cares deeply and wants a good result...We want to help people and lock up DV perpetrators. But we’re faced by barrier after barrier.”

Case studies

The following fourteen case studies were heard by the Review. They are presented below as anonymised testimony of lived experiences of the Met.

1. A

The review met A, who was a victim of domestic and sexual abuse at the hands of a fellow Met police officer during a long-term relationship.

A describes herself as having been “young” and “naïve” when she joined the Met and having had a “sheltered upbringing”. During one of her first postings she met her abuser, X, and they started a relationship.

Early in their relationship, A says X was arrested for assaulting his ex-partner, and that, shortly after, he became verbally, mentally and physically abusive towards her as well. A says she watched as the Met eventually dismissed the allegations made by his ex-partner, leading her to think she shouldn't come forward either.

“I watched as the investigation into his ex was dealt with so badly that he got away with a lot, he stalked her and the police did nothing and let her down. I was watching thinking ‘I can't come forward now, nothing's going to happen’.”

By this point the abuse had escalated significantly and A was regularly attending work clearly distressed and with bruising on her wrists and face. She says the abuse was an open secret on their team but few people wanted to speak up. Eventually, someone reported the abuse on her behalf, but the officer who subsequently questioned her about it was friends with X.

“They were asking me stuff and I was just crying saying I couldn't talk about it.”

As A didn't want to report the abuse, a non-crime domestic report was put on the system. She received a phone call to carry out a Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Honour Based Violence (DASH) interview, but says her abuser sat next to her during the call, writing down what she should say.

The abuse escalated further and she says X raped her on a number of occasions. After the worst and final incident, A ended her relationship with X.

“He smacked me round the face, I lost consciousness, he raped me. I had a black eye, a split lip.”

They remained on the same team despite her pleas to her supervisors, saying she couldn't tell them why, but they couldn't be on the same team. She says X would follow her while on duty and use police systems to see which calls she had attended and who she had been working with.

Several months after the final incident, A reported the abuse, providing two three-hour video statement and photographs of her injuries. What followed was a protracted period of almost two years where the allegations bounced in and out of the Met's misconduct system.

While X was first under investigation, A says she quickly realised the Met did not intend to take action.

She became aware that the first investigating officer on her case was friends with X on social media, and had worked with him in the same Command. At one point, a more senior officer called her and said: "once this is all done and dusted, you'll be fine to work on the same team as him won't you?" When she said no, he said "Oh ok, that causes us a problem." Her abuser was also given permission to attend a highly sought after police training course while the investigation was ongoing. A says, "it told me exactly what they intended to do with him."

A first heard that the case had been dismissed when her abuser's Federation representative informed her line manager. She had to ring the officer in charge herself to confirm no further action would be taken and that, if she wanted to avoid him at work, she would need to be the one to move locations.

"I was told under no circumstances would he be moved. I was told that if I wanted to get away from him I would have to move. They moved me to the other side of London."

After A moved, she was stalked. Her tyres were slashed, food was thrown on her car, she would receive silent phone calls and voicemails, and vexatious phone calls were made to the police while she was at work to say that she had collapsed in her home, leading to police breaking the door down.

A's suspicions that X was behind this behaviour were dismissed by DPS. Her requests to have his access to certain police systems restricted, so that he couldn't look up her vehicle license plate number and her address, were all denied.

Eventually, the DPS reopened their first investigation into the abuse A had experienced after she raised a grievance and they realised they have not followed procedures correctly.

Once the case was reopened, A says what happened next took around a year, during which the case went through six different investigating officers. Each time a new investigating officer took over, they would ask A to go back over her experience. She was asked to provide another video-recorded interview and to provide the phone she'd used during her relationship with X. When she said she no longer had the phone as it had broken since she first reported the abuse, she says the investigators questioned whether that was really the case. She says they also asked X for his phone, but gave him a long time frame to do so in. A also says her parents were also called on multiple occasions while they were at work for statements.

A says one investigator called her while at work and asked her to recount her experience. When she said she was at work and couldn't speak openly, and suggested the investigator watch her video-recorded interview he ignored her and questioned why she hadn't reported the abuse straight away.

"I was getting so angry and so frustrated with them and I decided I couldn't do it any more, I'm done, I need to get on with my life, I was in an absolute state, I had tried to kill myself that year because of the police investigation, it was draining the life out of me."

In 2021, within days of the murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Metropolitan Police Officer, A says she received an email from the DPS with one line, saying that they had decided to take no further action on her case.

"I was distraught. I didn't know whether I was going to stay in the Met... Sarah Everard being killed was very much an 'oh god' moment. The Met was coming out saying 'we hate violence against women and girls, we stand against this', and I was thinking no you don't. It made me rage. Did I need to die in order for you to take me seriously and actually look at this sort of stuff? Every time I saw something about the Met saying they're taking women seriously, violence against women seriously it pissed me off."

A has encountered her abuser a number of times at work since the investigation was concluded and suffers panic attacks when she does so. She has requested to be told when they'll be in the same place of work as one another which has been denied.

A says she has struggled to stay in the Met since her experience. She loves being a police officer but struggles to believe in the organisation she represents.

"I don't know how much longer I've got, there's only so much a human being can take... I'm struggling with how I'm supposed to lead a team when I don't believe in the organisation... I know there are really good people in the Met"

but I don't see them, it feels like a lonely place trying to forge this change and a better Met. It feels very lonely trying to do that. And I'll be ridiculed by my male officers trying to do that. They say they've never experienced any of this."

"If I went through the same things I went through back then I would 100% not report it and I would advise my friends and family not to either. It's not worth it. I wouldn't report it to the police."

Following the sentencing of a serving Met police officer for a string of sexual offences, the Met announced it would carry out a review of cases where it had been previously alleged that sexual offences or domestic violence had been committed by its own officers and staff. Officer A's case fell into this category but she says the Met are yet to contact her.

2. B

The Review heard from a gay, female officer, B, who has experienced misogyny and homophobia, and witnessed racism during her time in the Met.

While B was working in a Response team, she reported a male officer after he told her his "balls were cold" and requested that she should "warm them up" while working together, alone on a night shift.

She said that this officer had a reputation for making other women cry with comments about their policing abilities and their bodies, and there was an unofficial rule that women wouldn't usually work with him.

After she refused and did not laugh off his comments, she says the officer would no longer speak to her while they were working together other than to shout at her in front of colleagues. She says the officer would also undermine her with members of the public and would make her sit in the back of the police car and generally made her position working with him untenable.

B reported his behaviour but was dissuaded from making a formal complaint as her supervisor told her what he had done "wasn't the worst thing in the world", was probably just "banter" and that her supervisor had personally "experienced much worse things".

She was, instead, persuaded to go to mediation with the male officer where he refused to speak to her directly and stormed out of the meeting. She says there was no consequence, her complaint was not recorded as sexual harassment and, while women on her team would speak to her about her experience, the majority of male officers on her team did not speak to her about what had happened.

Sometime later, B was temporarily promoted. At this point she says male officers in her team expressed the view that she should not have been promoted because she had not “earned the right”. B says the officers would openly say to her that she had only been promoted because as a gay woman she was a “diversity hire to fill a quota”. The same officers would ignore her in the office. Her superior officers showed an unwillingness to act; she was told that she would have to “weather” this behaviour and that it would stop eventually.

B became aware that a number of junior, Black officers had been having significant issues with the same group of male officers. They felt they were being targeted and bullied because of their race; they were often shouted at in public, called ‘idiots’ or ‘r*tards’ and told that they should resign from being a police officer, and generally treated differently to other junior officers. When B questioned this behaviour she was told by senior officers in the team that she had “misunderstood” and that the examples she had been told of were all “character building.” She was accused of having a “vendetta” against the male officers and her concerns were dismissed.

B escalated her concerns and reported the behaviour formally and was assured her concerns would be investigated thoroughly. She says she has since been informed that all of the officers involved have been given ‘reflective practice’ with no further action taken.

3. C

Before C joined the Met, his family expressed concern that, as an openly gay man, he would face homophobia.

C recalls that the first team he worked in his colleagues were obsessed with his sex life and would continually ask inappropriate questions in briefings or around the police station such as “are you a giver or a taker?”

He says there was a particularly “laddy” culture when working in carriers with groups of male officers where offensive comments would be brushed off as “banter” and there was a pressure to accept this to be accepted and fit in. On one occasion he heard one officer tell another “don’t be such a f****t”. When he challenged him later about it he denied it had happened and subsequently ignored him entirely.

“You’re so desperate to be liked, you acquiesce, because you want to fit in”.

After moving onto specialist units, he continued to experience homophobia and the same “laddy” culture. In one specialist command officers, while driving around on duty, would openly rate female members of the public asking “what do you think of

her?”, “look at the tits on her” “from behind she’s great but don’t think much of the face”.

When a senior officer asked him for his opinion on a policing matter he referred to him as “pink and fluffy”, slang for aspects of policing which are seen as stereotypically female and “nurturing”, compared with the more “operational” side of policing seen as stereotypically masculine. Another senior officer told C that what he was wearing looked “queer”.

On one occasion, after he and a male colleague were away on a work trip, another officer posted on both of their social media profiles a graphic joke about them having sex. Both C and the other colleague complained, and the officer who posted the comments was moved to a different team. C says the officer moved on to work in DPS and has now been promoted.

“I can't think if he got a written warning. I know I could have taken it further; it was dealt with at a local level and my line manager did a great job dealing with it. It's more shocking thinking that someone like this went to work in the Directorate of Professional Standards”.

C says throughout his career he has felt a pressure to tolerate the comments and behaviour and laugh it off to fit in and avoid causing trouble. He says he has been left wondering if his experiences are the norm in the Met.

“The last thing you want to do is rock the boat by saying 'you can't say that!'.”

C has witnessed that homophobia spill out into the way officers police London, including witnessing officers overtly wanting to avoid attending incidents which involve people from the LGBT community.

“Back when I was on response team, when you heard an LGBT matter come out on the radio, you'd hear a collective groan. People don't want to attend those calls.”

Following the results of the inquest into the murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor, C says he considered leaving the Met altogether.

“I was this close to quitting. I was very angry about the Stephen Port inquest, how on earth did we allowed three young gay men to be murdered after Anthony Walgate? I was so disgusted and embarrassed to say I worked for the Met. Despite the Met arguing successfully at the inquest that it couldn't be

homophobia, most people in the LGBT community think differently and believe it's due to institutional homophobia."

C says these incidents have been few and far between in his career and that he has worked alongside many inspiring, professional officers. Despite this, he says he still witnesses senior officers making inappropriate comments about women and minority groups.

"There are some amazing people in the MPS, and it's these people that keep me from quitting. Additionally I've been managed by some inspirational leaders over the years, but time and time again I've experienced sergeants and above not respecting MPS values and insulting me and others. I know that acquiescing is the wrong thing to do but for the sake of my own mental health and my own career, I stay silent. London is one of the most diverse cities in the world and if we can't treat our colleagues with respect and compassion then how on earth can we provide Londoners the police service that they deserve?"

4. D

The Review spoke to D, a long-standing member of Met staff and a victim of abuse and coercive control at the hands of a Met police officer, Officer Y.

During D's relationship with Officer Y she says her and her children were subject to verbal, emotional and financial abuse and coercive control. D says the relationship left her with significant debts which Officer Y had run up in both of their names, that she was isolated from her friends and family and felt every aspect of her and her children's lives were controlled and monitored by Officer Y. D says the relationship led her to feel that she was to blame for her treatment and that she would never be believed if she came forward.

After she ended the relationship, she says Officer Y's behaviour escalated further, leading her to call the police on several occasions. She says her complaints, and the fears of her children, were either ignored or treated with complacency by Met officers. Upon telling one officer that she wanted to make a complaint of controlling and coercive behaviour, D was told that it would be very difficult to prove and that she "shouldn't bother". On another occasion, officers who attended her property asked to see photos of Officer Y to "see if they knew him". Another officer told her that Officer Y was "tired and not well" so should be allowed back into their property.

D discovered that all of the reports she had made had been recorded as 'domestic incidents' rather than as crimes and was told it was a "civil matter" rather than a criminal issue or a police conduct issue. She says that, as she was living in the same area both she and Officer Y worked in, the decisions to record the incidents in this way would have been made in the same office in which Officer Y was working.

D eventually applied for a Non-Molestation order in a bid to stop Officer Y from being in contact with her and her children. This was initially granted and enforced, before being partially revoked later when Officer Y said he had nowhere else to live. When this happened, D says he moved back into their shared property, installed cameras around the house and would wear a body-worn video camera.

Officer Y made an allegation of assault against D shortly after he moved back into the house. D herself was arrested and held in custody. D says the footage from his cameras were used to prove the allegation was false and she was released with no further action. D tried to report a breach of the Non-Molestation Order and controlling and coercive behaviour and was told that no reports would be taken as “this was just tit for tat”.

D says the impact living in this environment had on her children’s health and wellbeing led Social Services to insist that her children should not return home while her ex-partner was still living there. Subsequently, she says her children had to stay with family members while she slept on friends’ sofas, and eventually went into temporary emergency accommodation.

Social Services themselves spoke with Officer Y to ask him to move out of the property so that the children could move back into their home but say that he refused, was aggressive and lacked empathy. Social Services were so concerned that they submitted a report to the Met raising their concerns about whether Officer Y was fit to have contact with vulnerable people and fulfil his role as a police officer.

Eventually, a court ordered that Officer Y vacate the property once again and the Met decided to revisit D’s allegations. D provided details of her experience with Officer Y and says she did not hear anything further from the Met for two months. During this time, she was receiving intimidating letters from Officer Y’s solicitor and her children had seen him near to their property.

After complaining to her local MP and to senior officers in the Met, D says she was telephoned and “told off” for complaining by a police officer. She was asked why she could not just “move on” as Officer Y had already moved out of their home, that what she found to be intimidating may not be seen in the same way by Officer Y, that the Non-Molestation Order had not been breached and that she would not receive “special treatment” for being a member of police staff.

D says she requested for her case to be transferred away from the unit where Officer Y worked, which was granted. However, soon after the case was transferred, an officer from the new unit rang her to say that the investigation would take time as the suspect was “one of their own”.

It took five months for the new unit to conclude that no criminal case would be brought against Officer Y.

Today, D has to be escorted to and from her car, and to and from the toilet while she is at work in order to feel safe. One of her children has been unable to return home due to their fear that Officer Y will be allowed to return.

D says she has been left to feel “exhausted” and “personally betrayed” by the organisation she has worked at for so long, and feels that the Met has prioritised protecting “one of their own” over her and her wellbeing.

5. E

The review met E, an openly gay officer who has been the target of a sustained campaign of homophobia from inside the Met.

E cares deeply about the Met and believes it is made up of an overwhelming majority who join the organisation because they want to do the right thing and do a remarkable job. He became a police officer because he cares “deeply and passionately about public service, protecting communities and being there for those who really need us.”

E has had a varied career as a police officer and has been involved in a number of major events and responses to incidents receiving numerous commendations.

Despite this, he says he has been subject to malicious rumours that he is involved in party drugs and that he is having sexual relationships with senior male officers who are the reason for being given training opportunities or favourable postings.

He has been anonymously targeted on social media with homophobic slurs, calling him a “f****t” and a “c*** sucker”. He also says he has been the subject of malicious reports to the Met’s internal, anonymous phone number by colleagues. He says no one in the Met has ever asked “why is this individual being targeted?” or acted to stem the tide of disinformation.

E knows of other openly gay men in the organisation who have had a similar experience with malicious calls from their colleagues. An officer in the Directorate of Professional Standards commented that “if you were a straight white man in the organisation, we wouldn’t be having this conversation.”

E has seen evidence of WhatsApp groups amongst serving officers joking about trying to stop & search him off duty and using homophobic language. When E raised his treatment, he says the Met’s response was to brush off his experience.

“The organisational response was lacklustre and uninterested. Thankfully I had support from a handful of individual colleagues.”

E says that throughout his career he thought he had never witnessed overt homophobia in the Met, but then he started speaking to other colleagues who had received similar treatment and they were all gay or Black men.

His experience has left him feeling afraid of his own organisation and fearing for his safety.

“This will sound quite laughable. I am scared of the police. I don’t trust my own organisation. I will vary the route I walk to avoid walking past police officers when I am not at work.”

6. F

The Review met F, a Met officer who, while serving on a specialist unit, was groomed and coerced into a sexual relationship by a more senior officer, Officer Z.

F says that she experienced prolonged psychological and sexual abuse throughout the relationship and felt coerced and degraded. The abuse took place within the workplace.

When F ended the relationship and reported the abuse, she says senior officers on her unit did not take it seriously, viewed her as a person who had simply regretted having an affair, rallied around her abuser and even used the content of her statement reporting the abuse to take her through the police misconduct system. Her application for protected whistleblower status was rejected and she was subject to Gross Misconduct proceedings.

The misconduct complaints F was subject to all related to actions she had taken while being in the coercive relationship and which she herself had highlighted to the Met when reporting the abuse, including things like misleading officers about the nature of their relationship and having a sexual relationship in Met buildings.

“Everything I had said in my statement was thrown back at me”.

Once F was in the misconduct system, she said officers from the Directorate of Professional Standards combed through her statement to discredit her, calling her behaviour “flirtatious” and questioning why she had not approached anyone for support or assistance before she did. On one occasion, a DPS officer drew attention to a video of F “twerking and gyrating” with friends as evidence that she was lying about being uncomfortable with the behaviour of Officer Z on the same night. DPS never met with A.

While this was taking place, DPS informed her they would be taking no further criminal action against Officer Z. A DPS officer emailed her to say they were of the opinion she had merely entered into a “regretted relationship”.

DPS have failed to provide meaningful updates on F’s own misconduct case and, as of January 2023 have still yet to take a statement from her. She told the Review that she has lost faith in DPS. Her unit failed to provide her with a welfare officer; she has had to source her own specialist support.

7. G

The Review met G, an officer who told us of her experience in the Met, including the treatment of women and the difficulties in changing the culture.

When G finished her training, she says that she quickly discovered that what she had been taught in training school was different to the reality of working in the Met.

She told the Review of a session where a group of new officers were brought together and shown numerous examples of video footage where force had been used against the guidelines of ‘proportionate, legal, accountable and necessary’, but were presented as being examples of good practice and proportionate use of force. One example included footage of a Taser being used on a man who was in hospital, wearing a hospital gown and not presenting any sign of danger. She says the examples were so horrific that she and her fellow officers thought this was a test of their integrity. When she questioned it she says she was told “[that’s the Hendon \[training school\] way, and this is real life.](#)”

G told us of her surprise that senior officers would push officers to meet targets for using force. She was told “[we’ve looked at the figures, use of force isn’t being used enough.](#)”

During her time as an officer, G says she has witnessed multiple examples of bullying and discrimination, particularly directed towards more junior, female officers. She told us of one occasion when a senior male officer told a more junior female colleague he had just recruited to his team: “[I will break you.](#)” She says ‘breaking’ this officer took many forms.

[“He gave her the cases nobody else wanted, ones which would keep her working late. He would send her to horrific scenes alone: other people would send someone with her. A car crash or a body fallen from a tall building; someone would offer, and he’d say ‘no’. Nobody in her team could bypass him.”](#)

G said throughout her career she had encountered senior women in the organisation who expected the new recruits to face the same bullying and discrimination they had faced in their careers; like a rite of passage. G said that more senior women would say that new women recruits needed to tolerate discrimination to build their character.

“They’d say it builds you up.”

G spoke about her experience of working on a Sapphire team investigating rape and other sexual offences, and the resourcing issues they faced. She told the Review that the unit’s freezers, which held and preserved evidence obtained from victims and survivors of sexual violence including swabs, blood, urine and underwear, would be so full it would take three officers to close them: one person to push the door closed, one person to hold it shut, and one to secure the lock. All the fridges used for rape kits were in bad shape, packed and ruining evidence.

In the heatwave in 2022, G said that one freezer broke down and all of the evidence had to be destroyed because it could no longer be used. G said a general email had been sent round to this effect and that it meant that all those cases of alleged rape would be dropped. G also said she had “lost count” of the number of times she had asked a colleague where the necessary evidence was before being told that it had been lost.

G told the Review there were deeply concerning attitudes held by some officers who worked on investigating rape and sexual offences. She spoke of one occasion where she was discussing a violent rape with a police officer who disagreed with her about whether the case was rape at all. She said he illustrated his point by discussing the incident as if it had taken place between him and her.

*“He actually said ‘if I put my d*** in your arse, you said ‘ow’ you were screaming and I stopped because you were screaming is that still a rape?’ I was just asking which team needed to deal with it...He was questioning about whether it was a rape at all, he put me through the detail of it. ‘If I was doing this to you. If I put that here, I could hear you screaming...’ He carried on, ‘if it was happening between us.’ I said ‘why are you talking about us?’ I ended the call.”*

G says she left the conversation distressed and reported his behaviour to his line manager. The line manager responded by saying that the officer was “near retirement” had “just forgotten himself”, and asked her whether G would like it if they arranged a virtual call for him to apologise to her.

G spoke about another officer who works on rape cases. She says she entered a room where the officer was speaking to a victim of a historic rape. As she did so, she heard him say: “well if you'd told me ten years ago, I'd get to talk about sex all day I'd never have believed it”.

She also told us that when the internal campaign ‘Not in my Met’ was launched by the Met’s senior leadership team to encourage officers and staff to speak out about discrimination, senior leaders held briefings with all staff. Ostensibly, these briefings were intended to clearly set out expectations and standards around behaviour. However, she says it was made clear to her that the priority was to ensure all officers had signed up to attend a session so that their names appeared on a roll call. Then G says that during the briefing she attended officers were encouraged to delete their WhatsApp messages. She says officers were told:

“We don't want more people handing their phones in, take a look at your WhatsApps and Facebook statuses and messages, look carefully, they're coming for everyone now, protect yourselves.”

G says she knows of colleagues in other locations who received the same message at their briefings.

8. H

The Review spoke to H, a Black, female officer who has experienced racism and misogyny across a number of units in the Met.

In one of her initial postings on an emergency response team she experienced a “horrific” misogynistic workplace culture where colleagues were “sex obsessed” and would openly rate and grade female colleagues and members of the public on their appearance. H says during this time she was often described by male officers as “job fit” – a term she understood to mean women at work who they thought were 'attractive for a police officer'.

H says young, female officers were “traded like cattle” and moved onto different units depending on which male officers found them attractive. H herself says she was sent to work with a male officer who was known to like young, Black women. She says he was an “awful character, committing lots of sackable offences” but seemed to be unsackable.

After a number of years, H moved into a specialist team to try and escape the “toxic environment” and prove to herself that she could perform in one of the Met’s ‘elite’ units.

She says the team had a rigid culture with pressure to dress and look a certain way which H says did not factor in cultural differences. H describes an occasion where she was disciplined and told her hair looked like she had been in an “electricity socket” ten minutes after she had taken a shower following a physical training session.

H says that hierarchies, initiation tests, bullying and humiliation of junior officers were rife in the unit. She says women were pressured to compete in food eating challenges to initiate them into the team, and described women being forced to eat whole cheesecakes until they would vomit. On one occasion she was told of a male officer being sexually assaulted in the showers as part of their own initiation, something she says officers would openly talk and joke about on the unit.

Those who refused to participate were ostracised and considered “not to be part of the team”.

H says throughout her time on this unit she was aware that male officers would make comments about the women on the team in closed-off, male-only WhatsApp groups. She was told that male officers would use the groups to speculate and spread rumours about the women’s sex lives.

While on this unit, H says she was in a controlling and coercive relationship with a more senior officer. When she tried to end the relationship, she says he made a number of malicious allegations against her which led to her being arrested and put through the misconduct system, and used his personal connections in the unit to make sure that she was alienated from the team. H believes he made allegations against her in retaliation for her ending the relationship and to deter her from reporting his behaviour.

Throughout her career in the Met, H says she has felt unable to complain due to her race and gender, and a fear that she would be labelled as a troublemaker and either ostracised or moved.

“You have to try and be invisible as a Black woman...If you complain you get a reputation as being trouble and then supervisors try and pass you on to other teams.”

“It’s a ‘learn your place’ culture. Except your place is never there... At first I thought it was about being a Special [constable]. Then I realised it was just the Met. And as time went on it became more obvious that it was also about being Black and a woman.”

9. A supervisor's experience

A supervisor told the Review of a culture in the Met of moving 'problematic' officers into other teams rather than dealing with their behaviours or taking them through the misconduct system to the point of dismissal.

The supervisor had experienced both the difficulty of trying to tackle poor behaviour only for those officers to switch teams, and of having an officer with a troubling pattern of behaviour moved into his team.

"It's far easier to move people, shift the problem."

The supervisor described overseeing a team within which there was a well-known and powerful clique who had a reputation across the Met for being misogynistic. These officers would exclude people who didn't join in or conform to this behaviour. The supervisor said that previous leaders had either known about the behaviour, and failed to act, or had positively encouraged it in order to be accepted by the group.

"The clique had managed to establish [itself] over a number of years... Any supervisor coming in – either you don't join the clique and you get rejected, or you go in with them."

After taking charge, the supervisor was soon told by a female colleague that it was the "worst team she'd ever worked on" and heard reports of misogynistic comments and WhatsApp messages.

The supervisor attempted to challenge the behaviour, handing out "more management action in two months than in the previous 10 years" of his career, addressing the team to set out his values and expectations, and encouraging people to come forward with reports of wrongdoing.

However, although he had made every effort to address their problematic behaviour whilst they were in his team, the key members of the clique over time moved to other teams, many of them to the same team. He felt that these moves were prompted by the action he'd taken, which had removed the permissive environment the clique had previously had.

He feared that his efforts risked being undone as, although a handover takes place when an officer moves teams, addressing poor behaviour then becomes entirely reliant on the next supervisor's willingness to do so.

“Lots of them moved together, to where the old supervisor from this team was... this just moves the problem elsewhere.”

The supervisor also experienced having an officer moved into his team as a way of dealing with previous issues with his conduct. The supervisor became aware that the officer had moved “under a cloud” and had been put onto a development plan for inappropriate behaviour in his previous posting but the extent of the issues with his behaviour was withheld, as the previous unit did not want to “bias his thinking”.

“I don't feel I was properly and honestly briefed on what had gone on – it was skimmed over – so I'd take him on.”

After a short period of time on the new team, an allegation was made that the officer had behaved inappropriately towards a colleague. Following this, a pattern began to emerge where the officer would insist on working alone with young probationer officers who, in turn, started to make complaints that he would make them feel uncomfortable. Concerns were also raised about the officer's conduct on secure Met systems.

When the supervisor attempted to put the officer through the misconduct process, it became clear that he had a “whole history of minor misconduct issues”. The officer was then able to move to another team in the Met.

“There are people you don't want on your team, but you want to keep them there to deal with them properly [so you can] either improve them, or exit them from the organisation.”

10. J

J is a civilian who was in a relationship with a Met police officer for several years, during which time he became controlling and coercive. He blamed her for his abusive behaviour, wearing down her self-esteem by telling her she was always wrong and he was always right. She said she started to believe this, would apologise for things she had not done, and felt trapped in the relationship.

His behaviour later escalated to physical violence and, after the first occasion that he assaulted her, he told her that if she tried to report the assault to the police he could deny it as there was no physical evidence. After this assault she was able to leave the relationship, seek the help of a women's refuge, report his abuse to the local police and move away from the area.

A year later, she was contacted by that police force, who informed her that her ex-partner had made allegations against her of coercive and controlling behaviour. The

response to his allegations was completely different to hers. She was pressured to attend a voluntary interview, whereas he was never interviewed about the abuse she had reported. His allegations were sent to the CPS for a charging decision, whereas hers had not been. Both cases resulted in a no further action decision, but she feels his was taken far more seriously due to his position as a police officer.

He continues to serve in the Met.

"I find it terrifying and shocking, how a Metropolitan police officer can continue to help those in need and yet be an abuser himself."

11. K

The Review spoke to K, a gay, Black officer who has experienced racism, bullying and barriers to progress in the Met throughout his career.

K says he had wanted to be a police officer since he was young and that he was "excited to join." However, shortly after starting in the Met as a response team officer his excitement was quickly dampened when a fellow officer started to target him. K says the officer would bully him, hide his belongings and uniform making him late for shifts, mock him in front of the team, vandalise his locker and make his life "hell." Meanwhile his sergeant and the team around him did nothing to challenge the behaviour and would often join in. He said when he approached a colleague for help he was told to just ride it out and not retaliate as it would make the bully escalate his behavior.

"I had no support from my team until I reached breaking point."

Eventually after months K says he broke and told his sergeant that if the officer bullying him targeted him again he would report the behaviour to professional standards and resign. He says the situation drove him to depression.

K says the same sergeant would make homophobic comments towards him. On one occasion he recalls being in a van with other officers when his sergeant pointed at a man walking down the street who he assumed was gay and said "there's one for [K]". Other officers in the van laughed whilst K remained silent.

Throughout his career, K says he has experienced racist undertones from fellow officers. On one occasion after he was informally reprimanded, a member of his team asked "what's wrong with you lot, why can't you keep yourselves out of trouble?" K says he understood this to mean Black officers, leaving him to feel ashamed.

"I just wanted to be treated with dignity and to do a good job."

K says that he struggled to progress in the Met and has had a lack of opportunities compared to his peers, despite efforts to push himself. When he tried to speak to a senior officer about accessing more opportunities, the officer asked him “how’s the whole BAME thing for you?” and told him to contact another Black officer. When he asked for support with promotion he was simply told “you’re not ready” without context or help to address this, despite having the same credentials as peers who were supported. K feels he has always needed to work harder to be seen as worthy.

K said that he worries about using specific schemes designed to help BAME officers with promotion as he has heard White officers accusing underrepresented officers of only getting promoted because of their background.

“At what cost do I go to some of these positive action [programmes]? It hasn’t assisted me and my colleagues think I get the upper hand... I want the same opportunities as everyone else.”

When he tried to speak to a more senior officer about his experiences of racism in the Met, he was asked for physical proof and, when K said he couldn’t provide this, the senior officer brushed off his experience saying “so it’s not clear racism”. K says discrimination is often far more covert and not simple to tackle.

“Are we just looking at having to stop people saying misogynistic or racist words? It’s more than that and needs embedding in structure and policy.”

K told the Review it took him many years to tell his family about his struggles in the Met because he wanted them to believe he was doing well, progressing and that their initial concerns about him joining were unfounded. K says he feels saddened by the barriers he has faced in the Met, but that it remains his lifelong dream to be a police officer. He remains hopeful that there will be change for the better.

12. L

The Review met with L, a female officer who was sexually assaulted in the workplace on multiple occasions by a more senior male officer.

L says the officer would frequently touch her inappropriately; forcing her to sit on his lap, touching her on intimate parts of her body while she was getting changed in the communal changing rooms and deliberately bruising her arms while claiming he was demonstrating “officer safety moves”. L says this would happen frequently on Met premises and while on patrol together.

On one occasion he forcibly started to undress her while they were on duty together, and only stopped when a member of the public drove past. On another occasion the officer masturbated in front of her in the communal changing room.

The male officer had also been bullying and verbally abusing another female officer. After months of sexual assaults in the workplace, L reported the male officer to her Sergeant. Nothing was done, and the sexual assaults continued so L had to report him a second time.

At this point, L says she was asked if she wanted to “go down the misconduct route” or pursue a criminal case. She was warned that a criminal case would mean that what had happened to her could be reported on in the media, and that “everybody will know.” L felt like she had been persuaded to ‘keep it in house.’

“[Superior] was making it seem like my husband's going to know, everyone's going to know, so I decided on the misconduct route.”

L undertook a video interview, and a witness of her abuse provided a full written account. Months later, she found out by chance that the case had been dismissed when she bumped into an officer in a corridor who said “sorry about how it went, but that's how it goes.”

L spoke to DPS and challenged their decision but was told: “it's your word against his,” and that her abuser had a “long, unblemished career in the Met.” No further action was taken against him. He has since retired from the Met.

“Everything I went through, the worst thing I did was report him. If I could go back now I wouldn't report him.”

After the case was dismissed, L says she was labelled a liar and a trouble maker and ostracised from her colleagues. She told the Review that the workplace felt like a ‘boys’ club.’

L's mental health has been severely affected since the abuse; the Met have failed to provide her with any specialist support.

L is off work on long-term sick leave and says that the Met are currently trying to dismiss her because of her sickness record.

As part of the dismissal process, L says she was sent documentation by the Met which falsely stated that the misconduct case was not pursued because she had not wanted to proceed with the investigation.

L says she has been left with no trust in the Met.

“It would have probably been better to suffer in silence, but I couldn’t do that. He got away with everything, I was made to look like the liar.”

13. M

M was a victim of domestic abuse, stalking and false accusations of harassment by an ex-partner. In the course of her contact with the police, she received a welfare visit from two Met officers. During this visit to her home, she met a male officer who hugged her as he left, and went on to cultivate an inappropriate relationship with her. He contacted her frequently from his personal phone, capitalising on her specific vulnerabilities as a victim with recent trauma to become close to her. He fostered her dependence on him and discouraged her from speaking with friends and family and any other officers. She grew to see him as a friend and the only person she could trust. She was unaware that she was being groomed.

She later learnt that during this time where he encouraged her to trust and speak to him alone, he had not recorded any of the evidence she gave about her case, meaning her original abuser would not face justice.

She received sexual messages from the officer.

He cut contact when he was put under investigation regarding his relationship with another victim, who he also met due to her extreme vulnerability. When he made contact with her again, having resigned from the force before his hearing for Gross Misconduct, it was clear that he had been using police systems to find out information about her and her ex-partner, despite being on restricted duties whilst under investigation.

Once she realised that his behaviour had been manipulative and that he was a potentially dangerous individual, she faced huge challenges when trying to bring this to the attention of the Met, who passed her between DPS and local teams, each of whom claimed it was not their responsibility. She was told that officers often meet their partners through the course of their work, and that his behaviour and contact with her was at best inappropriate. She contacted DPS dozens of times. Although they have now recorded M's case and assessed it at Gross Misconduct, the Met is not planning to hold a hearing, as he was already charged with Gross Misconduct once with regards to the other vulnerable victim.

M told the Review that she felt she wasn't believed, and that DPS made little or no consideration of her safety; she was told to only contact DPS out of hours if her life was in immediate danger. She was extremely frightened, and was traumatised both by the officer's behaviour and her treatment by DPS officers. She was treated as a

complainant rather than a victim, and was offered no victim support. She was asked if her motive was financial, and asked if she would take payment from the Met. She says that her interaction with DPS would at times be worse than anything the officer had put her through. She told us: ‘I have nothing but condemnation for the way victims are treated by the DPS.’

Although he no longer works for the Met, his place on the policing barred list may expire, and there are concerns that his current job places him in a position where he could abuse other women.

14. N

N has spent over 20 years in policing but now dreads going into work and wants to leave as soon as she is financially able to. She has been consistently bullied across two of the Met’s specialist commands where she has been targeted for her gender and has been labelled as a ‘troublemaker’ for calling out problematic behaviour.

Both specialist commands where N has worked are heavily male-dominated and she found that she struggled to fit into the culture, and was made to feel isolated and miserable.

“I had been a police officer for longer, been in [the command] for longer... I had all the skills – I could drive, I could shoot – I could do anything that they could. The only difference was that I was a woman.”

This initial isolation escalated into bullying in both commands, in often subtle, petty and ‘under the radar’ ways, by both male peers and supervisors. This has included things like officers ignoring her calls on the radio, rubbing her name out when she signed up for overtime, ignoring text messages and emails she sent, even when these were operational, giving her tasks no one else wanted to do, and sitting in silence when she attempted to join in conversations in the carrier vehicle or on long car journeys.

“They’ve decided I don’t fit in...It doesn’t seem to matter what I do, they hate me.”

On one occasion the bullying she experienced was referred to the Directorate of Professional Standards by a senior officer with whom she had raised the issues. After a discussion with DPS, N decided not to make a formal complaint because she was worried about being labelled as a troublemaker or ‘weary’, a derogatory phrase in police slang to refer to a woman who complains about the behaviours of male colleagues, or speaks out against ‘banter’ or prevailing police culture.¹ Instead, she asked to move teams.

“I knew if I made a formal complaint, that’s going to blight the rest of my career. I’d be known as a complainer, weary, a troublemaker... when all I wanted was to be able to come to work and enjoy it, like everyone else seemed to”.

She says the senior officer informed people in the Command of her complaint anyway so she was instead informally ‘punished’ for having rocked the boat with further isolation and bullying behaviour.

On another occasion a supervisor took against her after she questioned why she was being treated differently to male officers. He would turn down her requests to be paid for hours she’d worked as overtime, change her working hours and prevent her inclusion in desirable deployments. When she complained to a more senior officer, she was herself referred to the Directorate of Professional Standards for potential misconduct around a technical issue relating to an internal process they said she had not followed correctly.

As well as bullying, N experienced unwanted sexual attention from a colleague, which also went unaddressed by supervisors. A member of her team frequently made her feel uncomfortable, often staring at her or invading her personal space. N says she avoided reporting the behaviour until it escalated to the point where he touched her inappropriately. The response of her supervisor, who had witnessed the incident, was to tell her to “just stay out of his way” and to arrange the roster to avoid them being left alone together.

N remains in this role where she has been bullied and unsupported by managers. After a long career in the Met, N now says she hates going to work, feels emotionally drained from the experience and says she spends her time “just trying to get through the week on duty”.

Chapter 6: Two specialist units

Chapter summary:

Resourcing and restructuring challenges in frontline Met policing and Public Protection stand in stark contrast to what we saw in examining two of the Met's specialist units: the Specialist Firearms (MO19) and Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection (PaDP) Commands. Well resourced, with elitist attitudes and toxic cultures of bullying, racism, sexism and ableism, normal rules do not seem to apply or be applied in MO19. Junior ranking officers and trainers hold disproportionate power in their relationships with senior officers because of the importance of their 'blue card' firearms status to Met operations. In PaDP we found low morale, overtime-dependency and a 'dark corner' of the Met – in which two of the most serious police offenders in British history had worked – where 'banter' and a bullying culture were not challenged. We heard similar concerns expressed about culture and bullying in the Met's Territorial Support Group. Despite these issues being well known, not enough was being done to address them.

6.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out the picture we saw and the evidence we heard regarding two of the Met's specialist units: the Specialist Firearms Command (MO19) and the Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection Command (PaDP), including the Firearms training centre which trains all firearms officers in the Met.

The chapter highlights serious concerns with the cultures in these units.

6.2. Specialist Firearms Command (MO19)

Undoubtedly, we are indebted to those police officers who train and work in one of the most challenging areas of policing. Carrying a firearm that can be discharged on home soil and directed at a fellow citizen is extraordinary, and pressured in its own way, with enormous responsibilities to the public at large. We are fully aware of that, and thank and admire those that step up to that responsibility.

This is why we were so concerned with what we encountered.

By visiting the Command, taking personal accounts from current and former officers and staff, and analysing data, the Review developed a picture of a deeply troubling, toxic culture at MO19, the Metropolitan Police Service's Specialist Firearms Command.

“It's the most toxic, racist, sexist place I've ever worked...it's just an unbelievable place.”

Who runs MO19?

There is a clear hierarchy imbalance in MO19. Junior officers who hold a ‘blue card’ which permits them to carry a firearm hold undue influence and elevated reputations within the Command due to their specialism and longevity.

Officers described an environment in which operational firearms officers, firearms trainers and assessors, and particularly Counter-Terrorism Specialist Firearms Officers (CTSFOs) have an ‘unofficial senior rank’, set the tone of the Command and have disproportionate power. We were told that these same junior officers talk openly about the power they hold over the Command. Referring to where CTSFOs are based, one junior firearms officer boasted that senior officers *“don't run the floor down there.”*

Officers and staff in MO19 described an *“inner circle”* and *“clique”* of people in the Command who have worked together for years, are close friends or in intimate relationships with each other, who have the ear of the senior leadership team, or are well connected to senior officers in the Met.

One officer described these networks as operating like a *“spider's web”* in MO19, influencing who gets promoted or handed prestigious jobs, who passes training courses and who receives preferential treatment from senior leaders.

“There is a ‘boys club’ that looks after its own in the unit.”

“There are power couples...this is one of the most insidious issues we have...they pass information around quicker than a radio.”

“It feels very much a command of long-established key players that could easily make you feel isolated...if you challenged the wrong person.”

We heard that senior leaders in MO19 fall into three camps:

- those who endorse, fuel and propagate this culture
- those who come to MO19 to gather experience for future promotion and who move on from the Command quickly, either without attempting, or without being able, to affect real change
- and those who bravely attempt to challenge the culture.

Those in the latter category are overruled, isolated and side-lined, or labelled as unhelpful, belligerent, and difficult. We were told that senior officers who had tried to challenge the culture were ‘warned off’ from making further complaints if they wanted to progress in their careers.

‘Colouring outside the lines’

Working in MO19 is seen as a prestigious and ‘elite’ part of the Met. In a survey of people who had left MO19, ‘prestige of the role’ was the most common reason officers reported as a reason for joining MO19. 80 to 90% of respondents rated prestige as an important reason for joining the Command.¹¹⁰

This has led to a widely held view in the Command and in the rest of the Met that firearms officers ‘need to be allowed’ to bend or break the rules because they are volunteers who could at any point decide not to carry a firearm or ‘hand in their blue card’.

We were told of one senior Met officer telling others in their chain of command that it was alright to “*colour outside the lines*” – to bend and break rules – because firearms officers are harder to replace than other officers and need to be cherished.

Finances

‘Colouring outside the lines’ in MO19 covers a catalogue of poor behaviours. Officers and staff told us that the Command does not make sensible or considered financial decisions. It allows officers to ‘game the system’ financially, with some earning up to significant amounts through overtime shifts. Officers are allowed to work the overtime system to top up their salaries, and financially rely on doing so.

We were told of well-known overtime ‘rackets,’ such as shifts for major events like Notting Hill Carnival and New Year’s Eve being filled by officers on overtime, rather than being scheduled as part of regular shift patterns, even though the dates are known well in advance.

We were told that senior leaders had endorsed this, or looked the other way, while a model developed where officers could work overtime when it was convenient to them, and refuse it when it was not.

We were told that hotels, usually used to accommodate officers asked to work extra shifts with no time to travel home, are being used to reward officers for hard work. Officers will also overspend on hotels, selecting more expensive options rather than

¹¹⁰ MO19 ‘leavers’ survey, January 2019 to March 2022

looking for value for money. They will make themselves available for certain shifts so that they have the use of a hotel room.

We were also told that access to elite training courses and police resources were either signed off without proper scrutiny, or used as rewards.

We heard of excessive spending on unnecessary, high-end equipment and kit, such as tomahawk axes and unusable night vision goggles which turned out to be useless in London's street-lit environment.

We were told that specialist vehicle camouflage wraps, ineffective on the streets of London, were purchased, and that a senior officer had to step in to block their use.

We were told of officers being allowed to make multiple, frequent expense claims just below the limit that would require formal sign off, travelling overseas for training courses, and ordering iPads and personalised jackets on expenses.

We were told that no other parts of the Met are given the freedom to pick and choose their own IT, their own equipment, their own clothing, only MO19 can. There is a resulting sense of entitlement in MO19 with regard to access to resources. There is also a preoccupation with pay and remuneration which the Review did not witness in the same way elsewhere in the Met. There is no incentive for officers who are earning excessive salaries to change the existing model.

Behaviours

'Colouring outside the lines' also extends to the acceptance of insidious attitudes including misogyny, racism and ableism in the Command.

MO19 is an overwhelmingly White, male command. Despite some changes, in 2021/22, 90% of MO19 officers were male and 92% were White. This should not in itself be a problem, but the Review team has built a picture of a culture in MO19 where misogyny is deeply ingrained.

When the Review team visited MO19, they saw sexism in plain sight. Male officers frequently interrupted and spoke over female officers, including those more senior to them. A male firearms officer openly expressed the view that women can "*struggle sometimes with handling the weapons*" because of their physical size. He was not questioning whether the equipment being purchased was suitable.

Female officers also spoke openly about MO19 being "*a men's department.*"

*“I knew it was predominantly men. I felt very vulnerable going in.”*¹¹¹

In a survey of people who had left MO19 for another team in the Met between January 2019 and March 2022, every female respondent and interviewee reported having been directly impacted by sexist and misogynistic behaviour such as inappropriate comments, sexual harassment and inadequate facilities.¹¹²

One female former MO19 officer said that, when she questioned why there weren't any female toilets at a training facility, she was brushed off by senior officers and *“told to use the woods.”*

On another occasion, a poster appeared in an MO19 common area which had been photoshopped to show female firearms officers carrying mops, irons and kettles instead of weapons.

The Review was also told of a number of sexual misconduct issues in MO19 indicating a clear pattern of male officers being temporarily moved off the command after allegations were raised, only to have the decision overturned, or be reinstated by a more senior officer shortly after.

One female former MO19 officer said she was deliberately paired up with an officer who was well-known to be problematic, because a senior officer had hoped her influence would improve his behaviour. Instead, she had to endure regular inappropriate comments, including during operations.¹¹³

We heard of troubling practices designed to prevent poor conduct from coming to light.

Officers told us that there is a tactic taught to some officers to indicate when a WhatsApp, Signal or Telegram group has become 'compromised' in some way, either because a complaint has been made about its contents, or because someone in the group is under a misconduct investigation. We were told that officers are taught to type 'LANDSLIDE' into the group (the same code word used if an officer finds an explosive that looks like it will detonate). Officers will then immediately leave the group, delete its contents and create a new group under a new name.

Training for MO19 and PaDP

Firearms trainers and assessors further embed this culture. They carry the power to decide, on a frequent, ongoing basis, who carries a 'blue card' and therefore a gun.

¹¹¹ MO19 'leavers' survey, January 2019 to March 2022

¹¹² MO19 'leavers' survey, January 2019 to March 2022

¹¹³ MO19 'leavers' survey, January 2019 to March 2022

They are the gatekeepers of MO19. Too often, they use this power and influence to select officers in their own image rather on merit, and to keep out women, ethnic minorities, and other people whose faces don't fit their ideal of a firearms officer.

This area of MO19, which is based in a different geographic location to the rest of the Command, is seen as *"impenetrable"* and operating as its own *"little island"* with a lack of senior oversight or proper scrutiny. We were told that senior leaders are either unaware of what is happening in this part of the Command, or are actively part of an inner circle which allows poor behaviour to go unchallenged.

The Review was told of a prevailing assumption in this part of MO19 that women and minorities will be *"shit at the job"*. We were told that officers would predict who would pass or fail a course just based on looking at names on a list and whether they *"fit the mould."* They would bully women to ensure they failed their courses and weren't able to carry a firearm.

The Review was told there is a training desk in MO19 where men hold competitions on how often they can make their female students cry, and that training officers had been heard to say that *"women shouldn't be allowed to carry a gun."*

We were told there are longstanding practices where instructors use intense physical training exercises to deliberately target officers they do not like, or who they want to 'punish'. The same exercises can also be used to target individual students to fatigue them, so that they make more mistakes and are more likely to fail their course.

In particular, continuation training – which has to be passed regularly to keep a blue card – is used as a tool for getting rid of people: by failing them and taking their card away, telling them there is no course available, or encouraging people to voluntarily withdraw from a course.

"They can pass or fail whoever they want...Instead of a culture of learning, it becomes a culture of bullying."

We were told that officers would adjust the content, length and difficulty of training courses based around who they wanted to pass or fail. One particular course was described as

"One of the longest standing tools for manipulating people's careers based on who the core group want."

"If they don't want you to succeed, they'll push you to do an ARV (armed response vehicle) course early on as you're more likely to fail."

On one occasion, a training instructor was heard to say about a particular female officer:

*“If she wants her f***ing ticket back, we’ll make sure we put her on a full ARV course, because then we can assess her and make sure we f*** her off.”*¹¹⁴

The Review heard another example of a female officer, for whom English was a second language, who failed one part of the firearms course twice. She was told – incorrectly – that she could not retake it, forcing her to join another Command. Meanwhile, a White male officer who failed his second attempt at a course was given a third attempt.

One attempt to set up a programme in MO19 to help those officers who had failed their firearms course – which, it was noted, were predominantly women and ethnic minorities – had some early successes. But it was criticised and dismissed by some officers. The Review was told of one officer who said *“I don’t want to deal with those m****”* when asked to work on that programme.¹¹⁵

The disproportionate power and lack of scrutiny regarding training means that officers are unwilling to speak up about these problems. One officer described a *“fear culture”* around instructors, with officers fearing their blue cards will be revoked if they get on the instructors’ bad side or make a misconduct allegation against an instructor or assessor.

6.3. PaDP: Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection

Made up of nearly 1,000 armed and unarmed officers and staff, PaDP is responsible for patrolling and controlling access to the Palace of Westminster, New Scotland Yard and Downing Street, and providing armed protection for diplomatic missions, embassies and consulates, and events around London such as state visits and Trooping the Colour. PaDP is heavily male. Only 10% of officers and staff are female (and only 7% of officers).

Officers in PaDP work long shifts, the majority of which are 12 hours long. They spend large parts of their day standing on a single post or patrolling a small area, often with limited interaction with the public. They are often wearing incredibly heavy and uncomfortable kit in all weathers.

At a moment’s notice, however, they can be called upon to risk their lives to protect the public at some of London’s most high-risk national landmarks. We saw the

¹¹⁴ ‘Ticket’ refers to the blue card giving authorisation to carry a firearm

¹¹⁵ Offensive slang for people with intellectual disabilities

importance, and the risk, of this so starkly in 2017 when PC Keith Palmer was murdered by a knife-wielding terrorist at the Palace of Westminster.

Why work in PaDP?

The Review heard that PaDP is known as an 'overtime command', where a shortage of officers means that extra shifts are readily available. We spoke to officers who had moved onto PaDP specifically to pay off a wedding, or to top up their salary before retirement.

"It's not the most glamorous job, it's mercenary...it's all overtime."

"This department runs on overtime. A large number of people will be here for overtime. If someone said they wouldn't come in, we'd fall down."

For many officers, moving onto PaDP is seen as a way to get away from the BCU and move away from local policing. It is also seen as an opportunity to carry a firearm, perceived as a mark of prestige by many in the Met.

Morale

The culture in PaDP is one where officers feel unhappy, unloved and bored, and where they are left isolated and unwatched by those above them. It is a dark corner of the Met where poor behaviours can easily flourish and are both *"harder to spot and harder to stop"*.

The Review heard from people across the Met that PaDP has a reputation for being a deeply unhappy Command. We saw this for ourselves on visits to the OCU and in conversations with officers and staff. Many thought that they were seen by the Met as officers that had failed to get into MO19.

The sources for this unhappiness are wide ranging. The work PaDP officers do is frequently monotonous and boring.

"On paper we're very privileged, it looks really impressive – the reality is that it's very monotonous."

The facilities they have access to are poor. The Review saw some of the locker rooms and break areas available to PaDP officers and staff. Some were underground and would flood in bad weather. Others were squalid, had rodent infestations or had low ceilings which left officers unable to stand up properly.

"If we were contractors, they wouldn't treat us like this."

“You wouldn't be able to put a police dog in that room.”

The shortage of officers in PaDP means overtime is readily available but also frequently leads to officers having their rest days cancelled to cover shifts. Some officers talked about the difficulties of keeping a work-life balance while working in PaDP, and the impact this had on their mental health. The Review was told of one week where there had been 270 compulsory rest day cancellations across the Command.

PaDP officers and staff have low morale, particularly those who carry firearms. Many officers talked about the poor treatment they perceived to receive while working on their posts. They also perceive themselves to feel undervalued by the Met and are looked down upon by other armed officers who work in MO19.

They were unhappy about the attitudes of the public and the media towards them and they perceived that everyone hates them or looks down upon them.

“Other police officers don't like us, [the] public don't like us, [the] press don't like us, but we get on with it.”

The Review also heard PaDP described as *“the PCSOs of the firearms world.”*

Their sense of being under siege could be seen clearly in the attitude of officers in PaDP to the series of scandals which have seen officers from the Command imprisoned in recent years.

Rather than introspection about how multiple offenders came to originate from the same Command, the Review saw officers express defensiveness that they were being demonised for the actions of those officers. There was criticism of the media coverage of the incidents and their focus on the individuals' professions as police officers. There was an overall sense that the number of incidents had felt relentless for the officers in PaDP.

We heard that some PaDP officers, including supervisors, did not acknowledge the levels of concern and impact on female officers after the incidents. Instead some would dismiss the concerns or say they felt 'accused' of being similar to the offenders.

“It's all negative, everything is to do with Couzens and Carrick.”

“I can't watch the news after the Couzens stuff... if it had been another profession, it still would have been reported, but not in that manner – you expect it, you're used to being abused.”

This unhappiness spills out of PaDP everywhere. It has a reputation for being a place in which people regularly “*moan and complain*” and are “*miserable*” which in turn further affects officer’s morale at work, and the reputation of the Command across the Met.

A dark corner of the Met

Officers and staff in PaDP have limited contact with other people in their Command, including supervisors. The way shifts are structured and officers are briefed before coming on shift means that many say they very rarely speak to their line manager, or even see them, other than for short, functional conversations.

Officers work long shifts, sometimes alone, sometimes with other officers. There are opportunities for officers to socialise during breaks in common areas. But if there are concerns about an officer’s welfare, or issues with their conduct, it is unlikely a supervisor would pick up on this without them being told directly.

“You can go a whole day without speaking to someone.”

Officers tend to stay in PaDP for a long time. They spoke about worries that they were becoming de-skilled from doing monotonous work, to the point where they either couldn’t leave for another Command or were worried about how they would cope if they did.

Attempting to visit one PaDP site during the course of the Review, we were told by a senior officer that PaDP officers “*don’t like visitors*” and prefer to be left alone.

This creates an insular, stagnant culture in the Command. It is a dark corner of the Met where there are limited opportunities to shine light on attitudes or behaviours.

Behaviours

Despite this closed-off culture, the Review was told of a number of examples of inappropriate behaviour from within the Command.

Officers said that the low turnover of staff, boredom, lack of supervision and skewed demographics in the Command had led to a culture of inappropriate comments disguised as ‘banter’.

“The lack of females there meant that men just came out with stuff that was quite offensive, and there was never any accountability because the Inspectors weren’t present.”

The Review was told one Black PaDP officer who worked as an unarmed guard on a post was referred to as a “*gate-monkey*” by other officers. This is reported as being a long-standing, derogatory way of referring to an officer doing a perceived unskilled, guarding role, as opposed to carrying a firearm. It was received as a racist slur by the Black officer.

Female officers spoke of feeling uncomfortable after overhearing male PaDP officers discuss their view that a victim who had alleged she had been raped was trying to make money. They heard other officers expressing the view that police officers arrested for rape should be bailed and allowed to return to work.

People spoke about the difficulty of challenging these behaviours and this culture. Officers and staff are worried that if they speak out against inappropriate behaviour, they will be isolated from the team, or lose their ‘blue card’ which allows them to carry a firearm, and therefore access overtime and financial remuneration.

Officers and staff were also left concerned that, while senior officers in PaDP expressed a commitment to rooting out inappropriate behaviour, some had been heard to openly agree that they wanted to avoid cracking down too hard on poor behaviour, as this would create a boring workplace. These senior officers expressed a general attitude that what was classed as inappropriate, sexist language could be open to interpretation rather than being a matter of zero tolerance.

[The Met’s response](#)

After the sentencing of a serving PaDP officer for the rape and murder of Sarah Everard, the Met commissioned a “*root and branch*” review of the OCU “*with a focus on recruitment, vetting, culture, professional standards and supervision.*”¹¹⁶ Internally, they refer to this as ‘Operation Leven.’

The Review has provided extensive feedback on Operation Leven to the Met. The Operation has provided important work on how to reform the OCU for the future. However, the Review found that it is striking that, to date, Operation Leven was not given the remit to specifically interrogate whether there is a prevalence of misogyny, other discrimination or conduct issues in the OCU.

The Met could have seen the enormity that two PaDP officers committing such heinous crimes would have on public trust in policing, and that every person in policing, and specifically in PaDP, could potentially be brought into disrepute without a visible clean-up and clear-out. They could then have set out to rapidly and thoroughly investigate the OCU for any officer or member of staff with potential red-

¹¹⁶ [Metropolitan Police Service, *Our response to the issues raised by the crimes of Wayne Couzens*](#)

flags or conduct issues. They could have ensured that every person working in the OCU had an opportunity to come forward to speak out in safety and in confidence to report where wrongdoing is taking place.

Two years on since the death of Sarah Everard and 18 months since the sentencing of an officer for her murder, Operation Leven has not yet concluded.

6.4. Conclusion

We have looked at two of the Met's specialist units and found serious issues of culture and behaviours that need to be addressed urgently.

During the Review, the mention of MO19 usually elicited an eye roll from current and former Met officers and staff we spoke to. It appeared to be well known what it was like there, but there was a sense that it either could not be challenged or that any attempt to would fail because of the overriding culture of the unit.

The Review is also concerned that, despite well-founded public outrage and horror at the crimes of two serving PaDP officers against women, there has not been to date a thorough enough investigation to determine if there is an underlying management or conduct problem, particularly with misogyny, in PaDP.

Chapter 7: How the Met deals with misconduct and grievances

Chapter summary:

Our interim report found that the Met's internal misconduct process takes too long, is worse with regard to sexual misconduct, fails to spot patterns of poor behaviour, results in allegations being more likely to be dismissed than acted on, places a heavy burden on those raising concerns and has racial disparity across the system. Further analysis identifies similar problems in the Met's wider systems for handling grievances and in the processes around Employment Tribunal claims. The prevailing culture in the Met does not encourage reporting of wrong-doing, rather those who experience it fear the consequences of being ostracised, moved or removed for speaking out.

7.1. Introduction

This Review has acknowledged the courage and passion than many officers and staff demonstrate in their commitment to the Met, to policing, and to the service they deliver to Londoners.

In every organisation things go wrong, employees make mistakes, break the rules or behave inappropriately. An organisation's integrity is judged on the fairness, effectiveness and transparency of its systems for dealing with such incidents.

The Met is entrusted with power for people's lives, safety and liberty. This means public expectations of behaviour are rightly higher for its employees, than for employees of, say, a supermarket chain. But it is all too apparent that high profile cases of depraved and criminal behaviour by serving Met officers have rocked both the Met's reputation and the public's trust in it.

This chapter revisits the Review's Interim Report into the misconduct system in the Met, published on 17 October 2022. The Interim Report, and Baroness Casey's letter to the recently appointed Commissioner of the Met, together with his initial response, are available online.¹¹⁷

The chapter also reports on the Met's handling of grievances, and Employment Tribunal claims. Sadly, across these issues we have found the same problems of inconsistency, disproportionality – especially in relation to race – and a tendency to underplay and deny problems, to brush them under the carpet, and to tolerate unacceptable behaviours in ways that fall far short of public expectations.

¹¹⁷ [Baroness Casey Interim Review on Misconduct](#)

7.2. Misconduct

The Met's internal misconduct system deals with reports of misconduct raised by Met Officers, staff or their family members, rather than public complaints (which are addressed in chapter 10).

The Interim Report concluded that the system is not delivering in the way that the public would expect. Cases are taking too long to resolve, allegations are more likely to be dismissed than acted upon, the burden on those raising concerns is too heavy, and there is racial disparity across the system, with White officers dealt with less harshly than Black or Asian officers.

The eight key issues identified in the Interim Report are summarised in the table below:

Figure 7.1: Key issues from the Interim Report on Misconduct

Key Issue	Key Fact
1. The Met takes too long to resolve misconduct cases.	On average, the Met takes 400 days to finalise misconduct cases.
2. Officers and staff do not believe that action will be taken when concerns around conduct are raised.	55-60% of misconduct allegations end in a 'no case to answer' decision: 11 percentage points higher than the average across England and Wales in 2021.
3. Allegations relating to sexual misconduct and other discriminatory behaviours are less likely than other misconduct allegations to result in a 'case to answer' decision.	Only 20% of finalised allegations concerning breaches of equality and diversity rules, and 29% of finalised allegations involving sexual misconduct result in a 'case to answer' decision, compared with 33% of all allegations.
4. The misconduct process does not find and discipline officers with repeated or patterns of unacceptable behaviour.	20% of officers and staff in the misconduct system between 2013 and 2022 had been involved in two or more misconduct cases, but less than 1% of these had been dismissed.
5. The Met does not fully support local Professional Standards Units (PSUs) to deal with misconduct effectively.	Local PSUs, despite being under-resourced, dealt with the majority of misconduct allegations. ¹¹⁸
6. The Met is not clear about what constitutes gross misconduct and what will be done about it.	Too often the organisation is reluctant and too cautious to define behaviour as gross misconduct, meaning it cannot dismiss many of those who fall short of standards of conduct the public would expect.
7. There is both racial disproportionality and disparity	In 2021-22, Black officers and staff were 81% more likely than their White counterparts to

¹¹⁸ PSUs have dealt with more than 50% of allegations in the last 2 years

throughout the Met's misconduct system.	have misconduct allegations brought against them, and more likely to have an allegation against them substantiated.
8. Regulation 13 of the Police Regulations, allowing removal of probationers found not suitable for policing, is not being used fairly or effectively in relation to misconduct.	Only 8% of Regulation 13 cases in 2019-20, and only 4% in 2018-19, led to dismissal, while Black and Asian probationers are more than twice as likely to have a Regulation 13 case raised than their White colleagues.

The Interim Report also identified four broader concerns with the misconduct system:

Firstly, these issues are not new.

The data we analysed went back to 2013. In addition, there were numerous reports and recommendations, dating back decades, on many of the issues raised in the Interim Report, including the key matter of racial disproportionality. In light of this, and the concerning nature of these issues, the Interim Report concluded that it was all the more important that the new Commissioner and leadership team gripped this and took the necessary action with urgent and effective improvements, not incremental reform.

Secondly, the Directorate of Professional Standards (DPS) in the Met does not fully command the confidence of officers and staff, and requires a significant change to do so.

The Interim Report concluded that an enhanced DPS alone, with a 'business as usual' approach, would risk making the issues outlined above even worse. Across the Met, it was apparent that the burden placed on those raising allegations was too heavy, and needed to be lightened by more confident management. Radical reform was required, based on a root and branch overhaul of the system. The Interim Report suggested that an early start could be made by enhancing the approach taken by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences team, established in February 2022 under the leadership of a Detective Superintendent.

Thirdly, the system was negatively impacted by pressures on the frontline in the BCUs, and by weaknesses in line management and supervision across the Met.

These are the first and most critical opportunities to set, embed and enforce professional standards. The Interim Report concluded that HR did not have a big enough role in the misconduct system or in supporting line managers. It also concluded that local Professional Standards Units were under-resourced and under-powered to deal with misconduct. We suggested greater resources be given to the BCU. Improving these weaknesses would help prevent misconduct in the first place

and help some low-level cases from escalating, as well as encouraging quicker and more effective action where necessary.

Issues of frontline pressures, and of supervision and management, are addressed in chapters 3 and 4 of this report.

Fourthly, some improvements would rely on overall regulatory changes that affect policing nationally, not just the Met.

The Interim Report identified that the decline in dismissals for gross misconduct had coincided with the introduction of independent Legally Qualified Chairs at misconduct hearings, although we did not have the data to confirm whether there was a causal connection. In addition, the overly complex, quasi-judicial, nature of the system made it more akin to a criminal justice process with a high evidential bar, rather than an internal system to uphold high professional standards and maintain public confidence in the police service.

The Interim Report concluded that the legal and regulatory framework regarding misconduct should be looked at urgently by the Home Secretary, together with the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs Council. However, it made clear that such changes need not stand in the way of many of the other urgent improvements that could and should be made in the Met.

Data limitations

The Interim Report focused mainly on the timeliness of handling misconduct allegations, the extent to which standards were (or were not) reflected and upheld in the process, and the existence of disproportionality and disparity in relation to gender and ethnicity. These were the issues that could be most strongly evidenced in the data made available to the Review.

Accounts provided during the Review, and comments following the Interim Report, indicate that some officers, staff and others believe there is also unfairness in the system related to disability, sexuality and other factors. We do not dismiss such views. Indeed, we consider this is highly likely.

But neither the data we examined, nor the recording practices on which the data is based, were of sufficient quality to allow such factors to be evidenced to the same extent as the systemic bias evident on race and gender. Better data recording by the Met will be necessary in future to support any improvements in tackling all forms of bias.

Action since the Interim Report

In his response to the Interim Report on 17 October 2022, the Commissioner said he accepted the conclusions in full, and set out his initial plans for improvement. We were pleased that the new Commissioner saw the severity of the situation, recognised that not tackling this would continue to let the Met and its staff and officers down, and has taken proactive measures to deal with the issues in our Interim Report.

Since the Interim Report, the Met has also worked with Crimestoppers to create an Anti-Corruption and Abuse Hotline. This provides a telephone number and online form for reports – including anonymous reports – from members of the public concerned about corrupt and abusive officers and staff. This is in addition to a separate internal Crimestoppers Police Integrity Line for police officers and staff to report corrupt colleagues. This is welcome.

We were pleased that, in response to the Interim Report recommendation on the legal and regulatory framework for misconduct, in January 2023 the Home Office launched a review into the process of police officer dismissals. This was expected to be completed within approximately four months.

It has introduced additional email and telephone reporting facilities that now allows anonymous reporting of wrongdoing by its officers and staff. Where misconduct relates to very serious issues, including criminal activity and miscarriages of justice, additional statutory protections are available to those reporting wrongdoing ('whistleblowers') to protect them from detrimental consequences. This is also welcome.

7.3. Dealing with officer and staff grievances

If an officer or staff member has a serious concern about how they have been treated by a manager or colleague, but the concern does not constitute an allegation of misconduct, that officer or staff member can submit a formal grievance using the grievance procedure and policy. A grievance is either upheld or not upheld.

The process can lead to the following actions:

- Formal or informal mediation
- Discussions with each of the individuals concerned
- Individual action plans
- Individual activities

- No further action
- An apology.

The grievance procedure and policy strongly recommends informal action in most cases.

During the grievance process, if it emerges that an act of misconduct has been committed, the matter is moved into the formal misconduct process.

As with misconduct, good management can often prevent grievances occurring in the first place, or swiftly resolve them before they escalate and cause longer term damage.

Since 2018, the number of grievance cases in the Met has decreased slightly, whilst the number of grievance *allegations* has been increasing. As there can be more than one allegation per case, this means that Met officers and staff with a grievance are raising more allegations within each case.

In the first seven months of 2022, there were an average of 19 grievance cases per month, comprising an average of 57 grievance allegations.

Most allegations (28%) relate to the behaviour or decisions of management. The other top categories are bullying (13%), policies (11%) and disability discrimination (8%).

Racial discrimination and sex discrimination constitute 6% and 3% of allegations respectively.

Black and Asian officers and staff are far more likely than their White colleagues to raise a grievance. In particular, Black officers and staff are twice as likely as their White colleagues to raise a grievance.

In views submitted to the Review we found evidence of low levels of trust or confidence in the grievance system:

“It’s a system where the outcome is always rigged.”

“When I have spoken out against such instances, the complaints process has not been followed, and as a result, I have been penalised and given rubbish jobs.”

“[It’s] a really difficult procedure with no-one independent to turn to or to back the officer up. They were all part of that circle of people.”

As with the misconduct system, we heard accounts about fear of victimisation after putting in a grievance and the perception that this was ‘*putting your head above the parapet*’. We often saw that claims of racism and discrimination were not recognised or taken seriously by managers and colleagues:

“The grievance process and the DPS are not fit for purpose and need a root and branch overhaul...My case was initially taken on but it soon became very apparent that the phrase ‘Racial Discrimination’ belonged in the too difficult box and was rebranded as ‘Overbearing Conduct’ and the perpetrator...was allowed to retire with no action taken. I am witness to how this organisation will do everything in its power to bury you if it believes you are a threat to its carefully crafted façade.”

An officer tried to raise concerns about racism to a senior officer who, in response, asked what evidence he had:

“I said ‘it’s not blatant racism – I can’t point to that but it’s undertones and aggressions.’ He said, ‘so it’s not clear racism’ and it was brushed off.”

Women are slightly less likely than men to submit a grievance. We heard many stories of sexism and misogyny, discussed in detail in chapter 9.2 of this report. The women had ample grounds for grievances, but women using the grievance procedure reported very negative experiences.

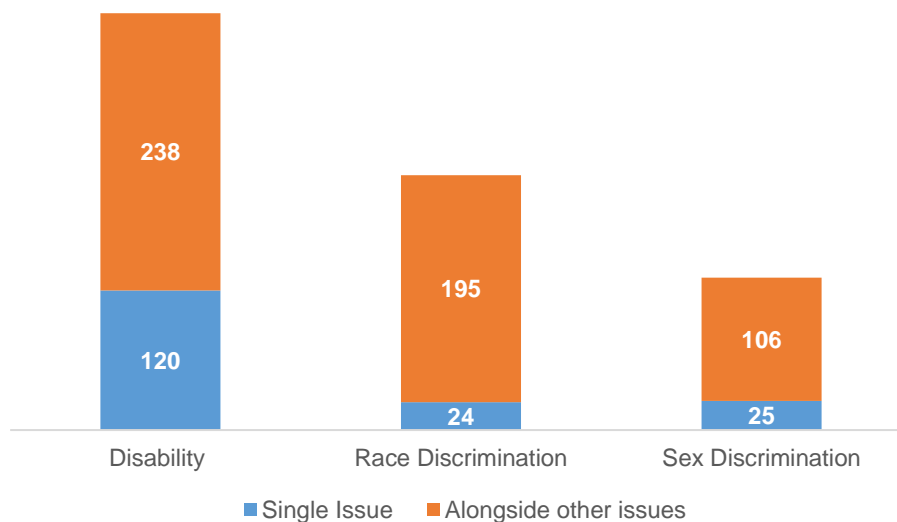
It is clear that the grievance procedure is held in very low regard and adds to discontentment and disillusionment among the workforce. Rather than leading to resolution, it adds to feelings of injustice, unfairness and lack of transparency. Furthermore, racial disproportionality in the use of the grievance procedure is yet another indicator of the need to identify and address the underlying issues for Black and Asian staff.

7.4. Employment Tribunal Claims

Similar themes emerge from examining employment tribunal claims against the Met. Claims to employment tribunals against the Met increased from 56 in 2017-18 to 92 in 2019-20. They dropped to 54 in 2020-21 (presumed to be the impact of COVID-19) but rose again to 99 in 2021-22.

A single claim can often involve several claim types but our analysis of the claims brought over the last five years indicates that the three most frequently occurring bases for claims were, in order, disability, race and sex discrimination:

Figure 7.2: Employment tribunal claims against the Met: most frequent claim types between 2017-18 and 2021-22



The number of Employment Tribunal claims brought by people with disabilities is striking. The Met has not shown sufficient curiosity as to why this apparent pattern has emerged, and what if anything they could learn from it. This is a source of frustration to people with disabilities in the Met:

“There is no willingness to learn. They think, ‘oh we’ll just see if they take us to an ET’ but that’s not good for [disabled] members of staff or the organisation.”

Available data also suggests Black, Asian and ethnic minority employees, and women, are disproportionately represented among those making claims.

With 380 claims, the total numbers of claimants are small in relation to the Met’s workforce, but it is particularly notable that compared to their representation in the workforce:

- Asian women were four times more likely to have brought an employment tribunal claim
- Black, Asian and ethnic minority women, and Black men, were nearly three times more likely to have brought an employment tribunal claim.

This disproportionate representation is set out in the following table:

Figure 7.3: Ethnic group and gender composition of the Met workforce and employment tribunal claims, 2017-18 to 2021-22

	% of ET claims made	% of workforce
Women	46%	35%
Black, Asian and ethnic minority men and women	45%	20%
Black, Asian and ethnic minority women	19%	7%
Asian men and women	17%	8%
Black men and women	16%	5%
Asian men	9%	6%
Asian women	8%	2%
Black men	9%	3%
Black women	7%	2%

7.5. Victims' and survivors' perspectives on misconduct

The Interim Report included case studies on serial perpetrators of misconduct and the inadequate consequences they had faced. During the remaining stages of the Review, we also considered the experience of incidents of misconduct and the process of reporting from the perspectives of victims and survivors. The three cases set out here illustrate the distress caused by the process.

Case study 1

A Met employee told the Review of her experience when she tried to anonymously report a colleague for making repeated inappropriate, misogynistic and prejudiced comments. These included making jokes about female victims of rape and sexual offences, speaking in support of extreme far-right groups and occasions where he had intimidated women in the office.

She had to wait for months with no update, still working in the same building as him. After three months, when she proactively requested an update, she was told that a 'no case to answer' decision had already been reached without being communicated to her. A supervisor commented "*we've spoken to other women who have worked with him, and they don't have a problem with it, so it is probably just you.*"

Following an initial assurance that she would be kept anonymous, she was made aware that the person she had reported knew it was her who had reported him. She says she was initially assured he would have to work in a different building to her but says she frequently still sees him in the office and that he has been heard to gloat about the dismissal of his case, and refer to any women who may have made complaints against him as "*whores.*"

Case study 2

One officer said that she was dealt with in an "*appalling*" way after she was a victim of domestic abuse perpetrated by a member of the Met.

Her abuser continued to work in the Met, and the officer says she had to fight internally for basic information about where they would be working so she could avoid seeing them. She struggled to get basic updates from her supervisors and DPS on what was happening. On one occasion, after calling for an update, she was left in tears after an officer from DPS told her it was "*about time you moved on from all of this and got counselling.*"

The officer believes there is an attitude in the Met that police officers who are victims of crime should be more robust than members of the public, and so they receive less contact and support.

“All I was doing was phoning someone to ask what was happening. No one was telling me anything. They'd just drop a bomb in my life and then walk away.”

“I had to fight to get the powers that be to do what they should have done in the first place.”

“Because you're a police officer, they think you should be more robust. And that's why police officers are so reluctant to report anything. We're encouraged to talk, but what's the point if you know you're just going to be stonewalled, fobbed off, put in the too difficult pile? How can I sit there with victims of crime and encourage them to report incidents when I myself have no faith in the system or process? The support's not there.”

Case study 3

A former DPS worker said the culture in DPS was one where officers and staff were encouraged to send misconduct reports *“back to Borough”* (to be investigated as misconduct only) as a *“get rid technique”* to reduce workloads, and levels of gross misconduct.

They also told us of examples where senior officers had been known to call in favours to protect their friends and allies from investigation, or to water down the investigation.

They told us that there was a well-known nickname for the DPS – the ‘Directorate of Double Standards’ – and said that the department needs a total overhaul:

“If you don't change the ethics, the values, you get the same unit but on steroids.”

7.6. Misconduct case studies: an update

The Interim Report concluded that the Met's misconduct process does not find and discipline officers with repeated or patterns of unacceptable behaviour.

We noted the crucial result is that repeated or escalating misconduct is not spotted. The Met therefore misses those who potentially pose the most risk to others.

To illustrate this, we conducted a 'dip sample' of officers and staff with more than five separate misconduct cases against them. Just three of these were presented as anonymous case studies in the Interim Report.

Many others could have been provided. We were prevented from including one due to open criminal proceedings, which have since concluded. It is now presented below.

Dip sample case study

Prior to joining the Met, Officer 1 had two crime reports registered against him in 2000, one for making threatening phone calls (**Case 1**) and another for carrying out a burglary (**Case 2**). Both incidents took place in the Met's jurisdiction and related to the same victim. She decided she did not want to proceed with the criminal cases, but asked that Officer 1 was spoken to by police.

Despite this, in 2001 he passed the Met's vetting and became a warranted officer.

In 2002, while Officer 1 was still on probation, he received his first public complaint from a member of the public, who said he had unnecessarily used CS spray (**Complaint 1**).¹¹⁹ The complaint was given a 'dispensation' and the Met did not proceed with it.

In the same year, a woman reported Officer 1 to the Met for actual bodily harm after he refused to accept the end of their relationship and a crime report was registered (**Case 3**). The Met spoke to Officer 1, but there is no record that the matter was referred to the DPS, or that any action was taken.

In 2003, Officer 1 passed his probation.

In 2004, an incident was recorded against Officer 1 by the Met after he had an argument with a woman (**Case 4**). Officer 1 was injured and went to hospital, stating he had fallen down the stairs. As this was a non-crime matter, the Met did not refer the incident to the DPS.

¹¹⁹ Also known as tear spray or gas

In the same year, a second public complaint was made about Officer 1 after it was alleged he and a colleague had assaulted someone whilst detaining them (**Complaint 2**). The complaint was 'resolved locally'. As defined by the IOPC, this is 'a way of handling complaints by resolving, explaining or clearing up a matter directly with the complainant. The complainant's consent is not needed.' No further action was taken.

The following year, in 2005, two additional public complaints were made against Officer 1 (**Complaint 3** and **Complaint 4**). Complaint 3 was made by a member of the public who said Officer 1's attitude was unprofessional. Complaint 4 was made by a member of the public who said Officer 1 was rude. Complainant 3 withdrew the complaint. Complaint 4 was resolved locally. No action was taken on either.

In 2008, a fifth public complaint was made against Officer 1 by a member of the public who claimed Officer 1 was aggressive and abusive towards her son during a stop and search (**Complaint 5**). The complaint was resolved locally. No further action was taken.

In 2009, Officer 1 joined PaDP as a firearms officer. This required checks on Officer 1's DPS record and in-date vetting. Either these checks did not pick up on the four cases and five complaints on his record, or did not deem them sufficiently concerning to prevent issuing him with a firearm.

A month after he became a firearms officer, a further non-crime incident was recorded against Officer 1, this time by Hertfordshire Police (**Case 5**). They were called to a property after reports of an argument about a relationship breakdown between Officer 1 and a woman. No action was taken by the police at the time but Hertfordshire Police say they referred the matter to the Met. The Met do not have any record of this referral on their systems and no action was taken.

In 2011, after ten years in the Met, Officer 1's vetting review was due. It was not carried out due to a backlog.

In 2016, Officer 1 had a crime recorded against him by Hampshire Police after a woman reported him as a repeat caller at her place of work (**Case 6**). Hampshire investigated but found the caller was a different person. No action was taken.

In 2017, Thames Valley Police were called to a Reading nightclub to deal with Officer 1 who had been ejected for swearing and intoxication (**Case 7**). Officer 1 showed officers his warrant card. They took his details but he was not arrested, the matter was not formally reported, and no action was taken.

Also in 2017, six years after it was originally due to take place, the officer was re-vetted. On his vetting forms, Officer 1 declared only one incident, that he had been given three points on his license in 2015 for speeding on a motorway. Whether the Met looked at his record of non-crime incidents, crime reports and public complaints as part of the re-vetting process is unclear. His vetting was granted in March 2017.

In 2019, Hertfordshire Constabulary recorded a crime against Officer 1 after it was alleged he had grabbed a woman by the neck and removed her from an address (**Case 8**). After investigating, Hertfordshire Police took no further action. The Met were made aware of the incident. DPS sent the incident to be dealt with locally by PaDP as they did not think it constituted Gross Misconduct. PaDP gave him 'words of advice' about the requirement that he report incidents of this nature to the Met, but no further action was taken.

In July 2021, Hertfordshire Constabulary arrested Officer 1 on suspicion of rape. The Met was made aware and placed him on restricted duties (**Case 9**). Hertfordshire police dropped the police investigation in August 2021 after the victim withdrew her statement. The Met initiated a misconduct review, but determined that Officer 1 had no case to answer, and lifted his restrictions on 27 September.

In October 2021, Hertfordshire Constabulary again arrested Officer 1 on suspicion of rape. This time he was charged and remanded in custody (**Case 10**). At this point, the Met suspended him from duty. It was only following Officer 1 being charged with rape, that the Met looked back at his record of non-crime incidents, arrests and public complaints and established his troubling pattern of behaviour.

In January 2023, Officer 1 pleaded guilty to 49 offences against 12 women, including 24 counts of rape.

7.7. Conclusion

The final case study set out above is a dark and stark warning of the dire consequences when misconduct is not identified and acted on swiftly, and when appropriate checks are not carried out properly.

The failings apparent in this case and many others we have looked at are compounded by a culture in the Met that discourages speaking out.

How the Met tackles misconduct is key to its integrity. The very public cases of criminality among serving Met officers, the Interim Report, and this examination of the Met's handling of grievances and employment claims, make it clear that the Met has a big job to do to improve its systems and culture. The new Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner have awarded a high priority to this task in the organisation.

This is essential to restore public trust and consent. The Met should not underestimate the extent and depth of the challenge.

Chapter 8: Governance, scrutiny and accountability

Chapter summary

Despite the statutory tripartite system of governance between the Met Commissioner, the Mayor of London and the Home Secretary, the primary public accountability of the Met for policing London should exist through the Mayor of London, together with his Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) oversight arrangements. Sitting alongside this, a range of other bodies provide additional inspection, investigation, audit, assurance and support. But the system is not working as well as it should. A dysfunctional relationship has developed between the Met and MOPAC, with defensive behaviours on one side and tactical rather than strategic approaches on the other; and the system as a whole does not hold or deliver real consequences where failures persist. Better and more open accountability is needed to restore public trust.

8.1. Introduction

The Met carries huge responsibilities for public money, employees, and most of all, the power it has over citizens. Appropriate governance, scrutiny and accountability systems need to underpin these responsibilities, particularly in a system based on consent.

A number of office holders and organisations make up the system of external governance and accountability for the Met. They provide a mixture of oversight, inspection, scrutiny, advice and guidance.

8.2. The tripartite structure of police accountability

The statutory basis for the system of police governance across England and Wales was established under the 1964 Police Act. It is a tripartite distribution of responsibilities between the Chief Constable (for the Met, this is the Commissioner), the Home Secretary (and Home Office) and the local police body (for the Met, this is the Mayor of London and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime: MOPAC. Elsewhere, it is the Police and Crime Commissioner, and was previously local police authorities).

At the centre of this system is the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis. The size of police service they are responsible for means they hold a unique position. The Commissioner is the most senior police officer in the country. The post has national and even international significance, with nearly 200 years of history, and special insignia.

The Commissioner is not appointed by the Mayor of London, but by the Monarch, on the recommendation of the Home Secretary, in consultation with the Mayor. In other police forces, the Chief Constable is appointed by the locally elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Policing Protocol Order 2011 sets out the Commissioner's responsibilities, including their operational independence, as follows:

The [Commissioner] is accountable to the law for the exercise of police powers, and to the [Mayor] for the delivery of efficient and effective policing, management of resources and expenditure by the police force. At all times the [Commissioner], their constables and staff, remain operationally independent in the service of the communities that they serve.¹²⁰

The operational independence of the Commissioner and officers and staff is important to avoid political interference – a significant concern when Police and Crime Commissioners were established.

However, policing by consent also requires the police to be properly accountable to the public for their actions and that includes operational matters. We return to this point below.

The Met's accountability to politicians in London is different to accountability in other UK police forces, and affords the Commissioner a greater sense of independence. Whether this derives from scale, the national functions – and the different accountability to the Home Secretary on some of these functions – or from the difference in the design of local political oversight, it is more evident in the Met and the role of the Commissioner in comparison with other Chief Constables.

The Met has its own internal systems of governance, including a management board comprised of a senior team of the Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners and senior civilian staff, joined bi-monthly by Non-Executive Directors, which the Commissioner chairs.

The Home Secretary is accountable to Parliament for maintaining the King's Peace within all police force areas, safeguarding the public, and protecting national borders and security. The Home Office retains a direct relationship with the Met in respect of the national functions it exercises, such as counter-terrorism, and the security of the Royal Family. Under the Policing Protocol Order 2011, the National Policing Board run by the Home Office enables the Home Secretary to:

¹²⁰ [Policing Protocol Order 2011](#)

directly engage with the policing sector to set the long-term strategic direction for policing and hold the policing sector to account for the delivery of the government's key policing commitments.

Changes introduced in 2011 were designed to strengthen local communities' ability to hold their police forces to account. These created locally elected Police and Crime Commissioners for other forces, and MOPAC in London. In implementing these changes, the then Home Secretary, Theresa May, signalled a significant shift in the Home Office's role in policing, from one of 'hands on' to 'hands off', in line with the 2010 Coalition Government's policy of 'localism'. Nevertheless, the 2011 Policing Protocol retained backstop powers of intervention for the Home Secretary:

[...] if it is determined by the Home Secretary that such action is necessary in order to prevent or mitigate risk to the public or national security. Such powers and tools will be used only as a last resort, and will not be used to interfere with the democratic will of the electorate within a force area.

The balance of accountability of police forces to local and national politicians has been the subject of some debate. While some might see any intervention by the Home Office as interfering in local decision-making, others might see this as appropriate action in the interests of the public and national security. The conditions that might trigger such Home Office intervention are, however, subjective, and create room for ambiguity.

The elected Mayor of London has responsibility for holding the Met to account on behalf of the public, the equivalent of the Police and Crime Commissioner. In turn, the Mayor delegates their policing responsibilities to the Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, who provides the political leadership for MOPAC, a body of the Greater London Authority.

The London Assembly's Policing and Crime Committee exists to provide an additional check and balance in the system, holding the Mayor (via his Deputy) to account for his policing role in overseeing the Met. However, the Committee's focus has become broader and considers the wider effectiveness of the Met, not just the Mayor's effectiveness in exercising oversight.

Met-MOPAC relations

During the Review, officers and staff both from the Met and MOPAC expressed some frustrations that indicated a relationship which, at times, was dysfunctional. At times, the Met was described as being defensive or evasive, while MOPAC was sometimes criticised for a lack of a systematic approach to supporting and challenging the delivery of agreed aims, objectives, or outcomes.

We heard that the Met had frequently invoked the concept of operational independence, at times to deter further scrutiny. In his Review of Policing in Northern Ireland, Lord Patten questioned the use of the term 'operational independence', as misleading, preferring instead the term 'operational responsibility':

In a democratic society, all public officials must be fully accountable to the institutions of that society for the due performance of their functions, and a chief of police cannot be an exception. No public official, including a chief of police, can be said to be "independent". Indeed, given the extraordinary powers conferred on the police, it is essential that their exercise is subject to the closest and most effective scrutiny possible. The arguments involved in support of "operational independence" – that it minimises the risk of political influence and that it properly imposes on the Chief Constable the burden of taking decisions on matters about which only he or she has all the facts and expertise needed – are powerful arguments, but they support a case not for "independence" but for "responsibility".¹²¹

He argues that the term 'operational responsibility' still provides the Chief Constable with the right and duty to take operational decisions, and makes it clear that that no-one should have the right to direct, for example, who to arrest:

It does not mean, however, that the Chief Constable's conduct of an operational matter should be exempted from inquiry or review after the event by anyone. That should never be the case. But the term "operational independence" suggests that it might be [...]

We found this a helpful explanation of operational independence and its limits in terms of scrutiny and accountability. It should be a reminder that transparency around police actions and incidents is integral to policing by consent.

Although the handling of the relationship is not the responsibility of the Met alone, we do find that aspects of Met culture, such as a tendency towards obfuscation and defensiveness, can limit the benefits of being scrutinised and having external oversight. Historically, the Met have made it very hard for MOPAC to scrutinise them.

¹²¹ [Lord Patten, September 1999, *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland*](#)

This has sometimes resulted in less strategic and more tactical approaches to governance.

The Mayor of London has the biggest individual electoral mandate in the country, while the Commissioner is the most senior police officer in the country. They are two 'big beasts', and how they work together and interpret their respective roles has huge importance for Londoners. It is important that they – and the Met and MOPAC, including the Deputy Mayor – pursue a partnership and relationship that serves and is accountable to Londoners, and gives them transparency and confidence in the Met.

8.3. Inspection, audit, investigation and advice

Sitting alongside the main statutory triumvirate of the Commissioner, Home Secretary and Mayor, the Met's governance system also comprises a number of external bodies. They provide inspection, audit, investigation and advice functions, which the Met should have regard to in delivering its operations.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary & Fire and Rescue Services

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) is the main body reporting to the public on police forces across England. Its role is to:

Inspect, monitor and report on the efficiency and effectiveness of the police and FRSs with the aim of encouraging improvement. By providing accessible information on the performance of forces and FRSs, we allow their public, and peers, to see how they are doing. This will place pressure on those forces and FRSs requiring improvement in aspects of policing and fire and rescue to raise their game.¹²²

It should be noted that HMICFRS only inspects police forces, not local policing bodies (in London's case, MOPAC). So the PEEL inspection of the Met does not comment on or pass any verdict on the quality of the governance and political leadership of policing in London. This is very different from, for example, the role of Ofsted. School inspections assess the school's governing body as much as they examine management and teaching quality. Likewise, an inspection of local authority children's services considers the quality of political as well as managerial leadership in improving the lives of children.

HMICFRS is clear that it is an inspector not a regulator. As described above, it drives improvement through publicising its findings so that forces feel the pressure from public and peers to 'raise their game.'

¹²² [HMICFRS: What we do](#)

It does not tell a force what to do and, unlike other parts of the public sector, such as local government, there are very limited consequences for failing to improve.

In June 2022, following a critical PEEL report, HMICFRS made the decision to move the Met from 'Scan' (normal force monitoring) to 'Engage'.¹²³

'Engage' is widely described in the media as being the equivalent of Ofsted's 'special measures.' It is not. Ofsted has powers to close services and put others in charge of failing organisations. Both the Department of Education and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities regularly intervene and use their powers where local authorities or schools are failing. There are different models and steps but, essentially, where other public services are failing independent intervention is a given.

In contrast, 'Engage' means:

[F]orces will develop an improvement plan to address the specific cause(s) of concern that has caused them to be placed in the advanced phase of the monitoring process. The force may receive support from external organisations such as the College of Policing or the National Police Chiefs' Council, brokered by HMICFRS.¹²⁴

Despite identifying concerns over a five-year period, HMICFRS does not have the teeth to enforce change. The 'Engage' phase might provide additional support, but does not bring greater accountability, or any real consequences.

In HMICFRS Inspection reports we reviewed, recommendations were made repeatedly and were not acted on.

For example, early in 2022, the HMICFRS review into counter-corruption arrangements in the light of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel found:¹²⁵

- HMICFRS warned the force in January 2017 and September 2019 that the Met had a lack of IT monitoring, which left it out of step with best practice, and clearly in a minority of forces. They rightly said that 'it is high time that the force took this matter much more seriously'

¹²³ [HMICFRS, 22 September 2022, *Concerns raised over Metropolitan Police's performance*](#)

¹²⁴ [HMICFRS: Our approach to monitoring forces](#)

¹²⁵ [HMICFRS, 22 March 2022, *An Inspection of the Metropolitan Police Service's counter-corruption arrangements and other matters related to the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel*](#)

- The Met were unable to state with any certainty who each phone or tablet owned by the force is allocated to
- Property and exhibits management, which had been a problem during the initial Daniel Morgan investigation in the 1980s, remained so in 2021. The report stated that the findings ‘[painted a dismal picture](#)’, with ‘[property storage facilities \[...\] not fit for purpose. The stores were overflowing with items, which were piled haphazardly. We had particular concerns about firearms.](#)’ The report indicated that ‘[The current situation is wholly unsatisfactory, and given the lessons of Daniel Morgan’s case, impossible to defend. The MPS has much more work to do](#)’
- Failings in the Met’s disclosure of conflicts policy directly related to a failure to learn from the Morgan investigation, in which it was found that a suspect in the Morgan case was closely associated with a journalist. But HMICFRS found that Met officers still did not have to disclose any association or interaction with journalists, despite national guidance to the contrary, and a history of scandals. The position has not changed.

Directorate of Audit, Risk and Assurance

Alongside HMICFRS, MOPAC’s Directorate of Audit, Risk and Assurance (DARA) has a significant role in the Met with the aim of driving improvement and providing assurance. While located in MOPAC, they are in effect the ‘internal audit’ function for the Met. They undertake around 20 audits a year, around a quarter of which are follow ups.

Risk audits carried out by DARA have regularly shown up problems which are not acted on and which are subsequently criticised in HMICFRS reports. Yet DARA is viewed as an external body by the Met, and handled as a process to get through, rather than as an assurance function that can be used to drive improvement. We were told that DARA’s assessments are given a very cool reception where issues are raised, and the Met doesn’t engage positively and welcome challenge.

Although audits may result in four possible grades, all Met audits are graded either ‘adequate’ or ‘limited assurance’. Between 2018-19 and 2020-21 no reviews of the Met achieved a ‘substantial assurance’ rating. In the same time period, there was no year in which the reviews receiving ‘adequate’ ratings or above exceeded 79%. In discussions during the Review, it was evident that the Met regarded DARA’s audit standards as unrealistic, and that Met staff and officers ‘push back’ against recommendations, rather than welcome the assurance they can provide.

This may not be an unusual attitude even to genuinely internal audit in large organisations. It is, though, a serious cause for concern, given the high degree of risk (for example over firearms processes) in the Met's operations, and the obvious importance of assurance in an organisation which has huge power over the lives of Londoners and is responsible for annual spending of nearly £4 billion.

“A mature organisation welcomes assurance activity, engages, understands and deals with it strategically. They take all the defensiveness out of it as that gets in the way.”

Independent Office for Police Conduct

The Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) is a public body established in 2018 as the successor to the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Its role is to oversee, and increase accountability for, the system for handling complaints against police forces in England and Wales, to investigate the most serious complaints and allegations of misconduct, and to handle appeals. It can make recommendations for improvement arising from its investigations. More recently it has been able to undertake 'own initiative' investigations, whereby it can decide to undertake an investigation without a case being referred.

In Review interviews, the IOPC were often criticised by officers and senior leaders in the Met. Sometimes IOPC decisions are resented and the relationship between the Met and IOPC can be challenging, even though we were told the Met had taken steps to improve it. While we consider it can be unhelpful if there is complete silence from the Met during IOPC investigations, senior officers have sometimes spoken out in support of their officers prior to an investigation concluding.

For example, in July 2020, Met Police officers stopped the car of athlete Bianca Williams and her partner Ricardo dos Santos, handcuffed them and carried out a search while their baby remained in the vehicle. Video footage of the stop was widely circulated. The Met were accused of treating them less favourably because of their race and voluntarily referred themselves to the IOPC. Later that month, Dame Cressida Dick made comments to LBC that *“any officer worth their salt would have stopped that car.”*¹²⁶ Her acting successor, Sir Stephen House, followed suit, stating that internal reviews had not seen anything wrong with the stop.

¹²⁶ Whilst the IOPC do not consider the comment to have been appropriate, they accepted that there was no evidence the comment was made to influence the independent investigation nor that it was capable of doing so, nor is there evidence to suggest it was intended to attack and undermine the complaints' integrity and reputation

Some officers see the IOPC as a critic with a political agenda rather than a statutory organisation who are responsible for relying on evidence when they investigate wrongdoing.

The following comments were made by Met staff following an IOPC update on the Williams and Dos Santos case:

“It sadly becomes a battle where somebody is out to trash your reputation and character (and [the] police as a whole) so you have to use all you have at your disposal and not give them anything that can strengthen their destructive narrative in their effort to undermine you.”

“The IOPC is about as anti-police and corrupt as it gets and needs to be destroyed and built from the ground up properly.”

However, we also heard from officers who felt that they could trust the IOPC more than they could the Met’s own misconduct system, and that the IOPC had lifted the lid on toxic cultures in the Met with their Operation Hotton report.¹²⁷

The IOPC role does provide some additional assurance for the public. But the length of time investigations of serious incidents take, and the absence of comment from the IOPC or the Met during such periods, increases fatigue and cynicism, which undermines public and officer confidence in the system.

National Police Chiefs’ Council and the College of Policing

A range of external bodies, including the National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing, provide support and guidance which can aid good practice in policing. Additional support from these bodies is one potential outcome arising from HMICFRS recommendations to address problems they have identified.

The Met makes extensive use of the formal procedural advice and guidance from the College of Policing. In terms of good practice guidance, however, there has been a historical tendency on the part of the Met to see products from other bodies as inferior, ‘not invented here’, or not suited to the uniqueness of policing in the capital. This means that the Met has not always co-operated with national projects to address policing issues and look for solutions. The Met should be more open to good practice from other sources *and* contribute more to its development.

Previously, HMICFRS, the NPCC (formerly ACPO), or the College of Policing would have sent in teams of officers from other forces to help effect change. This no longer happens, and it is what the Met needs.

¹²⁷ [IOPC, January 2022, Operation Hotton Learning Report](#)

In addition, it is clear that, although MOPAC, HMICFRS and the IOPC are able to provide some scrutiny, inspection and investigation, they do not currently have the levers required to create the types of changes that other parts of the public sector have in their arrangements.

8.4. Transparency

In his report on policing in Northern Ireland, which formed the basis for transforming the RUC into a new Police Service for Northern Ireland (PSNI), Lord Patten explored the different aspects of accountability:

- There is **democratic** accountability, by which the elected representatives of the community tell the police what sort of service they want from the police, and hold the police accountable for delivering it
- There is **transparency**, by which the community is kept informed, and can ask questions, about what the police are doing and why
- There is **legal accountability**, by which the police are held to account if they misuse their powers
- There is **financial accountability**, by which the police service is audited and held to account for its delivery of value for public money
- And there is **internal accountability**, by which officers are accountable within a police organisation.

He concluded that all of these aspects need to be addressed 'if full accountability is to be achieved, and if policing is to be effective, efficient, fair and impartial'.¹²⁸

In light of this, we looked in particular at transparency: how communities, their MPs, and local authorities can, through processes such as inquests and public inquiries, be informed about what the police are doing and why. By definition, these mechanisms are used when there is a significant concern about an incident or activity, or when a member of the public has not been able to obtain answers through existing routes.

These forms of transparency are not just for the police, but also are important means of holding all public bodies to account for their actions.

¹²⁸ [Lord Patten, September 1999, *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland*](#)

These provide other insights into how the Met views transparency, which we illustrate here through case studies.

Transparency to partners

MPs

We spoke to several London MPs whose experience with the Met had left them frustrated by a lack of responsiveness, lack of transparency and crucially a lack of accountability when they had raised matters about constituents.

Local authorities

One local authority Chief Executive told us of attempts they had made to establish the circumstances around an incident involving one of his employees:

Lambeth employee

In July 2019 a Black, male employee of Lambeth Council, 'L', made a complaint to the Met after he was handcuffed during a stop and search at Brixton Tube station on his way home from work.

He said he had paid his fare, passed through the ticket barriers, and stopped at the top of the escalators to finish a phone call when he was detained for a search by a police officer. A second officer grabbed his arm and handcuffed him. He asked for them to be loosened as they were tight and painful but this was ignored. The original officer conducted a search while the other officer held and twisted the handcuffs, hurting L's wrists. L made a complaint that the stop and search was unnecessary, and that handcuffs were used unnecessarily and had caused reddening and pain on his wrists.

In May 2020, the Met wrote to L to say the complaint had not been upheld, and that there were no unsatisfactory performance issues with the three officers involved in the search. They said that the officers involved had confirmed that L had come up the escalators from the platform while talking on his phone, and then attempted to go back down onto the platform again in a way that made the officers suspect he was trying to avoid the police. The letter also said he was behaving aggressively, and that removing handcuffs from him would have been an officer safety risk and increased the time taken to complete the search.

Lambeth Council challenged the outcome of the complaint with the BCU Commander. L said he had evidence and witnesses to prove he had been entering the station rather than leaving, and accused the Met of fabricating events.

The complaint was reviewed. In June 2021, a new outcome was issued accepting L's account that he was entering the station rather than leaving was correct. It also accepted that the officers, although legally allowed to use handcuffs during the search, should have considered other options, and that using the handcuffs escalated the situation. The review accepted that 'the service provided was not satisfactory' and his complaints were upheld.

However, the officers involved were referred for 'reflective practice' rather than misconduct action, and no action has been taken to address the discrepancies in the officers' statements.

Inquests

The death of Mr Ian Taylor while under arrest became the subject of an inquest, during which the behaviour of individual officers, delays and obfuscation by the Met to partners and the media only emerged due to the concerns of the Coroner and the local MP. It is hard to recognise any point in this episode in which the Met did anything to act with accountability or transparency.

Mr Ian Taylor

On 29 June 2019, 54-year-old Black Londoner Mr Ian Taylor died while under arrest by the Met in Lambeth. Police were called following reports of a fight, including a person using a hammer as a weapon. On arrival at the scene, officers found Mr Taylor lying on the floor injured. He asked for an inhaler and told officers he had asthma. The officers received information that he had been involved in serious violence that day, and arrested him for GBH. They also called an ambulance.

It was a very hot day with temperatures exceeding 30 degrees. Kings College Hospital was approximately one mile away and London Ambulance Service informed officers that there would be long delays due to high demand.

While waiting for the ambulance, Mr Taylor repeatedly told officers he could not breathe, that he was very hot and that he was dying. Officers positioned themselves to block out the sun before moving him to the back of an air-conditioned police vehicle.

A police officer was captured on body-worn video camera footage saying "*he's currently on the floor playing the whole poor me poor me; he's going to have to go to hospital as a matter of course.*" The officer was also captured saying "*he's*

saying he's got chest pains, he can't breathe blah blah blah, it's all a load of nonsense but there we go."

Two to three minutes later Mr Taylor stopped breathing. Officers performed CPR on him until an ambulance arrived. He was taken to Kings Cross Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

Following the incident, in both statements to media and in written briefings sent to local MPs and partners, the Met referred to the incident by saying that three people had been arrested on suspicion of murder following the death of a man in Lambeth. At the bottom of both the statement and the written briefing, the Met said that the man had been placed under arrest prior to being taken to hospital. A local MP noted that this was *"misleading"* as *"the impression given was entirely that Mr Taylor had passed away as a result of an assault by a third party, not that he died from a treatable disease."*

In January 2020, the IOPC wrote to the Met with a 'learning suggestion' that the Met ensure all officers are aware of the policy on transporting people to hospital in exceptional circumstances, including when an asthmatic is having an asthma attack and does not have an inhaler. The Met published a reminder of this policy internally some 18 months later, in July 2021.

An inquest was carried out in May 2022. The jury found that the medical cause of death was cardiac arrest, acute asthma, COPD, situational stress, ischaemic heart disease and dehydration.

In May 2022, the Coroner said he would issue a Prevention of Future Deaths report regarding police officers' access to inhalers and re-referring an officer to the IOPC.

The referral was linked both to the officer's comments at the scene and the Coroner's concerns that, at the inquest, the officer did not accept that he had learnt anything from the incident or that he would do anything differently in the future, and did not apologise to the family when given an opportunity to make any other comment.

In his report, the Coroner asked the IOPC to re-consider the officer's conduct at the scene and his attitude at the inquest, and for the Met to consider his supervision and further training needs.

In June 2022, the IOPC concluded that the officer should be referred for 'reflective practice' to reflect on his actions at the incident and his conduct at the inquest. The Met wrote to the Coroner in the same month to say that they recognised the

officer's comments demonstrated a lack of professionalism, were a breach of the code of ethics, and had caused distress to Mr Taylor's family.

The Met determined, however, that the conduct did not meet the threshold for misconduct proceedings, and that the officer should be referred for reflective practice only, where the officer's line manager would be able to identify any additional training needs. The officer went through the reflective practice process in July 2022.

There are currently ongoing civil claims against the Met relating to this case.

Legal Accountability

Legal Accountability takes many forms, including Public Inquiries. A Public Inquiry took place between December 2021 and July 2022 into the death of Mr Jermaine Baker in 2015.

Mr Jermaine Baker was fatally shot by a Met firearms officer in December 2015 as part of an operation to stop a planned attack on a prison van to help a gang leader to escape from custody.

Mr Baker was unarmed and sitting in the front passenger seat of a car with two other occupants. After the shooting, an imitation firearm was recovered from a rear footwell.

In December 2021, a Public Inquiry was announced by the Home Secretary. Published in July 2022, it found that Mr Baker's death was not an unlawful killing and that race did not play any part in his death.¹²⁹

The Inquiry did, however, find 15 failings in the planning of the operation, and nine failings in its execution. They issued 25 recommendations to the Met and said the Inquiry should 'serve as a loud wake-up call to a newly-appointed Commissioner', noting that the Met 'cannot expect any increase in that level of public confidence, without a willingness to accept and act upon justified criticism.'

At the time of the Inquiry's publication findings, Acting Commissioner Sir Steve House was quoted in an article on the Met's intranet as saying "*I welcome the inquiry's conclusion that that the circumstances in which Jermaine Baker was shot do not amount to an unlawful killing*" and acknowledged that the scrutiny of the

¹²⁹ [The Jermaine Baker Public Inquiry, July 2022, Report into the Death of Jermaine Baker](#)

shooting *“will have deeply impacted the firearms officer who fired the shot, the firearms commanders and all the officers involved in the operation.”*

While this is not the full article and other senior officers said more, Acting Commissioner House did not mention the Inquiry’s remarks about the shortcomings in the operation, the recommendations, or respond to the call for it to be a wake-up call for the Met.

In October 2022, the Met updated the Inquiry on the action being taken and progress being made in response to the Chairman’s recommendations.¹³⁰

However, in a now familiar pattern, the focus was only on the actual recommendation not the context. There is no comment or reference at all, either in this update document, or in the Met’s internal documentation, to responding to the ‘wake-up call’, or to any wider changes made on the back of the Inquiry beyond addressing the individual recommendations.

Reports and reviews

The Daniel Morgan Independent Panel was established in 2013 to look at the circumstances of Mr Daniel Morgan’s murder in 1987 and the handling of the case.

The Met’s response to the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel Report

The Met’s response to the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel illustrates defensiveness and a lack of candour. Speaking at the London Assembly following publication of the report which declared the force ‘institutionally corrupt’, Baroness Nuala O’Loan said *“the public statements which we have heard from the Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner and the Assistant Commissioner in the days following the publication illustrate exactly the problem that we have been describing.”*¹³¹

The Daniel Morgan Independent Panel’s report, published days prior, found that the ‘Metropolitan Police’s lack of candour manifested itself in the hurdles placed in the path of the Panel’.¹³² It listed a slew of instances showing the Met spending five years failing to help the panel with basic IT logistics which were necessary for them to gain access to information.

¹³⁰ [Metropolitan Police Service, 28 October 2022, *Public Inquiry into the death of Jermaine Baker: Update on Recommendations*](#)

¹³¹ [BBC News, 21 July 2021, *Daniel Morgan case: Met accused of 'betrayal' over unsolved 1987 murder*](#)

¹³² [Daniel Morgan Independent Panel, June 2021, *The Report of the Daniel Morgan Independent Panel*](#)

It went on to say that lack of candour about past failures ‘is not conducive to better policing, especially when those failures include corruption. There is a risk that, if a police force does not acknowledge corruption and combat it promptly and robustly, some officers may believe they can behave corruptly without consequences.’ The report also found serious deficiencies in the way in which anti-corruption investigations are resourced.

Victims, and victims’ families, are so often left with unanswered questions, and have told the review that they are met with a stone wall. We heard directly from many bereaved families who felt let down by the police and the rest of the criminal justice system. Although it is often impossible to answer all questions, the fact that people have to complain, campaign, lobby and press for mechanisms like inquiries and reviews to seek the information they need often prolongs their hurt and sense of injustice.

8.5. How the Met responds to external scrutiny

With a number of external bodies providing support, scrutiny, inspection and investigation, and with very significant resources within the Met dedicated to ‘transformation’ and responding to external scrutiny, Londoners would rightly expect positive outcomes and improvements in policing. Since the Met is a public body which operates with the consent of Londoners, they should also expect that reports, reviews and investigations will be conducted in a spirit of openness and transparency. This is not the case.

Typically, when a high-profile inspection or inquiry reports, the Met will set up an ‘Operation’ with a ‘Gold Group’ to respond. This Group carries out focused activity on a particular issue in the short term, but the model does not lend itself to embedding learning throughout the organisation and making the change needed.

Often, the intentions of a report, including the overall changes needed by taking all of the recommendations together is lost. We would expect a proactive and learning organisation to exhibit characteristics of openness and reflection, to co-opt external stakeholders to provide challenge, and to identify improvements, strategic learning, and enduring improvement plans.

A reactive organisation would be characterised by defensiveness, denial, unwillingness to accept or learn from criticisms, tick-box responses to recommendations, and a proliferation of short-life initiatives that wither on the vine as quickly as they have sprung into life.

In this Review, we observed far more reactive, short-term, defensive approaches in the Met than those which were proactive, self-critical and improvement-focused.

“They treat everyone asking questions as problematic rather than them being genuine questions.”

The Met doesn't open its doors to alternative views, or to challenge. This is both short-sighted and undermines policing by consent.

8.6. Conclusion

The Met is not always helped by a view from the outside that it is almost 'too big to fail.' Those with oversight lack the levers to force improvement, and politicians, inspectors and scrutineers sometimes fight shy of direct and damning criticisms.

Compared with the equivalent 'failure' of a school or a local authority, being put into the 'Engage' category by HMICFRS has very limited implications for the Met.

There are no ultimate sanctions in policing. Schools can be closed down or transferred to different providers, local authority children's services can be taken out of council control, and a failing council will have commissioners sent in. Whatever the flaws in these processes, they do have traction in driving improvement.

The Met itself sees scrutiny as an intrusion. This is both short-sighted and unethical. As a public body with powers over the public it needs to be transparent to Londoners for its actions to earn their trust, confidence and respect.

Statutory partners, MPs, coronial inquests and even public inquiries are entitled to seek explanation for incidents that occur, for those requests to be treated seriously and their findings to be seen as important learning for the organisation and providing transparency for those who seek answers.

A cultural shift is required for the Met to become a reflective and learning organisation which opens its doors and invites criticism, examination, challenge and assurance.

Despite some ambiguity in the tripartite structure of police accountability in London, there is an opportunity for the new Commissioner to draw a line under past dysfunction in the relationship between the Met and MOPAC, taking the opportunity to reset and better integrate. Indeed, this is a necessity.

With a need for wholesale enduring reform and improvement of the Met, the time is right for the Commissioner and his senior colleagues to shine the light of common sense through the governance and accountability fog, and put the interests of the

public first, recognising the Mayor's electoral mandate and role in holding the Met to account for Londoners. The Commissioner should not seek to do this alone or only from within the Met.

Chapter 9: Discrimination

Chapter summary

We have identified institutional homophobia, misogyny and racism, and other forms of discrimination in the Met. But the Met has only reluctantly accepted discrimination and has preferred to put this down to a minority of ‘bad apples.’ Unlike many other public sector bodies, the Met does not ask its own officers and staff about their experiences of bullying and harassment inside the Met. In a survey commissioned by the review 22% of respondents said they had experienced bullying at work. This had been experienced even more acutely by officers and staff who were women, LGBTQ+, disabled or from ethnic minorities

9.i. Introduction

Accusations of institutional homophobia, institutional misogyny and institutional racism are not new to the Met. Following a series of incidents and scandals, these accusations have only grown in volume in recent years. This Review was, in part, commissioned to look at how far discrimination is a feature of Met culture. It is, sadly, a very strong feature – and a symptom of some of the deeper leadership, management and system failings we have discussed in earlier chapters.

For the Met, tackling discrimination is both a *legal* imperative, since it is an organisation that seeks to uphold the law regarding equality, and a *functional* imperative, to promote effective policing and provide a good service to all Londoners.

Chapter 1 described London’s diverse and changing population, as well as its social challenges and extremes of wealth and poverty. If the Met is to gain consent for policing, and prevent and tackle crime effectively, it has to understand and be able to communicate with a whole range of diverse groups, and cannot discriminate against any individuals or sections of society. Any loss of trust, confidence and consent resulting from discrimination has a fundamental impact on policing by consent and, therefore, how well the Met serves London.

To deliver the police service London needs, the Met also needs to ensure it can recruit and retain the most talented officers and staff from all backgrounds. People are unlikely to join the Met if they think they will face discrimination at work. Those who do join will be far more likely to leave quickly if they face discrimination, and less likely to recommend the Met as a good career.

While discrimination is, of course, a feature of many institutions and wider society, this should not inhibit the Met from tackling the problems that exist in their own organisation.

The Met is a service that is dependent on the consent, agreement and support of all Londoners, whether they are Black or White, straight or not straight, disabled or not disabled, young or old, man or woman. For that reason alone, it must lead the way in tackling discriminatory culture, both in the way the organisation works internally, and the way it serves London.

The Met accepts it 'is not free from racism, discrimination or bias.'¹³³ Its public strategy for diversity, the Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement (STRIDE) 2021-2025 states:

Grave concern exists in relation to the behaviours and standards of a very small minority of colleagues who have not demonstrated the values of compassion, integrity, courage and professionalism to the level that befits a member of the Met.¹³⁴

This part of the Review explores the reality inside the organisation. In doing so, we have looked at the Met's policies, systems and data, at the culture that exists inside the Met, and the experiences of those who have to live with the impact of that culture.

Our survey of Met officers and staff, and of Londoners, provides insights into views on fairness and discrimination in the Met:

Six in ten (60%) Met officers and staff who responded think that the Met treats all Londoners fairly. However, only one in four (25%) think that Londoners feel the same way.

Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Londoners are confident they would be treated fairly by the Met if they reported a crime, while around half are confident they would be treated fairly if they were suspected of (51%) or arrested for (50%) a crime.

However, Londoners' trust in the Met to offer fair treatment in different circumstances varies significantly by ethnic group. White Londoners are more confident they would be treated fairly compared to Black or Asian Londoners.

The views of Met officers and staff also vary depending on their ethnicity. Only one in four (22%) of Black Met survey respondents and a third (36%) of Asian Met survey respondents agree that the Met treats Londoners fairly, compared to two thirds (65%) of White Met survey respondents.

¹³³ [The Met's Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement \(STRIDE\) 2021-2025](#)

¹³⁴ Emphasis our own

[The Met's Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement \(STRIDE\) 2021-2025](#)

Over half of respondents to the survey of Met officers and staff agree that Met employees are treated fairly regardless of sexual orientation (63%), religion (62%), race or ethnicity (57%), physical appearance (53%) and gender (53%). But a significant number disagree:

- One in three (31%) disagree that everyone is treated fairly regardless of gender. 41% of women disagree and 24% of men disagree
- A quarter (25%) disagree that everyone is treated fairly regardless of their race or ethnicity. 53% of Black, Asian and ethnic minority respondents disagree, and 18% of white respondents disagree.

A further question asked whether the treatment of London's Black, Asian and other ethnic minorities, women, LGBTQ+ communities would get better, get worse, or not change, under the new leadership of Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley.

Londoners are more optimistic than Met employees who responded to the staff survey. 38% of Londoners expected it would get better compared with 29% of Met employees.

Many policy makers, police officers and academics have examined this topic. Racism in policing, and in the Met in particular, has been analysed and reported on at length since the Macpherson report in 1999. Therefore, we have drawn on extensive research, data and analysis from others who have carried out this important work. We are grateful for this expertise. There is no shortage of evidence or research regarding racism and institutional racism in the Met. For this reason, this chapter also considers the organisation's willingness to accept it, to examine themselves and to wholly change.

Awareness of homophobia and misogyny, in wider society as well as in policing, has grown significantly in the national consciousness over recent years. This is due to the greater profile that has been given to both homophobic hate crimes and discrimination faced by the LGBTQ+ community, and male-perpetrated violence against women. But there is not yet the same amount of data or research on trends and experiences around homophobia or misogyny, either from within the Met or from outside.

We collected our own data regarding these issues wherever possible. We also wanted to focus on understanding the lived experience of people within the organisation to build a picture of how the Met treats difference. We achieved this through discussion groups, interviews, listening exercises and our own survey of almost 7,000 staff and officers.

We have found a culture of discrimination that takes many forms in the Met but is felt most acutely by those who cannot hide their differences from the White male norm, particularly people of colour and women. We have found racism, misogyny and homophobia in plain sight.

This 'resistance to difference' emerges in a culture of bullying experienced by a significant minority of the organisation, described further below. Those who do not conform to the prevailing culture face discrimination, bullying and barriers to thriving and progressing in their careers. Those who try to conform teeter on a knife edge in the organisation. If they speak out, they will be labelled as a 'trouble-maker'. They are incentivised to hide things about themselves which would bring them into conflict with the prevailing culture. But even if they walk that line effectively, the organisation may still decide that their 'face doesn't fit'.

The Review does not agree with the Met's current STRIDE strategy that discrimination in the organisation is down to a 'very small minority of individuals'.

While it may or may not be a small minority of colleagues who are committing acts of discrimination, many more are affected by those acts. The organisation as a whole, especially through its leadership, its management tiers, its policies, systems and practices, allows, or causes, discrimination and abuse to occur and recur. As a result, the integrity of the whole organisation is degraded and public trust is eroded.

The following sections outline the evidence that we have seen on homophobia, misogyny and racism – internally and externally – as well as a broader culture of bullying.

9.ii. Bullying

Bullying is one of the most obvious examples of personal prejudice, poor behaviour and lack of integrity. Individuals have to take personal responsibility for their discriminatory behaviour and conduct. Those that use 'difference' to exploit their power, and bully others are, in many cases, racist, sexist and homophobic.

In a service where integrity, respect and impartiality are founding principles, the presence of such bullying, often borne out of discrimination, is hugely concerning.

Throughout the Review, we have heard testimony about supervisors and senior officers looking the other way, ignoring their management responsibilities, and actively engaging in discrimination.

Grievances, complaints and misconduct processes designed to provide formal routes to challenge, uphold policing standards, and maintain public confidence are systematically failing to pick up the pieces, as we discuss in chapter 7.

The Review has found systemic and institutional bias in the misconduct system.

The Met's annual staff survey does not ask specifically about bullying and harassment.

As well as individual testimony, the Review conducted a survey which asked about and found a wide picture of bullying. 22% of Met respondents have had personal experiences of bullying. But it is more pronounced for those with protected characteristics:

- 25% of women respondents have experienced bullying
- 30% of respondents who are LGBTQ+ have experienced bullying
- 33% of respondents with a long-standing illness, disability or infirmity have experienced bullying
- 36% of Asian respondents and 35% of Black respondents have experienced bullying
- 16% of Asian respondents have experienced discrimination on the grounds of their faith or religion, compared to 3% overall.

We noted that bullying and harassment is asked about in the annual surveys of other organisations. The NHS has identified that 18.7% of its staff have experienced bullying and harassment at work.¹³⁵ The Civil Service staff survey has identified bullying and harassment levels of between 7-12% over the last decade.¹³⁶

We received testimony from across the Met about bullying.

¹³⁵ [NHS Employers, 30 March 2022, *Tackling bullying in the NHS*](#)

¹³⁶ Benchmark scores – [GOV.UK, 28 April 2022, *Civil Service People Survey: 2021 results*](#)

On 'pranks' and 'banter':

We heard of bags of urine being thrown at cars, male officers flicking each other's genitals, dildos being put in coffee mugs, lockers being emptied or covered in evidence tape, and an animal put in an officer's locker.

On being humiliated and frightened:

"I have seen ethnic minority officers, women & men being undermined in front of others, ridiculed, cut out of conversations, [and] spoken down to by others at training."

"He led me into a room where I thought he was going to help me. Instead, he closed the door and blocked my pathway out of the room. He then proceeded to scream and shout at me for interrupting his work. I was genuinely scared, felt trapped, and even now many years later and ranks higher, I still get that visceral feeling of terror when I think of that incident."

On being told you're wrong:

A group of individuals complained to a Chief Inspector who said:

*"Let me tell you now if you're coming in here to talk about bullying, I'm on team [name of officer] and you can f*** off."*

The person who made the complaint has been given reflective practice.

"There are a couple of Sergeants here who everyone knows they are bullies and have been complained about to high ranks. For those who have come forward and complained, it's 'if you don't like it, lump it. You're in a disciplined service, you can go.'"

On knowing you'll suffer the consequences:

"Over the last few years, I had two Sergeants who bullied me and complaining about this incident resulted in me being put on an Action Plan. Nothing happened to the Sergeants. I got no help...Instead, like always, I had to move to another section of my department or job as I felt vulnerable. I now use that as a strategy instead of reporting it. I love my job and the Met but have [historically] found, when you complain you become the suspect and the offender is treated as the victim, the supervisors close ranks and even lie, you get micro-managed and it becomes impossible to do your job without fear."

“At present on my BCU we have a Superintendent openly bullying people witnessed by an Inspector and Chief Inspectors and nobody wants to say anything for fear of being outcast as we ‘can’t get on the wrong side of the boss.’”

On initiation rituals:

We were told about the humiliation of junior staff through initiation tests. These included food eating challenges, people being urinated on in the shower, and a report of a person who was allegedly sexually assaulted in a shower.

On being targeted for your beliefs:

“There have been a number of incidents where baptised [Sikh] officers are picked on. One officer had his beard cut because an officer thought it was funny. Another officer had his turban put into a shoe box because they thought it was funny. Unless we educate our officers then this will happen.”

A Muslim officer told us:

“I found bacon left in my boots inside my locked locker. I was horrified but kept an open mind as to who this could be. I was hoping to identify who the culprit was and take appropriate action. I didn’t want to be branded a person who played the race card and out of fear of reprisals did not tell anyone at the time.”

On having a disability:

“When your face doesn’t fit, a line manager will use every possible tactic to get rid of you. So your work life becomes a constant battle to keep your job (frequently to higher standards than able-bodied staff) whilst discrimination and processes are used against you.”

“There is an attitude in the Met about people with disabilities, especially hidden ones, being lazy, and it destroys you. We do have a culture of bullying...People have questioned if you are really that ill why don’t you leave the job.”

Many disabled staff end up going through employment tribunals and win settlements. Chapter 7 notes that disability discrimination was the most frequent claim type brought against the Met between 2017-18 and 2021-22. But there is no willingness to learn from these cases or reflect on the signals about the wider toxic or bullying culture.

The Review was concerned at the level of overt and active bullying. The Met does not ask about bullying in its staff survey. There is a policy which states that the Met does not tolerate bullying in any form. But like many written policies in the Met, we found it bears little relationship to the lived experience of Met employees.

Official routes are neither trusted nor effective and complaints about bullying are closed down, moved on, and denied.

These forms of personal discrimination are far too present in an organisation that is dealing with members of the public who are made vulnerable by being a victim of crime. An organisation that wants the public to trust them.

Chapter 9.1: Homophobia

Chapter summary

While the relationship between the Met and London's LGBTQ+ community is vastly different to what it was in the last century, it has become poorer in recent years. Trust in the Met amongst LGBTQ+ Londoners has fallen at a faster rate than other Londoners over the last seven years. This has coincided with criticism of the Met's defensive handling of the serial murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor. The Met does not collect data on the sexuality of its own employees, but a Review survey of Met officers and staff, and testimony we received from serving and former officers and staff, revealed concerning levels of homophobia and bullying.

9.1.1. Introduction

The last census indicated that around 300,000 people in London identify as lesbian, gay or bisexual, or another minority sexual orientation.¹³⁷ Many more identify as being part of a wider LGBTQ+ community.¹³⁸ The Met's relationship with this community is inextricably linked with both changes to the legislative framework, and the changing attitudes of governments and society regarding lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people.

Same-sex relationships between men were partially decriminalised in England and Wales in 1967. But the offence of 'gross indecency', and the criminalisation of anal sex, which were both widely used to target and criminalise sexual activity between men for many years, were only repealed in England and Wales by the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Today, the Met sets out its commitment to engaging with the LGBTQ+ community, and to being an organisation which values and welcomes officers and staff from that community, both internally and externally.

The Met's Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement (STRIDE) 2021-2025 was published with a Management Board lead for each commitment. This included commitments to increase trust in the LGBT+ community to report hate crime, to engage and celebrate all of London's communities, and to make the organisation more inclusive.

¹³⁷ [Sexual Orientation, England and Wales: Census 2021](#) - over 16s only

¹³⁸ Throughout this chapter, we refer to the LGBTQ+ community, unless for a specific reason: for example, the Met's strategy and messaging does not consistently use Q

The Met participates in Stonewall's Workplace Equality Index. This is a voluntary list which assesses the level of LGBTQ+ inclusion from how an organisation engages with the public to employment practices.

There are internal and external groups and mechanisms to ensure a regular feedback loop with the LGBTQ+ community. The Met celebrates Pride month, and has senior officers who champion LGBTQ+ engagement.

On the surface then, the Met is a far cry from the police service many people in the LGBTQ+ community experienced in the twentieth century.

This chapter explores the experience of the Met's LGBTQ+ officers and staff, and its policing of LGBTQ+ Londoners. As policy and academic research around these issues is relatively recent and data relatively limited, we have collected our own data wherever possible, and focused on gathering lived experience of people through discussion groups and interviews.

9.1.2. LGBTQ+ officers and staff: the view from the inside

The Met does not collect the sexuality profile of its own officers or staff and we are therefore unable to identify the extent to which it reflects London's profile.

Currently the Met LGBT+ Staff Support Association membership stands at around 500 officers and staff, but we are aware this is a small proportion of the Met's LGBT+ community. Prior to the creation of the Met LGBT+ Staff Support Association, the Gay Police Association had 2,500+ officers and staff as members, which might be a more accurate reflection.¹³⁹

The general absence of data on sexuality in the Met limited the Review's understanding of how sexuality might affect recruitment, progression, attrition and progression through the ranks, and how conduct issues are tackled.

The Review carried out our own survey of Met officers and staff to try and address and understand these issues.

Our survey found that 3% of all respondents had personally experienced homophobia. 19% of the Lesbian, Gay, or Bisexual respondents surveyed directly experienced homophobia.¹⁴⁰ Of those, 14% say this happens at least once or twice a week.

¹³⁹ Estimate from the Met LGBT+ Staff Support Association

¹⁴⁰ This may refer to experiences from working with the public as well as experiences with other Met employees

We saw further evidence in the response to bullying. A significant minority of LGBTQ+ staff and officers (30%) who responded to our survey have experienced bullying when compared with people overall in the Met (22%) who responded. 35% of LGBT respondents who had experienced bullying said this happened at least once or twice a week.

Almost half (45%) of LGBTQ+ respondents thought that LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented in the Met, compared with 18% of heterosexual respondents.

One in four (24%) LGBTQ+ employees surveyed do not think everyone working at the Met is treated fairly regardless of their sexual orientation, compared to 12% of heterosexual respondents.

In our survey of Londoners, a third (35%) of respondents think LGBTQ+ people are underrepresented in the Met. 52% of LGBTQ+ Londoners think there is underrepresentation, compared with 33% of non-LGBTQ+ Londoners.

To address the issues with the Met's data collection, and to build a picture of the lived experience of LGBTQ+ people in the Met, the Review listened to a significant number of officers and staff who identify as LGBTQ+.

Some officers and staff spoke of their pride about how the Met actively celebrates diversity, including supporting events like Pride, and encourages people to be themselves at work. There was also acknowledgement that the organisation's attitude towards the LGBTQ+ community has improved considerably. The Review team was working in New Scotland Yard during Pride month and saw the efforts made to celebrate Pride within and without the organisation.

"My experiences are better in the Met than in a lot of private sector environments I've worked in."

However, we heard that recent events have had an impact both on officers and staff within the Met as well as outside, with the publication of some of the messages exchanged among a group of officers who operated out of Charing Cross Police Station. These WhatsApp messages included

*"You f***** gay!"*

*"F*** you bender"*

There were a number of recurring themes which came from personal accounts of officers and staff, which cause significant concern about the Met's ability to operate inclusively.

Open comments

As with Black and ethnic minority officers and staff, LGBTQ+ officers and staff spoke of the openness with which negative comments were posted on the intranet.

“There are comments after intranet articles, along the lines of ‘why can’t we just get on with the day job, why do we have to care about bi-sexual people?’”

Over-sexualisation

Officers spoke about a culture where their colleagues would over-sexualise members of the LGBTQ+ community under the guise of ‘banter’.

“There is a huge issue Met-wide with over-sexualisation of gay and bi women.”

We heard repeatedly that officers in the Met feel emboldened to ask personal questions about the sex lives of gay and bisexual women that they wouldn’t ask of heterosexual officers and staff.

Gay women would be asked questions such as *“who’s the man in the bedroom?”* or *“what percentage gay are you?”*. They were asked whether they are *“up for a threesome”*, and asked whether they were *“chatting up”* members of the public when speaking to them as part of their job.

One officer had a picture of her partner put up as a ‘poster girl’ in a local office by male colleagues because she was attractive.

“My response team were obsessed with my sex life. They’d ask ‘are you a giver or a taker’ – this would be out in the open...I would laugh it off. I wouldn’t want to cause any grief. You just would not ask somebody that. You would not ask a heterosexual man that question. It’s just offensive.”

‘It’s only banter’

The prevailing culture is to accept these jokes as ‘carrier culture’ or ‘banter’ which have to be accepted in order to fit in.¹⁴¹

“If you accept the comments as ‘banter’, maybe you’ll be accepted. You just had to hope they’d leave you alone.”

¹⁴¹ ‘Carrier culture’ is a colloquial policing term, referring to behaviour in the police carrier (minibus)

“When these things are happening to you in the job, it's easier to let it happen, you don't want to be seen as a complainer. You want to fit in, be liked, be accepted.”

We heard similar responses from other minority groups within the Met. They felt they had to keep their heads down and hope it will go away.

It was felt that much more needs to be done to reinforce where the line should be drawn and to provide clarity on what is obviously unacceptable.

“It's plain manners and knowing how to talk to people, it's your basics about why are you a police officer, it's missing. Treat people with respect, humanity, integrity.”

Speaking up

An officer told us they had witnessed a straight White male officer telling a whole open-plan office how disgusting gay sex is. No one challenged it.

“This kind of behaviour ultimately makes you feel like you don't belong.”

We heard about a senior officer who was homophobic bullying a junior colleague. The outcome was to move the ‘problem’ officer somewhere else, not to address the bullying and discrimination at the heart of the case. Throughout this Review, we have seen that side-stepping issues or passing them on, is very much part of the culture in the Met. A discomfort with challenge makes it easier to sweep the problem under the carpet.

In the example mentioned above, the issue was eventually escalated to a misconduct case. But the officer later reflected:

“You shouldn't always have to go to the DPS anyway...don't have a culture like that in the first place or deal with it much earlier.”

A gay officer told us about one incident. He was told by a group of officers that a supervising officer had made lewd sexualised comments on a WhatsApp group. Shortly after, the officer received a video call at work from the same supervising officer, making obscene gestures and asking about his sexual practices. The officer made a formal complaint and misconduct proceedings were started.

The misconduct panel found the case ‘not proven’ for sexual harassment, despite screen shots providing evidence of both allegations. The officer only found this out through a third party. He says that the DPS informed him he was not entitled to know the outcome. He felt that if he had not been a gay man then the outcomes would

have been very different. He was refused a meeting with the SLT to discuss the matter. Later, he was contacted and told there is nothing that he can do. He is not entitled to see a report or to appeal, other than through a judicial review. He is trapped in his role and has been told he cannot transfer as a direct result of speaking out against wrongdoing.

This officer said he has always reported wrongdoing when he has seen it, but these events have left him disillusioned and lacking faith in the misconduct system, and especially in his senior officers who have refused to engage with him.

We heard from another gay officer being told to take his own statement following abuse by a member of the public, rather than being treated as a victim and given the same support a member of the public receives.¹⁴² We heard a similar story from a woman who had been domestically abused, and an Asian officer who had suffered racial abuse.

The lack of victim care and empathy came up repeatedly.

“As a member of the public I reported homophobia to the police but it was dealt with inadequately. I am an SLT [senior leadership team] member so I know how to progress things. How do the public feel?”

‘LGBT expertise’

The LGBT+ Staff Support Association spoke of the weariness they felt at the level they are relied upon to deliver training, mediation and support for the Met in dealing externally with the LGBTQ+ community. This is voluntary work on top of their roles as police officers.

At the same time, officers were worried that raising concerns might lead to the work being taken away from them, since they felt it provided an important service.

This was also a dilemma experienced by Black and other ethnic minority staff, who were asked to help improve the organisation in relation to racial diversity.

Being open about sexuality

While many officers were open about their sexuality at work, others reflected that they had made compromises to fit in and kept their heads down. It was felt that the Met needed to support safe routes for officers and staff to be open about their

¹⁴² This is in contravention to Met policy as part of [Operation Hampshire](#), which sets out among other things that police officers should be treated as victims and ideally should not be expected to write their own statement.

sexuality, if they wanted to, without suffering bullying or discrimination, and still be able to get into senior roles.

“It shouldn’t have to be a choice. And visible/known diversity can be empowering.”

9.1.3. The Met and the LGBTQ+ community: the view from outside

The Met has clear structures in place to engage with the LGBTQ+ community, both centrally and at a local level.

The Met’s main route into the LGBTQ+ community is through its LGBT+ Independent Advisory Group (LGBT+ IAG). Following the bombing at the Admiral Duncan public house in 1999, the IAG was set up in 2000 with the aim of providing independent advice on matters affecting LGBTQ+ people and communities across London. This is to their credit. The Met is one of very few police services internationally to have an LGBT+ advisory group.

“There is real value in having IAG members that have been members for years, because they have an in-depth understanding of the community’s history and policing.”

The Met’s LGBT+ Staff Support Associations represents staff internally, but also act as informal advisers to fellow Met officers on operational matters which impact on the LGBT+ community.

LGBT Advisers

The Met also introduced LGBT Liaison Officers following the Admiral Duncan bombing. These were intended to be an internal resource to complement the work of the community volunteer-run Independent Advisory Group. The Liaison Officers worked in every borough to investigate relevant crime and to engage with the community. These had become well established.

Following the BCU reorganisation in 2018, LGBT Liaison Officers largely disappeared from the Met. According to an internal Met document this was due to ‘competing priorities and redeployment of staff’ which followed the introduction of the model.

Two years later, following a decline in victims’ satisfaction, trust and confidence scores,¹⁴³ the Met reintroduced the Liaison Officer role, rebranded as LGBT+ Advisers.

¹⁴³ LGBT respondents to MOPAC’s ‘User Satisfaction’ and ‘Public Attitude’ surveys

This time round, they are volunteers who undertake their role alongside their full-time job as an officer or police staff member. They must be a member of the Met LGBT+ Staff Support Association, commit to a minimum of two hours per month to carry out the role including engagement work, and attend training every year.

The Met says their role predominantly involves community engagement work, such as liaising with LGBTQ+ forums, local businesses and groups, and working alongside Hate Crime Co-ordinators.

The Met praises its new LGBT+ Advisers. In January 2022, Dame Cressida Dick told the MOPAC Police and Crime Committee:

“They are a brilliant bunch. If anybody wants to come and meet them, they are a fantastic group of people and they are very active. They are there to advise their colleagues and to support the BCU Commander, any senior investigating officers (SIOs) and anyone else who needs advice and support and to reach out into communities.”

However, it is clear that there is a disconnect between the Met’s description of the scheme, the experience of Advisers and the expectations of the community.

LGBT+ Advisers in the Met are volunteers and have said the expectations are not clear and that those who volunteer enthusiastically don’t know how to fulfil the role.

Meanwhile, members of London’s LGBTQ+ community feel misled about Advisers. They feel inaccessible to the community and internally focused. The significant uplift of thousands of new officers, gives the Met a chance to replace and reinvest in the areas and roles they prioritise.

“They [LGBT Liaison Officers] used to be known and valued, were visible in communities and the Met cut them...the community are still up in arms about this...What we have now is one hate crime coordinator for the whole BCU and a number of LGBT Advisers who are actually an internal resource rather than for the community.”

“It really pisses off the community when the Met talks about the work their LGBT advisers are doing. All we get is PR bullshit, the advisers don’t exist.”

This approach indicates what we have seen elsewhere in the Met – the need to be seen to be doing something when something is going wrong, rushing out a solution before thinking what the problem is, and raising expectations which are inevitably going to be let down.

The murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor

We turn now to the murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor. We consider the Met's response to the investigation, and to the subsequent charge of institutional homophobia aimed at the Met.

Case study: Response to the murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor

Between June 2014 and September 2015, in Barking, London, an individual perpetrator murdered four young men, Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor through the administration of fatal overdoses of Gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB).

The Met investigations initially treated all four deaths as non-suspicious despite them sharing clear similarities and in spite of repeated concerns being raised by people close to all four men and by members of the LGBTQ+ community.

In October 2015, the Met connected the four deaths. The perpetrator was arrested and, in November 2016, sentenced to life imprisonment with a whole life order for the four murders, and for sexually assaulting a number of other young men.

In December 2021, an inquest jury found that 'fundamental failings' – including failing to carry out basic lines of enquiry and not sending evidence for forensic testing – by the Met 'probably' contributed to the deaths of Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor.¹⁴⁴ The Met apologised, calling the findings 'devastating', and have taken a number of actions including changing how they handle unexpected death investigations, introducing new training, changing internal policies, carrying out a review of deaths from GHB poisoning and changing how they engage with the LGBTQ+ community.

Before, during and following the inquest, the families and friends of all four men and members of the LGBTQ+ community stated that they believed homophobia, discrimination and assumptions about lifestyles played a part in the failings in the initial investigations. London MPs also wrote to the former Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick to demand a public inquiry to consider whether the Met is institutionally homophobic.¹⁴⁵

Since hearing the evidence at the inquest, the IOPC have confirmed they are reinvestigating the conduct of some of the officers involved in the initial

¹⁴⁴ [East London Inquests, 10 December 2021](#)

¹⁴⁵ [Sky News, 11 December 2021, *Stephen Port murders: MPs call for inquiry into claims of 'institutional homophobia' at Met Police*](#)

investigations. As a result of this ongoing investigation, the Review is unable to publicly set out our view on whether homophobia played a role in the investigation itself.

For this reason, the Review has focused on the Met's response to the accusations of homophobia, how it has handled this, and the impact of this on the families of the four victims and the LGBTQ+ community.

The Review's conclusions below are taken from information and accounts already in the public domain, and from the testimony from some of the families of the victims who have been interviewed by the Review.

The Met's response

The Met has publicly rejected both any suggestion that officers acted in a way that would be considered homophobic, and that the Met itself is institutionally homophobic. Former Assistant Commissioner Helen Ball said:

"We don't see institutional homophobia, we don't see homophobia on the part of officers. We do see all sorts of errors in the investigations which came together in a truly dreadful way."

In any public body, but especially one which relies upon community trust and public consent, the Review would expect to see evidence of a culture where there is openness to internally interrogate and assess the role prejudice, including assumptions and misinformed stereotypes, may play internally. An absence of this raises concerns about that institution's ability to tackle homophobia where it exists.

During the 2021 East London inquests into the deaths of the four men, the Met instructed its lawyers to argue that it is outside the statutory role of a Coronerial Inquest to elicit a finding of discrimination and that there was insufficient evidence for any findings of institutional prejudice/homophobia to be made, and that the coroner should prevent the inquest jury from expressing any view on this issue.

The coroner instructed the jury that she had 'ruled as a matter of law that it was not a matter upon which they may express a view.' Her comments on this topic were limited to this one line. She did not make any further comment on prejudice or homophobia, whether there was evidence of it, or whether it played a role in the investigation.

Since the inquests, officers from the Met have used the Coroner's instruction to the jury as confirmation that there was a lack of evidence of homophobia.

On 25 January 2022, former Commissioner Dame Cressida Dick spoke about the case at the London Assembly's Police and Crime Committee where she said:

*"I accept that there were errors...However, I would refer you to the Coroner's direction to the jury that during that very extensive inquest, all manner of evidence and, I suspect, everything that could have been looked at was looked at. It was put in front of the Coroner. I am not going to remember her exact words, but she directed the jury that, because of the lack of evidence around homophobia, in essence, they could not find that as part of the reasons. I do not rely on but do to some extent defer to the Coroner."*¹⁴⁶

The former Commissioner's comments were an oversimplification of the Coroner's instruction.

Subsequent calls for a public inquiry into the four deaths, or an examination of institutional homophobia in the Met, have been batted away using the Coroner's instruction or, more recently, by suggesting that since this Review is taking place an inquiry is unnecessary.

Multiple people, including serving officers, have informed the Review that they believe this refusal to engage on the topic of homophobia is down to a fear that the public will then see all Met officers as homophobic, and that Met officers will feel unsupported by the leadership, rather than because the Met have thoroughly interrogated whether homophobia exists within its ranks.

For some of the families and loved ones of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor and members of the LGBTQ+ community, the Met's failure to properly engage on this topic prevents them from feeling like justice has been done, and from having faith that changes have been made. Donna Taylor, sister of Jack Taylor said:

"Someone needs to take responsibility for homophobia, someone needs to own it...not one person has...you can't put it right and change it if you don't know what's wrong."

¹⁴⁶ [London Assembly Police and Crime Committee, 25 January 2022, Transcript of Agenda Item 5 – Question and Answer Session with the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime and the Metropolitan Police Service](#)

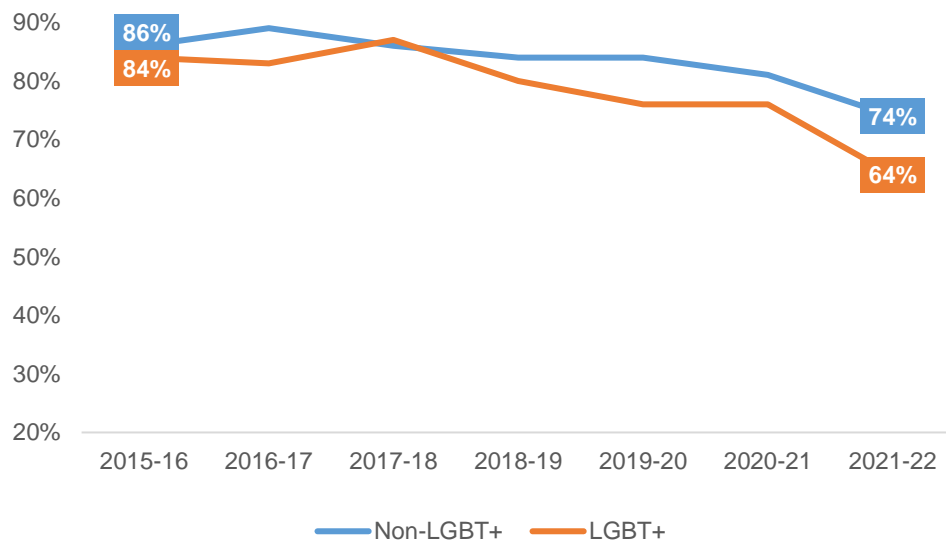
LGBTQ+ trust and confidence in the Met

In recent years then, the relationship between London's LGBTQ+ community has been significantly damaged. Trust in the Met has fallen significantly amongst the LGBTQ+ community.

The MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey showed that between 2015-16 and 2021-22, the general trust score for LGBT+ respondents fell 20%. For those who do not identify as LGBT+, the fall was 12%.

The gap is even wider between LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents when asked if the police treat everyone fairly; LGBT+ fairness scores have dropped 20% since 2014-15 from a similar start to non-LGBT+ scores to considerably lower (-13%). Local and London-wide confidence in the Met has also dropped quickly from LGBT+ respondents, but at a similar rate to non-LGBT+ scores.¹⁴⁷

Figure 9.1.1: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents who trust the Metropolitan Police Service, 2015-16 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)



¹⁴⁷ MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey

Figure 9.1.2: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents who agree that the police treat everybody fairly regardless of who they are, 2014-15 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)

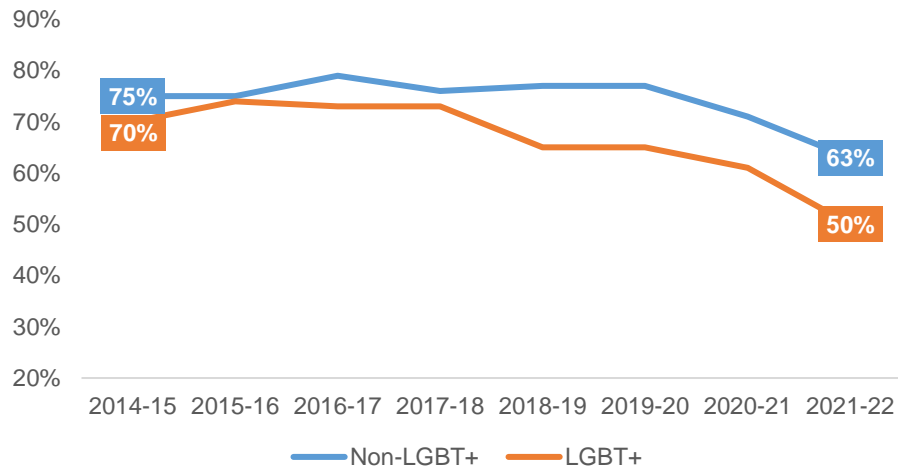


Figure 9.1.3: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents who think that the police do a good job locally, 2014-15 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)

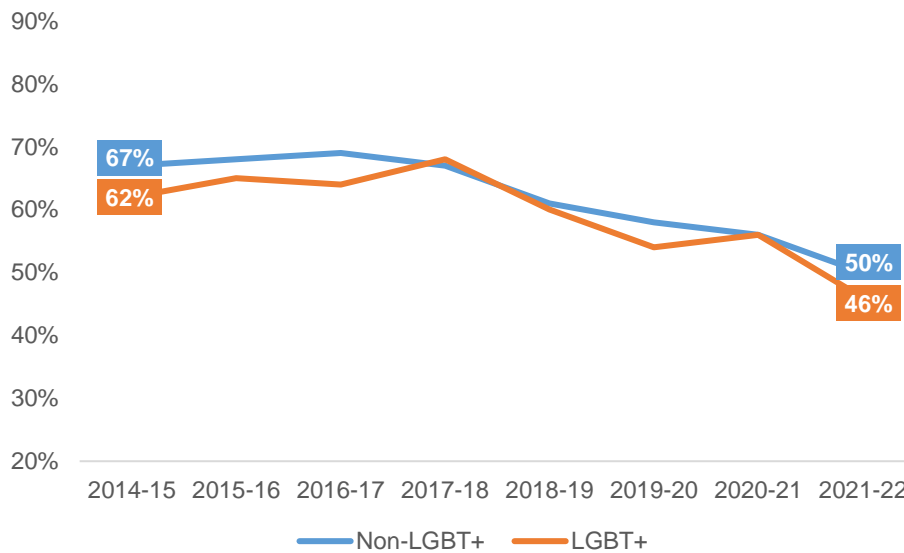
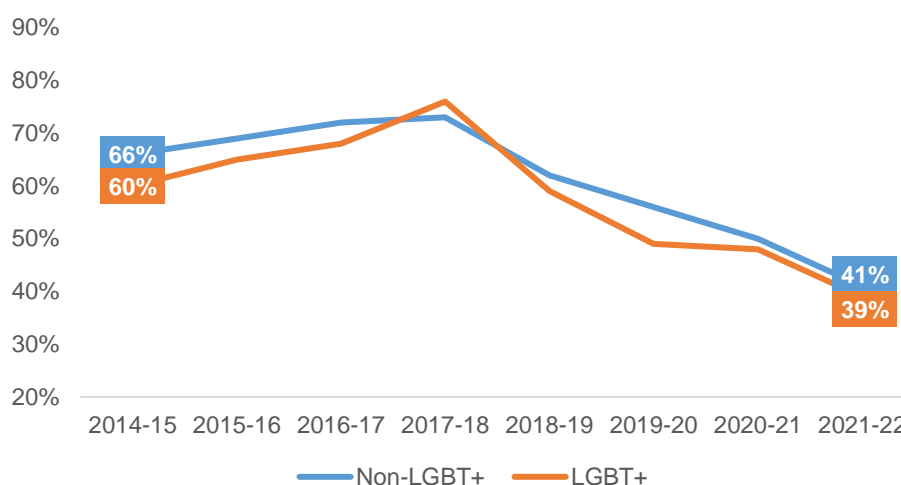


Figure 9.1.4: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of LGBT+ and non-LGBT+ respondents who think that the police do a good job for London 2014-15 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)



Our own survey of Londoners found that 51% of LGBTQ+ respondents do not have confidence in the Met to treat people fairly and equally.

A point where the majority of a group of people do not have confidence in a public body should serve as a red flag signal that something needs to drastically change.

This fall in trust coincides with reactions to the Met’s handling of the investigation into the murders of Anthony Walgate, Gabriel Kovari, Daniel Whitworth and Jack Taylor, described above.

The original investigations, the murderer’s trial, the campaigning the families felt they have had to carry out to get justice, the East London inquests, and a TV dramatisation of the investigations, have all contributed to accusations of ‘institutional homophobia’ towards the Met.

In London recorded homophobic hate crime is rising. The Met’s data indicates that recorded incidents of homophobic hate crimes against gay men and women in London have increased significantly. Over the past five years it has gone up 75%. 3,551 offences were recorded in 2022-23.¹⁴⁸

In July 2022, organisers asked uniformed officers not to march in London’s annual Pride march. This marked a low in relations between the community and the Met.

¹⁴⁸ MPS Hate Crime Dashboard

9.1.4. Conclusion

In many ways, the Met is an organisation which, up to senior levels, values and welcomes LGBTQ+ officers and staff, and has shown its willingness to engage with the LGBTQ+ community.

However, as this chapter has reflected, LGBTQ+ people within the organisation face higher levels of bullying and discrimination than straight officers and staff.

The Met's failure to collect data about sexuality has made it difficult to identify the true extent to which homophobic discrimination by individual officers is reinforced through Met culture, processes and systems.

However, the finding that almost one in five Met employees have personally experienced homophobia and 30% of LGBTQ+ employees have said they had been bullied, suggests a significant problem. This survey should be a warning sign that the problem is pervasive throughout the organisation.

The absence of data and information on sexuality is an example of institutional complacency on LGBTQ+ issues. These protected characteristics need active monitoring.

There is a major issue with over-sexualisation and prejudice relating to LGBTQ+ officers and staff in the culture of the Met. This has worrying consequences for the assumptions Met officers make about victims of crime and how they police London.

We have seen that over half of LGBTQ+ Londoners do not have confidence in the Met to treat people equally and fairly. The Met needs to make its external engagement more meaningful, listen more rather than being on 'transmit', and start to rebuild trust.

The Met's institutional defensiveness and concern to maintain its reputation, and its reluctance to listen to and accept that problems are down to anything other than a procedural mishap or the failings of one or two officers, risks significantly alienating officers, staff and the LGBTQ+ community. This defensiveness is getting in the way of rebuilding trust with the LGBTQ+ community.

The Review finds the Met to be institutionally homophobic.

Chapter 9.2. Sexism and Misogyny

Chapter summary:

Sarah Everard's murder and other horrific crimes perpetrated by serving Met officers against women in London have shone a light on shocking treatment of and attitudes towards women in the Met. Despite improvements in gender representation and increasingly flexible working practices, women are not treated equally in the workforce, with new women recruits resigning at four times the rate of all probationers; and a third of Met women we surveyed reporting personally experiencing sexism at work, with 12% reporting directly experiencing sexual harassment or assault. Despite signs of success in the volunteer-led Signa project, women in the Met are still reluctant to speak out for fear of the consequences on their working life and career.

9.2.1. Introduction

In March 2021, Sarah Everard was abducted, raped and murdered by a serving police officer who used his position and warrant card to entrap her. This was a defining moment in the history of the Met and of crime perpetrated by men against women.

As discussed in the introduction, the ensuing response by the Met to a vigil in Clapham to mark this incident, and its reaction when the murderer was found guilty, further entrenched the perception of the Met as being out of touch and lacking empathy particularly with regard to women.

This followed an egregious offence committed by two serving Met officers, who photographed and circulated pictures of the murdered sisters Bibaa Henry and Nicole Smallman. That incident came after a slow response to their disappearance by the Met, leaving their family and friends to search for, and find, the sisters' bodies themselves.

In February 2022, the publication of the investigation into the behaviour of officers in Charing Cross, and court proceedings in other cases, revealed the contents of WhatsApp groups of serving police officers. These displayed sexist and misogynist views glorifying violence and hatred against women.

In January 2023, a serving police officer was convicted of the rape and torture of 12 women over a 20-year period, after using his warrant card as a way to gain their trust.

These cases in particular have been at the forefront of our minds in writing this chapter.

Society's understanding of sexism and misogyny has shifted substantially in recent years. In response, expectations have risen that the police will deter and investigate misogynistic crimes.

Male violence against women has a greater profile, and there has been more action to tackle the problem by government, the London Mayor, and police forces nationally, as well as criminal justice partners.

Domestic abuse, stalking, rape and sexual assault are disproportionately committed against women. While these crimes remain significantly under-reported, the numbers coming forward to report are greater.¹⁴⁹

The sentencing of the murderer of Sarah Everard unleashed a great deal of activity in the Met, brought together in the Rebuilding Trust Programme.¹⁵⁰ This combined commitments around 'raising standards', 'improving our culture' and 'doing our job well: protecting women and girls' including an 'enhanced response to tackling violence against women and girls.' A statement in April 2022 on the enhanced response to tackling violence against women and girls in London said:

“We have listened carefully. The feedback was clear. Londoners want to see more about the work we're doing to build trust with women and girls across London so they can be confident that when they report violence and abuse we will take it seriously. This is really important to us too and we have set out how we will achieve this in our plan.”¹⁵¹

The priority attached to violence against women and girls is continually emphasised. For example, the Met have rolled out Walk and Talk schemes to ask women what they need to feel safe.

Internally, programmes have been launched to raise awareness of, and tackle, sexism and misogyny faced by women working in the Met. A dedicated Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences Team has been established within the Professional Standards Directorate to improve the Met's approach to related misconduct by its officers.

¹⁴⁹ As discussed in chapter 1

¹⁵⁰ Launched October 2021 but since removed from the Met's website

¹⁵¹ [Metropolitan Police Service, 4 April 2022, *Enhanced response to tackling violence against women and girls in London*](#)

The Met's history of the treatment of its women employees, and of tackling the crimes that mainly affect women has, to some extent, reflected shifting societal attitudes over a relatively short period of time.

"We've come leaps and bounds from where I started in the 1990s in terms of women and inclusion."

"The way the '100 years of women in police' was taken up and celebrated was incredible to acknowledge women's role and how far we have come."

Many officers talked to us about how bad it was in policing twenty or thirty years ago when some female officers were subjected to humiliation upon arrival at a new command in the form of 'station stamping'. This was the practice of women officers being bent over the front desk, having their skirts lifted up and having the office stamp used on their buttocks or breasts. We understand this practice, thankfully, does not happen now.

"When I started ...station stamping was going on, some colleagues were station stamped. [You were put] over the front desk and you were stamped."

Previously, male violence against women was not seen as a crime but as a 'domestic', and treated as a 'burst of temper' requiring a cooling off period. In another example of shifting attitudes, such treatment is now seen as unacceptable.

However, high profile cases over the last twenty years highlight a repeatedly inadequate response to female victims that does not take their word, questions their character, and blames them for their own abuse.¹⁵²

Recent investigations into the vetting process for the Met, and policing nationally, have shown signs of serious failure. In 2020, the Centre for Women's Justice submitted a super-complaint on the failure of the police to address police-perpetrated domestic abuse, highlighting the experiences of women who are abused by officers.¹⁵³

The Met's public approach to violence against women and girls was discussed in chapter 5 as part of our examination of Public Protection. In this chapter, we set out the evidence put to the Review on the experience of officers and staff serving in the Met and the degree to which they experience sexism and misogyny. We then go on

¹⁵² This has been documented by a series of reports including IPCC (2013) report on Southwark Sapphire Unit; Angiolini (2015) report into Met's rape investigations; Met (2017) review of sexual assault cases following two high profile collapses

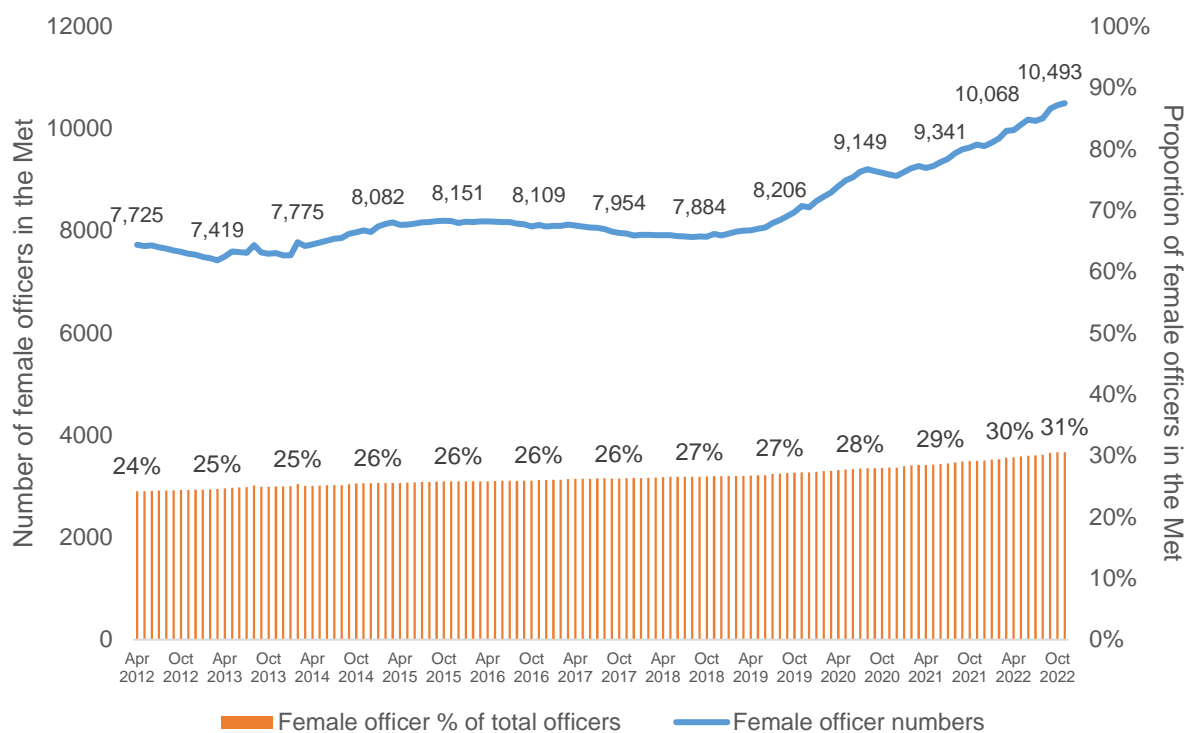
¹⁵³ [Centre for Women's Justice, 9 March 2020, Super Complaint on Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse](#)

to examine the impact of offences committed by serving Met officers against women and girls.

9.2.2. Recruitment of women in the Met

In December 2022, female officers comprised 31% of Met officers compared with 51.5% of the population. While falling short of female representation in the general population, this is nevertheless an improvement of 7 percentage points since April 2012 when female officers made up less than a quarter (24%) of all Met officers.

Figure 9.2.1: Volume and proportion of female officers in the Met, April 2012 to January 2023



The increase in female representation within the Met officers' results mainly from a steady and continuous increase over the last decade in the proportion of new female recruits. The 2021-22 intake was 39% female, up from 29% in 2013-14.

Figure 9.2.2: 9 years of officer recruitment to the Met, proportion of female officers in each recruitment year, 2013-14 to 2021-22

Recruitment year	Female officers	Male officers
2013-14	29%	71%
2014-15	28%	72%
2015-16	29%	71%
2016-17	30%	70%
2017-18	33%	67%
2018-19	31%	69%
2019-20	32%	68%
2020-21	37%	63%
2021-22	39%	61%

While the steady increase in the proportion of women in the force is to be welcomed, if recruitment of women continues to increase at the same pace, and taking into account current rates of attrition and predicted officer uplift, it will take the Met another thirty years to achieve gender balance (in 2053-54).

To reach a position of gender balance within a more reasonable ten-year time frame would require that 50% of new recruits would be women from next year, and for this to increase by 3% each year to 80% of recruits being women by 2032-33.¹⁵⁴

In our survey of Met officers and staff, and of Londoners, the underrepresentation of women in the Met is recognised more by women respondents than by men.

- A third (35%) of male Met employees and two in five Londoners (41%) think women are underrepresented in the Met
- Half of female Met employees (49%) think women are underrepresented in the Met.

As we will discuss with ethnic diversity targets, it is clear that the Met itself has not made a proper assessment of what is achievable, or what additional steps might be needed to address the deficit in its workforce's reflection of Londoners.

¹⁵⁴ Based on average attrition rates of 5.5-6% and a net increase of 4,557 officers over three years

9.2.3. Attrition

Female officers are resigning from the Met at a slightly higher rate than male officers. But the picture is more marked for new recruits. The proportion of new recruits resigning during their probationary period is increasing but remains relatively low at 10%. However, female recruits are resigning at four times the rate of probationers as a whole and 36% of all women probationers resigned in both 2020-21 and 2021-22.

The Met needs to focus on retaining women recruits and encouraging those with established careers to stay. Recruitment cannot do all the heavy lifting to achieve gender representation.

9.2.4. Progression of women within the ranks

The Met has had its first female Commissioner in Dame Cressida Dick. Its first female Deputy Commissioner joined the force in 2022, and currently two of the four Assistant Commissioner positions are held by women.

Since 2012-3, the proportion of women at Chief Superintendent level has doubled and more than tripled at Detective Chief Superintendent level. However, structurally, women remain under represented in all supervisory and management roles. Women make up a less than a third of officers in all ranks above Constable level.

Female representation is higher amongst detectives at all ranks compared with non-detectives. At Constable rank, women make up only 29% of PCs, but 45% of DCs.

Women remain least represented at Sergeant, Inspector, Chief Inspector and Superintendent levels, and there has been the least improvement in gender diversity in these ranks since 2012-13.

Figure 9.2.3: Percentage of female officers in every rank below Commander in the Met, 2012-13 to 2021-22

Female officers	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Detective Chief Superintendent	9%	10%	21%	28%	20%	14%	7%	8%	19%	29%
Chief Superintendent	12%	14%	17%	22%	28%	29%	29%	26%	30%	26%
Detective Superintendent	17%	16%	13%	15%	14%	19%	23%	23%	24%	31%
Superintendent	14%	16%	22%	26%	27%	26%	26%	24%	19%	18%
Detective Chief Inspector	17%	18%	19%	18%	22%	24%	24%	25%	26%	27%
Chief Inspector	16%	18%	18%	19%	22%	20%	20%	21%	22%	21%
Detective Inspector	18%	20%	21%	23%	23%	25%	26%	27%	29%	28%
Inspector	14%	15%	16%	17%	18%	18%	20%	20%	19%	19%
Detective Sergeant	20%	21%	21%	23%	24%	24%	26%	26%	26%	28%
Police Sergeant	16%	17%	17%	17%	18%	18%	18%	19%	19%	20%
Detective Constable	34%	35%	36%	37%	37%	38%	39%	40%	42%	45%
Police Constable	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	27%	28%	29%

Proportions of Black, Asian and ethnic minority women are also highest in the lower and detective ranks. But they make up a very small proportion of the workforce overall: 7% of Detective Constables, 4% of Constables and only 2 to 3% at Inspector and Chief Inspector ranks.

There was some praise for increased career development opportunities:

“I feel the opportunities for career development have improved along with supportive tools being given to aid and support within promotional processes.”

Similarly, the introduction of part-time working helps mothers better balance their caring responsibilities, which continue to fall on women significantly more than men. Schemes to support mothers returning from maternity leave and keeping in touch arrangements have improved the experience of returning to work.

However, female officers and staff told us of barriers they face when seeking to continue their careers in the Met.

“The Management Board say they support it [flexible working]; that’s great – then you check in with your department who say you are not allowed to do flexible working. The disconnect falls from the management board to the person you deal with.”

“Women are still being turned down for flexible working and other job share/Project balance opportunities. This is...a lottery on who is viewing your request. This prevents women returning to work after maternity or other leave and is a barrier to women applying for new roles and career progression.”

One female officer was advised not to apply for promotion by her female inspector, who said:

“I was too nice. I wasn’t suitable for the high potential development scheme and it wouldn’t make me happy. It wasn’t compatible with home life and having a family.”

Women referred to the stigma attached to working flexible hours:

“Women are made to feel guilty for working compressed hours...it makes you ashamed and called out.”

“There is this ‘we are carrying you’ mentality...[people] don’t use that language but there is this undercurrent and it is hard to challenge when someone saying it to you is senior.”

Women, especially women of colour, need to work harder than their male counterparts at senior level:

“As the only ethnic minority female within Senior Leadership in my OCU I find that I still have to work harder to prove myself when my peers are white males.”

“Women have to be twice as likeable.”

We heard again and again from women and some men that the organisation remains a male bastion:

“It feels like a closed club. You need to be very connected to have opportunities to progress.”

“All the blokes would get the overtime, they would get a call with 2 hours’ notice and get all of the double time. I never got the call and neither did the other girl I worked with...bit of a boys’ club.”

This applies to specialist commands in particular. Women represent a third (33.3%) of officers on BCUs but only around a quarter (23.3%) in specialist commands.

“At Superintendent rank and above, you were nearly always the only woman.”

We heard of women being sent off specialist units on promotion to ‘gain experience’. This denied them opportunities to progress in the policing area they wanted, while men got promoted within the team. In firearms command we were told:

“Three female officers were sent off the Command to ‘get operational experience’ elsewhere rather than being promoted internally. All three were told ‘you need to leave to get experience out of the Command and get credibility.’ Meanwhile, four male officers were all promoted in house. Why aren’t they going out for operational experience? [Because]... it’s an old boys’ club.”

Jobs went unadvertised until the ‘right’ person came up for their rotation. This was described as ‘jobs for the boys’. To obtain a coveted firearms role:

“If the instructors don’t like you, there’s no way you’re passing this course.”

In other specialist units we heard of similar barriers:

“I was particularly interested in counterterrorism work. My inspector said ‘I wouldn’t recommend you, you haven’t shown aptitude for it.’ I said ‘okay’ and took it. He didn’t know me. Straight away he said no.”

9.2.5. Life for women in the Met

We have seen that structurally, women remain underrepresented in the Met, particularly ethnic minority women, with deficits in supervisory ranks and the majority at lower ranks. The ‘boys’ club’ culture, particularly in the specialist commands, creates a vicious cycle. The more male-dominated the command, the less women seem to be able to break through.

However, it was the day-to-day experience of sexism, bias, bullying and misogyny against women employees that the Review Team found concerning.

Our survey of officers and staff in the Met found that:¹⁵⁵

- a third (33%) of women in the Met who responded to the survey report personally experiencing sexism at work
- 12% report directly experiencing sexual harassment or assault.

Two in five (41%) women in the Met who responded to the survey think the Met treats everyone who works there fairly regardless of gender, compared with 60% of male respondents.

The everyday experience for many women ranged from patronising comments and downplaying of women’s achievements, to overt inappropriate sexual comments, unwanted attention, harassment and violence.

“I’ve experienced being shut down in conversations by male counterparts, yet watching them hearing other male viewpoints. Tones towards me are lowered and patronising when I suggest ideas.”

These behaviours are routinely accepted and seen as ‘just the way things are’ and women are expected to put up with it.

“[It’s] something we have always had to put up with so you just get on with it.”

“It happens on a daily basis [so] that it is almost considered a normal occurrence for women to deal with unwanted sexual attention or advances.”

Women officers are told that their achievements are only a result of their being attractive or ‘having slept with the right man’.

¹⁵⁵ Due to the survey wording the below may refer to experiences from working with the public as well as experiences with other Met employees

"I have also heard jokes made by both male and female officers about how a female has got to where she is and who she slept with to be there."

*"We were all required to introduce ourselves and to state what team [we] were on as an ice breaker. I stated that I was on a particular team and one of the male members of the group asked me, "Who did you have to f*** or suck to get that job?" The entire group burst out laughing and no one challenged the group or defended me which made me feel degraded and undervalued as the insinuation was I was solely there as a sex object."¹⁵⁶*

Sexism was in plain sight on visits. We observed women being spoken over, put down and their views dismissed as inaccurate.

Women are subjected to unwanted sexual attention from the outset of their careers:

"I have witnessed substantive officers preying on the vulnerability of new recruits, thinking they are being funny by making comments such as 'A new recruit needs to have slept with a substantive officer before they complete their probationary period.'"¹⁵⁷

"The thing about every single department you go to, there is someone. Everyone knows who it is, what's been going on and they're still there and being promoted and well revered."

Many senior officers in the Met attributed misogynistic and sexist attitudes to the new recruits, those early in their career, but what we saw and heard contradicted this:

"The MPS is a male orientated and misogynistic environment filled with testosterone, notches on bed posts and conquests. From the outset of my service I have witnessed senior officers and supervisors prey on females like predators. There is a culture of hit lists, targets and trying to sleep with female officers and staff. Women are viewed as inferior and not truly belonging, being judged on looks and physical assets only. Only women who are either attractive or willing to have sex with colleagues are accepted. When a woman joins the police or is new to borough or team, they are immediately targeted by men competing to sleep with them. Attractive women are parachuted into posts or positions often simply because someone has taken a liking to them wants to gain an advantage over them. The way women dress is spoken about and [it] is deeply uncomfortable."

¹⁵⁶ SIGNA data

¹⁵⁷ SIGNA data

*"I haven't experienced direct sexual harassment but misogyny is widespread in my opinion. It's expressed through speech, conversation, tales, stories, rumours. Females are objectified and graded as pretty or 'do-able'. Unfortunately, this isn't curtailed to lower ranks, I've actually sat in a room when a senior officer has used the words 'Any new hot totty to look at?' If that happens at that rank it sends a message to newer police officers that it's okay to speak like that about their female counterparts."*¹⁵⁸

An analysis of Met Signa data – a tool for officers and staff to report and raise awareness of sexism and misogyny – reveals that of 227 cases where the rank was known, 147 of perpetrators were in a senior position or in a position of authority (such as an instructor) relative to the reporting individual.¹⁵⁹

*"To hear street duties tutors commenting on female members of the public was shocking to me. I really did wonder what kind of organisation I joined. Comments like: 'She has a great a***, look at her t***', and many more I feel ashamed to mention here, were hugely disturbing to me. I did not challenge because I did not feel safe to do so. This kind of behaviour from tutors teaches new officers that this kind of sexist behaviour in the police force is acceptable."*¹⁶⁰

One officer was a victim of unwanted touching by a colleague. Despite this being witnessed by her Sergeant, and her telling this supervisor that the colleague regularly invades her space and makes her feel uncomfortable, she was told:

"Just stay out of his way, mate."

We received accounts of repeated unwanted behaviours from males despite rejection, and disrespect for boundaries.

"One chap was obsessed with me. My friend said to me recently about him: 'he wasn't just obsessed he was your stalker.' He was a married man. I couldn't go anywhere, he was there. He asked me a number of times whether I'd go out with him and I continually said 'no'. Once it reached a crescendo [and] I told him where to go. He turned on me and for every job I set up...he made it his business to scupper my work."

¹⁵⁸ Sexual misconduct survey run in one BCU

¹⁵⁹ SIGNA data

¹⁶⁰ MetX x Network of Women, 2021, *Creating an environment where women feel safe*

When asked whether he would do anything about inappropriate comments about raping a celebrity made by an officer within earshot, one Sergeant responded: *“I don’t know what you’re talking about – I didn’t hear a thing.”*¹⁶¹

The head of one specialist unit is reported to have regularly made comments that made others feel uncomfortable, including bragging about having sex in the workplace and saying *“the rumours are true and I’ve got the DNA to prove it.”*

*“He came in on parade and had brought cupcakes. When asked where they were from, he replied “they’re from a Misper’s [missing person] Mum that wants to suck my c***.”*

*“I reported a male DC who made inappropriate comments to [a] young female detainee. I was labelled as a troublemaker by my colleagues for potentially ruining this officer’s career. [They questioned] ‘why would I do that, she was just a criminal[...].’”*¹⁶²

The IOPC report of their investigation into misconduct at Charing Cross Police Station found:

evidence of a culture of ‘toxic masculinity’, sexual harassment and misogyny. During the investigation, the IOPC found evidence of teams dominated by ‘macho’ officers using discriminatory, misogynistic and offensive language. When challenged by colleagues, those who reported the behaviour were “ostracised, harassed and humiliated.”¹⁶³

The investigation found ‘numerous messages about domestic violence as well as sexually explicit, misogynistic and demeaning conversations’, including messages about raping colleagues, each other’s partners and visiting sex workers.

Officer 1: “You ever slapped your missus?”

*Officer 1: “It makes them love you more. Seriously since I did that she won’t leave me alone. Now I know why these daft c***s are getting murdered by their s***** boyfriends. Knock a bird about and she will love you. Human nature. They are biologically programmed to like that shit.”*

Officer 2: “Lmao.”

¹⁶¹ London Victims’ Commissioner paper

¹⁶² MetX x Network of Women, 2021, *Creating an environment where women feel safe*

¹⁶³ [IOPC, January 2022, Operation Hotton Learning Report](#)

Officer 1: "I'm right though."

Other comments included:

"I would happily rape you."

*"If I was single I would actually hate f*** you."*

"If I was single I would happily chloroform you."

"Getting a woman in to bed is like spreading butter. It can be done with a bit of effort using a credit card, but it's quicker and easier just to use a knife."

"That's alright, DV victims love it. That's why they are repeat victims more often than not."

Many of these comments were downplayed by the officers under investigations as being 'only banter'.

"They all said they thought he was joking and didn't think he would carry out anything."

"They would say we're a close-knit team and this is how we joke about things."

The report stated that those on the WhatsApp groups said they had 'witnessed no discriminatory behaviour'. It noted this may indicate that 'the officers spoken to did not consider the comments to be offensive, and that they were so commonplace they were not particularly memorable.'

The IOPC report unsurprisingly generated shock around the organisation but we heard attempts to downplay its findings. We were told it was a one-off, 'a closed unit', which had now been shut down. We were also told that it took place four years ago, as if it couldn't possibly happen today, without explaining why that should be the case. Some senior Met officers clearly did not grasp the seriousness of the issues it uncovered:

"I had [a] discussion with two Commanders who said: 'we'll ride it out, it's all the media and then it'll be resolved.' I said 'have you read the Hotton report?' I am questioning myself being in the Met. Some people think it'll just take six months to ride it out."

The Met's public response to Operation Hotton was to distance the organisational culture from what was reported in the IOPC's report. In response to a report in the media, a Met spokesperson said:

*"We do not believe there is a culture of misogyny in the Met...[In] an organisation of more than 44,000 people there will be a small number with attitudes and beliefs that are not welcome in the Met; we will challenge, educate and discipline as appropriate."*¹⁶⁴

In November 2021, one BCU undertook what they termed a 'male perspective' survey which asked, among other things, about whether the Met has a problem with misogyny and sexism.

Many men who responded were appalled at the sexism and misogyny that recent events had revealed. But others were unhappy about the impact that restrictions on making sexist and misogynistic comments might have on them. Their views were that such comments are just 'banter', and 'dark humour', necessary for protecting mental health in a stressful job, and shouldn't be regulated. Reflecting the corporate viewpoint, they suggested that behaviours which cross the line are those of 'a few bad apples'.

Views that the Met is 'no worse than other organisations', or even other countries, and that sexist and misogynistic behaviours are a reflection of general society missed the point that *more is expected from police officers*.

"I think the police is a reflection of a changing society, in a stressful environment people do stupid things, when a line is crossed they are and should be dealt with, that being said people are now scared of traditional 'banter' or similar things that a stressful environment needs, and a team needs to function well."

"Change the record with sexism/misogyny. If you want to see real sexism/misogyny, go and live in the Middle East. We are in the most advanced country in the world in terms of freedom of expression and women's rights. I feel that diversity only works one way and at every opportunity, people are using one off incidents to put down white heterosexual males."

Some respondents talk about putting the onus back onto female colleagues to report, even when acknowledging that there may be reasons they don't:

¹⁶⁴ [The Guardian, 1 February 2022, Met officers joked about raping women, police watchdog reveals | Metropolitan police](#)

“Perhaps better inputs in training school giving female officers in particular a reality check that they may be on the receiving end of inappropriate behaviour and they MUST report it: or it’ll never change!”

“[...] We need to have an honest conversation with our female colleagues. We are all police officers and are expected to challenge illegal and criminal behaviour. Part of being a police officer is doing the right thing even if it is the hardest thing to do. Every female officer who has made the decision not to report sexism/harassment has left that bad-apple cop in post to do it again. Whilst I am sympathetic to the fact that some female colleagues don’t want the trouble that comes with reporting, I am increasingly frustrated at hearing these horrific stories and the end result always being ‘oh and this happened 18 months ago and I didn’t speak up or do anything about it.’ We are all duty bound, regardless of our sex, to report wrongdoing.”

9.2.6. Speaking out against sexism and misogyny

As we reflect elsewhere in the report, there is a culture of not speaking out in the Met. Leaders merely exhorting people to ‘speak up’ will not change this culture while people’s experience of doing so remains so negative.

There is a legitimate fear among women that if they challenge or report sexist or misogynistic behaviour there will be serious implications for their working lives and careers.

This fear is borne out in many accounts. Women’s attempts to report inappropriate, or even criminal, behaviour were seen as ‘rocking the boat’ and that the women themselves were being a ‘troublemaker’ as opposed to being dealt with as examples of systemic misogyny.

Women and men who did speak out found themselves being informally punished for it, with micromanagement, being given undesirable tasks, being excluded or bullied in the workplace or moved to another team without asking. Complaining meant:

“you’re likely to be ostracised, restricted, likely to go sick, moved to another borough.”

An officer who ‘put her head above the parapet’ to challenge her treatment found that one of her supervisors began to treat her differently:

“[He] started doing really petty things like turning down overtime I’d applied for, changing the hours I’d worked, putting us down as off duty when we were actually working.”

“From someone that comes from a trauma-informed background, I know how hard it is to come forward. I know how hard it is for people to come forward for a sexual offence...[I watched] officers report things internally and being bullied out of it by other supervisors.”

Additionally, based on their lived experience, women rightly worry that their reports will not be taken seriously.

“When the Sergeant who takes the report is smirking and trying not to laugh it really makes you feel like nothing will be done.”¹⁶⁵

9.2.7. Initiatives to challenge sexism and misogyny

From the accounts we heard, and reports and board presentations we reviewed, there was a clear sense that the presence of everyday sexism and misogyny within the Met is well known.

Some of this is being challenged internally.

SIGNA, the project set up to record and raise awareness of everyday sexism in the Met, developed from conversations in the wake of Sarah Everard’s murder when women in the organisation began sharing their own lived experiences of sexism and misogyny.

The volunteer team who run the SIGNA project provided analysis of 315 entries showing:

- 35% were classified as ‘unwanted sexual behaviour’ or ‘criminal offence’ relating to sexual behaviour
- 24% involved insulting or exclusionary language
- 10% involved comments on appearance
- 10% involved comments on an assumed level of ability.

Of the entries where rank or position of authority was specified (227), 65% involved a person who was a senior rank, or in a position of authority (such as an instructor), to the victim.

¹⁶⁵ SIGNA data

The project is starting to reveal and record a picture of a more widespread problem. The work of the SIGNA team is challenging cultural complacency and denial and represents an important step forward.

The project is entirely run by volunteers in their own time, and is reliant on supportive management and colleagues. Their work is to be commended.

The voluntary nature of the programme is seen as a positive, with increased engagement from staff because it is not part of 'the system', and the genuine motivation and momentum that the volunteers bring.

However, it is indicative to us that, rather than the Met making a corporate commitment to investigating and uncovering sexism and misogyny, volunteers have taken matters into their own hands.

Several officers spoke favourably about the 'HeForShe' programme, an international movement, adopted by all police forces in the country, which encourages allyship to promote gender equality and to stop women bearing the sole responsibility for challenging discrimination. While such programmes are important, it will take time to start to shift the responsibility for change, which is still left predominantly to women.

"It became tiring being looked to as the female lead for all of that work. I campaigned a lot for allyship. It's difficult being the sole voice when you're the minority who's looked to, to provide that perspective."

9.2.8. Police perpetrated sexual misconduct and domestic abuse

We have examined how the Met responds to police officers who commit domestic abuse and sexual offences. The Met has a duty of care to its employees so needs to take allegations of discrimination and violence towards its employees extremely seriously. It also needs to maintain and uphold the standards and reputation of policing by tackling serious breaches of conduct.

Our Interim Report into the Met's misconduct system found that, despite being more serious, allegations about sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual and emotional misconduct are less likely to result in a case to answer decision (29%) in comparison with all misconduct allegations (33%).¹⁶⁶ This only reinforces a cycle in which people do not report. The Met must ensure that when people report these kinds of misconduct, it is taken seriously.

Our Interim Report also identified that patterns of behaviour over time are not considered when undertaking misconduct investigations. Predatory behaviour of the

¹⁶⁶ [Baroness Casey Interim Report on Misconduct](#)

type that frequently characterises sexual misconduct, stalking, harassment or domestic abuse, often escalating over years, is not identified. The Met does not look at patterns of conduct, but rather at each individual issue in isolation. This misses a core understanding of the nature of misogynistic behaviour, and therefore undermines the protection of women against police perpetrators of abuse and violence.

[Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse](#)

Perpetrators of domestic violence who are also police officers have an additional level of power, with the potential to influence the treatment of the victim and outcomes if victims report, and can wield the threat of this influence.

The Centre for Women's Justice explains:

*The partners of such men feel doubly powerless. They experience the powerlessness that most domestic abuse victims experience, but in addition their abuser is part of the system intended to protect them.*¹⁶⁷

Their super-complaint (which considers forces nationally, not just the Met) found evidence of police suspects trying to stop the victim from reporting to the police, drawing on their status as police officers to undermine the victim.

During the Review, we also heard of cases in the Met where friends and superiors had closed ranks around the police suspect to protect them.

It is also clear that, where crimes of abuse or sexual assault committed by a police officer are reported by a victim in another police force area, information is not automatically exchanged between the two forces. We also know that it is not a requirement for a suspect to reveal that they are a police officer when arrested.¹⁶⁸ These are further ways in which a police perpetrator can continue their abuse.

We took a closer look at how cases of police perpetrated domestic abuse were treated by the Met's misconduct system. We found the data to be inadequate. Missing and inconsistent data limited our ability to undertake our analysis, and will similarly affect any analysis the Met undertakes in this particular area.

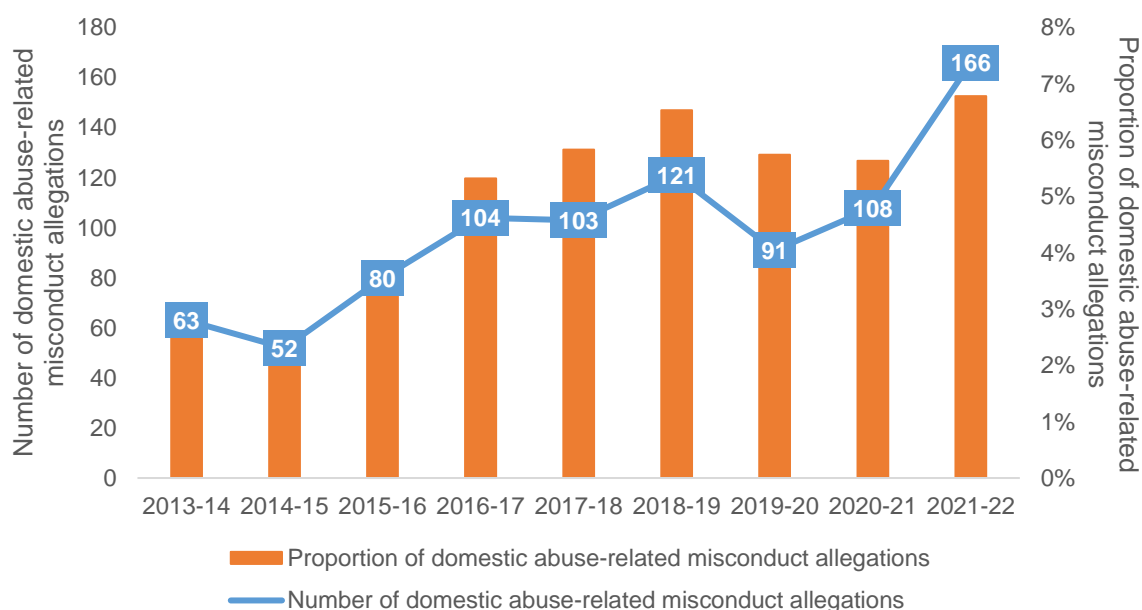
¹⁶⁷ [Centre for Women's Justice, 9 March 2020, *Super Complaint on Police Perpetrated Domestic Abuse*](#)

¹⁶⁸ [Chief Constable Lucy D'Orsi, January 2023, *Chief Constable Blog: Professionalism in Policing: Minding the Gaps*](#)

Despite these challenges, our analysis of such cases paralleled previous findings on sexual misconduct.

The proportion of domestic abuse allegations has risen from around 3% of misconduct cases in 2013-14 to around 7% in 2021-22.¹⁶⁹ This is likely to indicate a greater willingness to report on the part of those experiencing abuse over time.

Figure 9.2.4: Volume and percentage of misconduct allegations related to domestic abuse, 2013-14 to 2021-22



The average proportion of finalised allegations between 2013-14 and 2021-22 resulting in a case to answer decision is substantially lower (14%) than the rate for all case types (around 33%).¹⁷⁰

This means that, historically, domestic abuse cases are around half as likely to receive a case to answer decision, when compared to all case types.

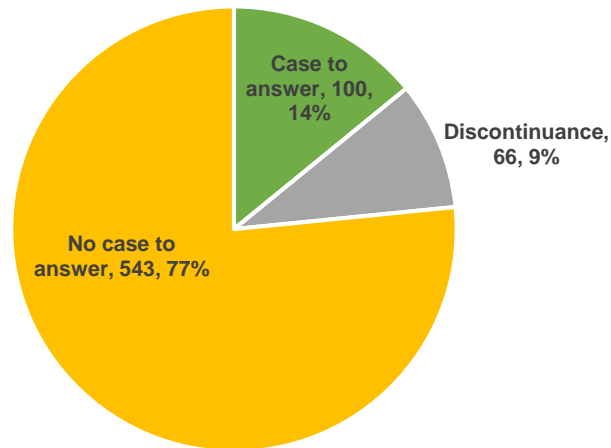
There is a higher rate of discontinuance for domestic abuse allegations, which often results from victim withdrawal. This mirrors issues in criminal investigations. But this does not entirely account for the lower case to answer rate. The outcome is that, for the majority of allegations where domestic abuse is a factor, an overwhelming

¹⁶⁹ Domestic abuse allegations are recorded only as conduct issues, not as public complaints

¹⁷⁰ [Baroness Casey Interim Report on Misconduct](#)

majority resulted in no formal action being taken.¹⁷¹

Figure 9.2.5: Decision made for all finalised misconduct allegations related to domestic abuse, 2013-14 to 2021-22



It was a surprise and major concern to the Review that, in domestic abuse misconduct cases, interviews with all victims and suspects were not always undertaken. Similarly, while we were told it was common practice for DPS and Intelligence Bureau teams to receive information from another force if an officer was arrested outside the Met area, information about perpetrators is not always shared between police forces as a matter of routine. We return to this point later in the chapter.

Abuse of Position for a Sexual Purpose

As we have noted, the fact that police officers are given powers over their fellow citizens makes it likely that policing will attract people who want to abuse that power. Social workers, school teachers and other professions recognise their roles will attract people who want to abuse children and other vulnerable people, and have developed systems and structures to screen them out or minimise the circumstances and situations in which abuse can occur.

The officer who murdered Sarah Everard, and the serial rapist convicted of raping twelve women, are extreme examples of how fellow officers, staff and members of the public are exposed to this risk from corrupt police officers.

¹⁷¹ This refers to finalised cases only, N=610. No formal action was determined by summing all allegations with the following recorded outcomes – no action, informal action, referral to reflective practice, and management action – no misconduct

“The perpetrators are allowed to thrive and flourish. It’s a breeding ground, because of the power and control that comes with being a police officer.”

“Down through the years I have witnessed all sorts of behaviour by these officers: including surfing crime reports looking for female victims who live alone, contacting them when off-duty and offering 'support', contacting them via social media, talking about intimate details of the crime reports to officers not involved in the investigation, etc.”

The IOPC reports that the abuse of position for a sexual purpose is the most common form of corruption it deals with. In 2020, this accounted for 25% of referrals and almost 60% of corruption investigations nationally. They also observe that the scale of abuse of position for a sexual purpose, and sexual misconduct, is likely to be vastly underrepresented.¹⁷²

In 2017, the NPCC produced a national strategy on abuse of position for a sexual purpose. The Independent Police Complaints Commission (the precursor to the IOPC) had published a report on the scale of the problem in 2012.¹⁷³ There were related HMIC reports in 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2019.

However, there seemed to be limited consideration within the Met about how the organisation should be protecting itself, its employees and the public from this serious corruption.

Rather, officers seem to be given the benefit of the doubt, deemed to have made an ‘honest’ mistake, or given a second chance. We return to this in the Operation Rainier case study below.

We asked the Met for figures on allegations of abuse of position for a sexual purpose, and reviewed these against our own analysis of their misconduct and complaints data. We anticipated some under-reporting, since the descriptor ‘Abuse of Position for a Sexual Purpose’ (AoPSP) was only introduced in 2020, following a change of regulations.

The Met provided us with information regarding cases of abuse of position for a sexual purpose since 2020. Our own analysis of allegations over the same period found around six times as many allegations as the Met provided.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² [IOPC, May 2022, Learning the Lessons Issue 40](#)

¹⁷³ [IPCC, September 2012, The abuse of police powers to perpetrate sexual violence](#)

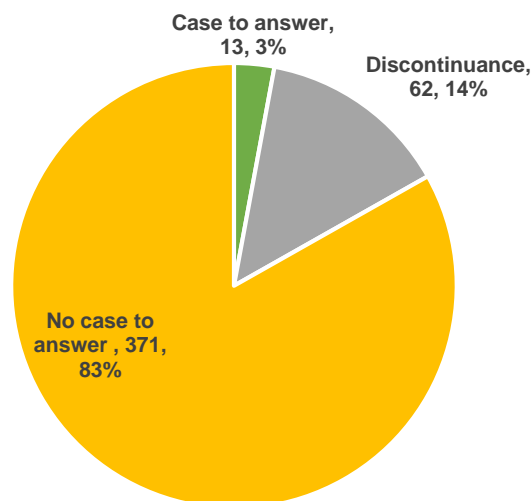
¹⁷⁴ The MPS highlighted concerns around data quality in the public complaints and misconduct data which might impact the accuracy of our search for allegations (for example, relating to whether the incident occurred on or off duty); the figures provided here are based on the data provided to us

Examples of allegations not classified as abuse of position for a sexual purpose included: a sexual assault that took place within a holding cell in a custody suite; another in a hospital while the officer was on duty; and another in a complainant's home, also while the officer was on duty.

The Met said they were unable to provide any figures on abuse of position for a sexual purpose prior to 2020. However, in reviewing public complaint data from earlier years, we identified an average of 60 allegations per year between 2013 and 2020 in which officers were accused of sexual assault or other sexual misconduct whilst on duty.¹⁷⁵

Across the relevant cases identified by the Review team, the data on public complaints relating to abuse of position for a sexual purpose shows that only 3% of finalised allegations resulted in a case to answer for misconduct or gross misconduct compared to 5% of all public complaint allegations. We have noted an underlying assumption that public complaints tend to be false or malicious in intent. This strikes us as a further indication of complacency in relation to this important issue.

Figure 9.2.6: Decision made for all finalised public complaint allegations related to abuse of position for a sexual purpose, 2013-14 to 2021-22



Abuse of position for a sexual purpose is also being perpetrated against other Met employees. SIGNA data shows that half (52%) of the unwanted sexual behaviour or criminal behaviour reported was committed by a person in a senior rank or other position of authority and trust.

¹⁷⁵ 534 in total across 2013-2022

We heard of officers who ‘targeted’ young, new female officers:

“On joining a unit, an older and more established member of the team took a shine to me and decided to be a stand in mentor for me. He engineered situations where we would work as a pair without any supervision...Within a few weeks, he was texting me every day and at any time...He told everyone that we were best friends and that I couldn’t leave the unit because he refused to work without me. He...would send over-complimentary messages which began to make me feel uncomfortable.”¹⁷⁶

And of instructors who abused their position among students:

“[A course instructor] struck up a friendship with this girl. He started sending her messages, flirting. There’s a professional line and he crossed it. I think he ended up following her around, going to places where she was – essentially stalking and harassment. I don’t know if she felt she had to message him because she wanted to pass the course.”

Despite extensive guidance, it does not appear that this issue is viewed as a corruption issue which needs to be tackled strategically and structurally within the Met.¹⁷⁷ Poor data quality and inconsistency in recording, and most allegations resulting in no action, suggests a lack of grip.

Operation Rainier – the Met’s review of sexual misconduct cases

To explore further how the misconduct system works in relation to police perpetrators of domestic abuse and sexual misconduct, we reviewed the Met’s investigation into live and historic cases. This was conducted as a key plank of its Rebuilding Trust Programme.

Operation Rainier involved all live sexual misconduct and domestic abuse cases (313 cases) and a ‘dip sample’ of 100 similar cases over the previous 10 years.¹⁷⁸ The report, which assessed that around three-quarters of its investigations were of a good standard, included some worrying findings about how misconduct cases relating to sexual misconduct and domestic abuse cases are handled:

¹⁷⁶ SIGNA data

¹⁷⁷ Guidance exists both relating to MPS and nationwide. CoP/NPCC have published guidance, in addition to the Code of Ethics on professional boundaries and on appropriate relationships and behaviours. The NPCC also published a national strategy on this issue in 2017, and the IOPC published a ‘Learning the Lessons’ document in May 2022. There are also internal Met policies relating to behaviour at work

¹⁷⁸ Operation Rainier

Vetting:

- 42 of 452 (9%) individuals included in their investigations were linked in some way to allegations of sexual misconduct or domestic abuse at the point of initial vetting to join the Met
- Further, the findings note that in the vast majority of cases, this link was through intelligence, or having been arrested with no further action taken, and that under current vetting which adheres to College of Policing approved practice, this would not prohibit an individual from joining the Met
- In 34 cases where there was a link to an allegation, the vetting team in the Met had not shared this information so it was not on the misconduct intelligence system
- There were at least two cases which were in line with approved practice, but in which applicants had been let in despite previous convictions or acquittals for rape having been identified. These individuals later came to the attention of DPS due to sexual misconduct.

Lack of action taken:

- Operation Ranier dip sampled 100 cases over a ten-year period. 85% of these resulted in no further action being taken. While this excluded cases where there had been a dismissal, it was striking that no action at all was taken in such a high proportion of cases. This mirrors our findings of cases related to domestic abuse and sexual misconduct.

Investigations are not sufficiently rigorous:

- 349 criminal cases and misconduct cases were reviewed. In criminal cases, around a quarter were either identified as needing improvement (21%) or as inadequate (6%). In misconduct cases, the proportion rose to a third, with 27% cases identified as requiring improvement, and 7% as inadequate
- In nearly half of all cases (115 out of 249) DPS investigators did not check all the available evidence with DPS's Intelligence Bureau
- Investigative templates used in other parts of the Met to help investigate sexual misconduct and domestic abuse were not being used in DPS. DPS' own templates appear to be discretionary for investigators

- In 38 cases reviewed, the suspect had not been interviewed. This is a basic requirement in investigation of domestic abuse cases, suggesting different treatment where a police officer is a suspected perpetrator
- In 31% of misconduct cases, the victim was not contacted by DPS because they had previously withdrawn or not supported the criminal investigation. Again, this ignored basic practice in these types of cases.

Patterns of behaviour are not looked for:

- If people had been investigated on two or more separate occasions for related behaviours, this was very rarely considered when weighing up evidence or seriousness. This indicated a blinkered approach to investigating these cases. This had occurred in 24 cases
- IPCC (now IOPC) guidance published in 2015 for professional standards departments highlights the importance of investigating repeat behaviour, stating that the ‘officer’s complaint history should be considered in all cases’.¹⁷⁹ The review found the guidance had been applied in only 2% of cases
- 51% of assessments by the integrity assurance unit, which identifies any requirement for the imposition of risk management measures for officers who have had a case investigated and finalised, required improvement, although the proportion of good assessments had significantly increased in recent years.

These findings – weak vetting, lack of action, not looking at the detail of cases, not speaking to victims and not looking at patterns of behaviour – show a lack of understanding of the nature of domestic abuse and sexual misconduct. The Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offending (DASO) team was established for just such a reason.

This report was a top priority for the Rebuilding Trust Programme responding to police perpetrated violence in the light of very serious offences by individual police officers. However, the introduction to the Rainier report reflects an optimism bias that effectively says this is all ‘business as usual’:¹⁸⁰

Sometimes our people let us and the public down. There are many reasons why this happens and it is absolutely not a reflection of the high standards and values that the Met has and strives to maintain [...]

¹⁷⁹ [IPCC, 2015, IPCC guidelines for handling allegations of discrimination](#)

¹⁸⁰ Metropolitan Police Service, May 2022, Internal report

The DPS already has a plan to transform how we deliver our business and much is underway or already completed in the last six months. We are of course not complacent and will continue to drive improvements and learn from reviews, audits, inspections and feedback.

[...] While there may be seem to be a large number of areas where we can improve we are keen to demonstrate that this is evidence of our ongoing commitment to sharpen our working practices. Many of these recommendations are 'simple' internal changes to working practices or refreshing knowledge, skills and experience that have already been completed.

Following the conviction in January 2023 of a serving police officer for serial rapes of 12 victims, the Met is now conducting a further review (Operation Onyx) of all cases involving all allegations of domestic abuse and sexual offences, child abuse and other offences, with the option to re-open cases.

9.2.9. Conclusion

The Met is rightly proud of their previous Commissioner being a woman, and having women at the very top of the organisation, but women remain underrepresented at all ranks in the Met above Constable. A 'boys' club' culture continues to play out across the organisation. The testimony and the data make it clear that mistreatment of women is a feature of that culture, which demonstrates sexism and misogyny.

Across the organisation, there are also people who are challenging the status quo. But corporately, the Met needs to take misogyny and sexism, and the mistreatment of women that arises from those prejudices, more seriously.

The Met's data, and its own review of misconduct and criminal investigations into police perpetrated domestic and sexual violence, indicates a worrying level of complacency about the risks posed by police officers who prey on officers and members of the public.

It has not recognised that such men (and it is largely men) may be attracted to policing in the first place due to the power it gives them, or that predatory and repeat behaviour is a feature of such crime, or that the control they exert means that victims are less likely to report.

A system that sees misconduct as a series of processes and procedures, and deals with sexual misconduct in the same way as fraud or misuse of Met property, is not going to be effective in rooting out those who corrupt the integrity of the Met in this way.

The establishment of the DASO unit represents a hugely important step forward in recognising and valuing specialism, and the need for a victim centred approach rather than a simple focus on misconduct processes. Senior management need to ensure that the culture change it represents is properly embedded and sustained, not see it as business as usual.

Women are not treated equally in the Met, and its structures and processes reinforce discrimination. We also see this across its treatment of crimes that mainly affect women and girls in London, as discussed in chapter 5 on Public Protection.

The Review finds the Met to be institutionally sexist and misogynistic.

Chapter 9.3: Racism

Chapter summary

The Met has improved the ethnic diversity of its workforce and compares favourably to other urban police forces in England and Wales. But representation of Black, Asian and other ethnic minority officers falls far short of the diversity in London's communities, and is even more unrepresentative at higher ranks or amongst women. At current recruitment rates it will take at least another 30 years to come anywhere even close to reflecting London's ethnic diversity. Higher attrition rates amongst Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers further exacerbate this challenge. A more radical strategy is required to properly reflect London's diversity in the Met, including tackling corrosive and racist myths about needing to 'lower the bar' to do so, and addressing the racism experienced by officers and staff in the Met. There is a systemically biased misconduct system and 46% of Black and 33% of Asian officers and staff saying they personally experienced racism at work in response to a Review survey. For Londoners, trust and confidence is lowest among Black and Mixed ethnicity Londoners and has been, persistently, for years. Black Londoners are under-protected – disproportionately the victims of homicides and domestic abuse; and over-policed – facing disproportionate use of stop and search and use of force by the Met. A huge and radical step is required to regain police legitimacy and trust among London's Black communities.

9.3.1. Introduction

There is a very long history linking British policing with mistreatment of, and prejudice against, Black and ethnic minority communities.

The murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993, the subsequent investigation, and the landmark 1999 Macpherson Inquiry irrevocably changed the nature of policing in the UK.¹⁸¹ The Macpherson recommendations changed the understanding, investigation and prosecution of racist crimes nationwide.

The Macpherson Inquiry found 'inescapable evidence which highlighted the lack of trust which exists between the police and the minority ethnic communities' and 'also detected a greater degree of distrust between the police and the minority ethnic communities in the MPS area than elsewhere'.

¹⁸¹ [The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, February 1999, Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson](#)

Describing the Met as ‘institutionally racist’ in 1999 set a new benchmark to measure the force’s relationship with its Black, Asian, and ethnic minority populations.

Twenty-four years on, the Met is very different to the force of the 1990s in many ways, but continues to be described by some as institutionally racist.

However, in recent years the Met’s position has been that whilst there are people within the Met with racist views, and that there is work to be done with London’s communities, the Met as an organisation is not institutionally racist.

“Back to how far the Met has come, we have come an enormous way. I say to other people that if you want to call us institutionally racist, that is a matter for you, but it is not a label I find helpful, as I have told this Committee before. We are not collectively failing in all the ways described in Sir William’s definition. There is no collective failure. It is not a massive systemic problem. It is not institutionalised.”¹⁸²

“We recognise the Met is not yet free of discrimination, racism or bias, but we are changing to build a Met which is.”¹⁸³

In July 2021, the Home Affairs Select Committee’s report ‘The Macpherson Report: Twenty Two Years On’ made a finding that:

“Since the Macpherson report was published there have been important improvements in policing including significant improvements in the policing of racist crimes, in the commitments made to promoting equality and diversity and in good examples of local community policing. But our inquiry has also identified persistent, deep rooted and unjustified racial disparities in key areas including a confidence gap for BME communities, lack of progress on BME recruitment, problems in misconduct proceedings and unjustified racial disparities in stop and search.”¹⁸⁴

In 2022 following the publication of our Interim Report, the new Commissioner publicly accepted there was systemic racial disparity in the Met’s misconduct system.¹⁸⁵

¹⁸² [Dame Cressida Dick QPM providing oral evidence to the Home Affairs Committee, Macpherson 22 years on, 8 July 2020, Home Affairs Committee – Oral evidence: The work of the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, HC 560](#)

¹⁸³ [Metropolitan Police Service, 2022, Acting Commissioner Sir Stephen House statement on the launch of the National Police Race Action Plan](#)

¹⁸⁴ [Home Affairs Committee, 30 July 2021, The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on](#)

¹⁸⁵ [Sir Mark Rowley’s letter to Baroness Casey following publication of the Interim Report on Misconduct, 17 October 2022](#)

The Review acknowledges the many inquiries, reports, and reviews on the issue of racism in the Met over several decades. We have sought to learn from those who have come before us, and to build on the foundations they provided.

This chapter explores the evidence of racism, racial disparities and racial disproportionality from officers, staff and the Met's data, both in the Met's internal processes and its policing of Londoners, as well as the interaction between them.

9.3.2. Racism and its persistence in the Met

It is notable that the same themes emerge regularly in the many past inquiries and investigations into racism in the Met.

These issues have also been found in our Review:

1. **Diversity within the workforce:** mentioned in Macpherson, the Met continues to fall far short of being representative of London's Black, Asian and ethnic minority men and women throughout the ranks. If recruitment continues on its current trajectory, it will take at least another forty years to reach an officer cadre which is 46% Black, Asian, and ethnic minority.¹⁸⁶ The key issue here is that nothing that the Met has done or is currently planning to do that will change this position in the near future.
2. **Professional standards:** how the Met treats its Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers and staff has been the subject of several reviews.¹⁸⁷ High profile discrimination claims in employment tribunals, and misconduct investigations against Met officers of colour, are indicative of what many regard as a 'hostile culture'. Our Interim Report on misconduct showed unequivocal evidence of systemic racial bias alongside significant administrative failings. Black officers are 81% more likely to be subject to a misconduct case than White officers.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁶ Based on a starting point of 20% recruitment from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities + 1% every recruitment year, taking into account a 4,557 officer uplift. By 2061-62, Black, Asian and minority ethnic officers will need to have been 50% of all recruits for over 10 years for officer numbers to be representative of London's population in 2022

¹⁸⁷ In 2004 Morris found 'serious discrimination'; in July 2013 IPCC reported on MPS handling of complaints alleging race discrimination recognised 'significant concerns'; and in 2016 EHRC reported on discrimination in the Met's complaints process, finding significant weaknesses as well as a 'a general reluctance within the MPS to admit mistakes and apologise for them'

¹⁸⁸ [Baroness Casey Interim Report on Misconduct](#)

3. **‘Under-protection’**: while the Met are very active in areas of London with higher Black and minority ethnic communities, this does not mean that those communities are better protected from crime, and victimisation is in fact higher for certain crimes.
4. **‘Over-policing’ and disproportionate use of powers against certain communities**: most prominently this includes stop and search, the use of force, intimate or strip searches, and the injury or deaths of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority Londoners, including deaths in custody, in the pursuit of a subject, or during an arrest. This is exacerbated by a process for public complaints of racism and discrimination that is frequently criticised.¹⁸⁹

These issues broadly fall into either the *internal culture* of the Met, or how the Met treats its own people of colour; or the *external face* of the Met, or how the Met interacts with different communities in London.

The two issues are inextricably linked. On one hand, how Black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities are represented at all levels of the Met workforce impacts how the Met understands, engages with and makes decisions affecting different communities.

On the other, how the Met treats its officers and staff of colour impacts on how different communities view and interact with the organisation, as well as informing decisions such as whether they want to join the police.

The Review has looked at these issues together, to assess their cumulative and interrelated impact on culture and standards.

9.3.3. The Met’s workforce; the internal culture

To understand how this looks from the inside, we have reviewed the recruitment, progression, attrition rates, employment experiences, and complaints or misconduct issues for officers and staff of colour.

“Just being Black in the organisation is still a challenge today.”

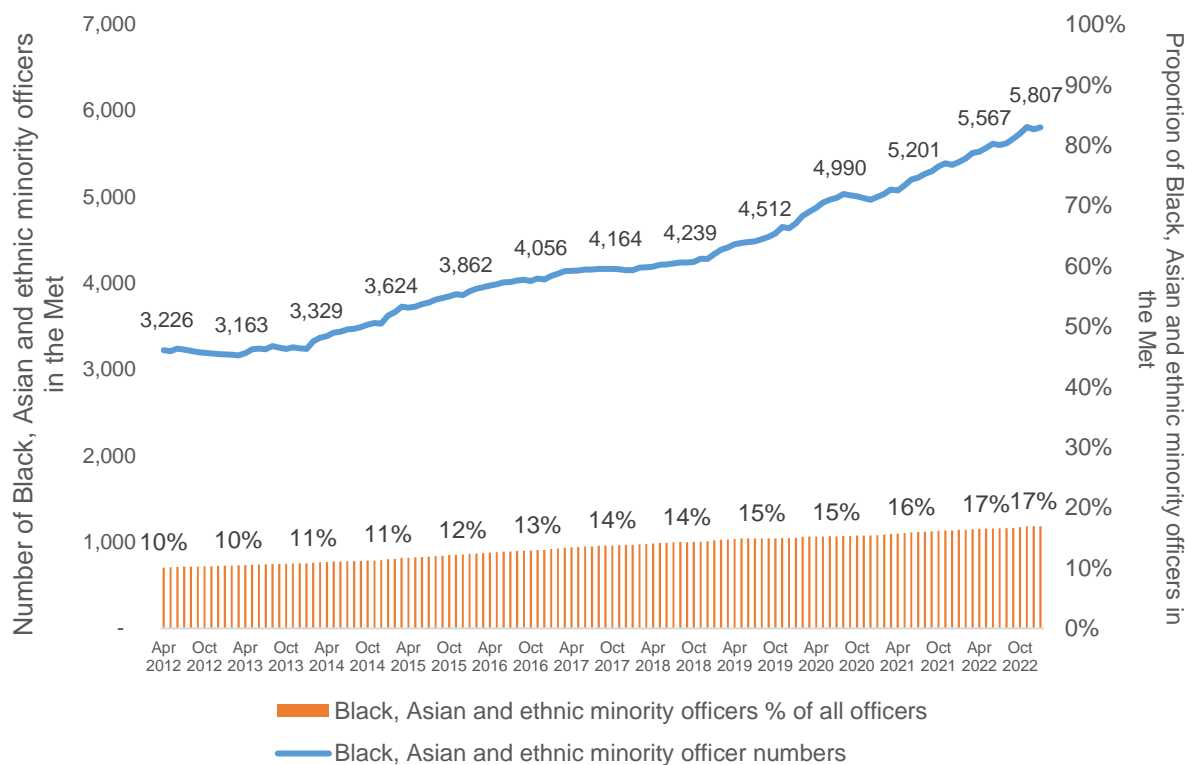
Recruitment and representation

Black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups are substantially underrepresented in all police forces across the country. The Met has the highest proportion of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers of all police forces in England and Wales. But it also

¹⁸⁹ [IPCC, July 2013, Report on Metropolitan Police Service handling of complaints alleging race discrimination](#)

represents the most diverse population, so must be more ambitious in its recruitment, retention, and progression strategies.

Figure 9.3.1: Volume and proportion of Black, Asian, Mixed ethnicity and Other ethnicity officers in the Met, April 2012 to January 2023



In 2022, self-describing Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers made up 17% of all Met officers but 46% of the population of London. This was an improvement of 7 percentage points since 2012, when Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers made up 10% of the workforce.

However, there has been just a 3% increase for women from Black, Asian, and ethnic minority communities. At the end of 2022, this group made up only 5% of Met officers (or 1,543 officers). This was an improvement from 2% (or 779 officers) in 2012-13.¹⁹⁰

The table below shows that the percentage of recruits from Black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups rose significantly from 16% in 2013-14 to 25% of all recruits in 2015-16 and 2016-17. Since then, it has fluctuated at levels below 25%, but fell to 17% in 2019-20.

¹⁹⁰ [In 2014 the London Assembly published a report on the diversity of the Met's frontline](#), which highlights that the MPS's biggest challenge has been in recruiting more women from ethnic minority backgrounds

Figure 9.3.2: 9 years of officer recruitment to the Met, proportion of officers from Black, Asian, Mixed and other ethnicities in each recruitment year, 2013-14 to 2021-22

Recruitment year	Non BME officers	BME officers
2013-14	84%	16%
2014-15	84%	16%
2015-16	75%	25%
2016-17	75%	25%
2017-18	76%	24%
2018-19	79%	21%
2019-20	83%	17%
2020-21	81%	19%
2021-22	77%	23%

The absolute numbers of Black, Asian and ethnic minority recruits do not fluctuate as significantly as the overall patterns in recruitment. When overall recruitment dropped by 47% in 2014-15, it only dropped 19% for Black, Asian and ethnic minority candidates. When overall recruitment more than doubled in 2019-20, Black, Asian and ethnic minority recruitment only increased by 77%.

This means that more recruitment of Met officers has not automatically resulted in more candidates from ethnically diverse backgrounds.

Our survey of Met officers and staff, and of Londoners, shows this underrepresentation is well understood by the groups most affected.

- Half of Met employees surveyed (49%) think Black people are underrepresented in the Met. But over four in five (83%) Black respondents think this compared with just under half (47%) of White respondents
- Similarly, while about half of Londoners think Black people (51%), Asian people (49%) and people from other ethnic minority backgrounds (47%) are underrepresented in the Met, Black Londoners are far more likely (72%) than White Londoners (46%) to think Black people are underrepresented in the Met.

The Met have repeatedly acknowledged a lack of diversity as both a challenge and a priority. There have been various initiatives designed to reduce disparity. These were seen as promising advancements by this female Met officer of colour:

“There was an initiative to help minorities and women when I joined, and I attended it before I attended my interview. Since then, I have seen the introduction of more initiatives such as the BPNS [Black Police Networking Strand], talking to Black applicants during the application stage via a chat function, community outreach and podcasts. These are things that didn’t exist back then so [I] feel they should be acknowledged.”

Having initiatives designed to attract greater ethnic diversity – including those that have been adopted in line with national standards set by the College of Policing – has been a positive step by the Met. However, rather than acknowledging the importance of these initiatives, a view has been allowed to emerge in some officers, including some of those at a senior level, that standards have been lowered to attract more diverse officers into the force.

“There is a disproportionate number of people leaving the job from underrepresented groups: is because they were recruited but never stood a chance or are we inherently racist? Think it’s the former.”

“Is it that there’s an additional level of support given to some Black and Asian officers [on recruitment]? ...Are we withdrawing that support when they become PCs, leading to them disproportionately leaving the system?...Is it an issue of coached candidates vs uncoached candidates?”

In January 2023, His Majesty’s Inspector Matt Parr – who has responsibility for assessing London’s policing – repeated this view in an interview with *The Telegraph*. He said he had seen anecdotal evidence that the Met were recruiting people who were *“functionally illiterate in English”* and that it had *“lowered standards”* to make the Met *“much more representative of community it serves.”*¹⁹¹ The Met misses opportunities such as this to rebut this narrative and defend its Black, Asian and ethnic minority recruits.¹⁹²

This has translated into a myth that is repeated in the organisation, so much so that officers at different ranks in the organisation felt comfortable repeating it in the company of their colleagues who are from a Black, Asian and ethnic minority background, officers and members of the Review team.

It is going to be a huge challenge for the Met to reflect the diversity of the communities it serves. Our analysis showed:

¹⁹¹ [HMI Matt Parr in The Telegraph, 26 January 2023, Met Police recruit 'functionally illiterate in English' in attempt to improve diversity](#)

¹⁹² Mr Parr has asked the Review to explain that the words quoted were ones he had heard anecdotally; HMICFRS has not inspected on this topic and Mr Parr had no evidence that standards were being lowered

- At the current rates of recruitment and attrition, and predicted officer uplift, the Met will only manage to increase its Black, Asian, and ethnic minority representation to 22% of all officers by 2055. It will not be able to increase that proportion without significantly higher levels of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority recruitment¹⁹³
- Even if the Met continued to improve its Black, Asian, and ethnic minority recruitment by an additional 1% each year from 2022 onwards, it would take 39 years to reach an officer cadre that was broadly proportionate to London's current Black, Asian, and ethnic minority population (46%). By this point, Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers will need to have represented 50% of recruits for the previous 10 recruitment years¹⁹⁴
- To reach a position where 46% of officers were from a Black, Asian, and ethnic minority background within ten years would require the Met to increase the proportion of its Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officer recruitment to 50% immediately. It would then need to continue to recruit 3% more Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers every year until they represented over 80% of all recruits.¹⁹⁵ Neither that level or rate of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officer recruitment has ever been achieved.

The Met does not appear to have made any assessment of what is achievable, or what additional steps might be needed to address the deficit in its workforce's reflection of Londoners. A far more radical strategy is required to improve the Met's ethnic diversity and connection with London's diverse communities.

If the problem is that the Met cannot meet its diversity aspirations, then it is even more important that it overhauls how it works with and polices the communities of London. It must ask itself searching questions about why it is so difficult to attract talent from London's diverse pool of talents.

The Met also needs to be proactive in countering corrosive myths about the quality of diverse recruits, and it needs to do so right from the top of the organisation.

¹⁹³ Based on the three-year average BAME recruitment proportion of 20%, average attrition rates of 5.5-6% and a net increase of 4,557 officers over three years

¹⁹⁴ Based on the three-year average Black, Asian, and ethnic minority recruitment proportion of 20% and an increase of 1% point a year until Black Asian and ethnic minority officers constitute 50% of recruits, average attrition rates of 5.5-6% and a net increase of 4,557 officers over three years

¹⁹⁵ Based on average attrition rates of 5.5-6% and a net increase of 4,557 officers over three years. By 2032/33 Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers will represent 80% of recruits for in order to reach 45% of the workforce.

A more diverse Met will better reflect, understand and engage with all the communities it serves. It will be more likely to win public respect and consent, and benefit from the insights and skills that diversity brings to any workforce.

Progression

The lack of diversity of the workforce and shortcomings in recruitment is also reflected further in progression rates through the organisation.

The higher the rank within the Met police, the less representation from Black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups there is. Superintendents, Chief Inspectors, and Inspectors are the least diverse ranks (between 7% and 10% are Black, Asian or from other ethnic minorities, compared with 17% of Constables). There are some exceptions. The proportion of Black, Asian and ethnic minority Chief Superintendents has grown from 4% to 12% over the last decade. In real terms however, this actually represented a cut of 35 Black, Asian and ethnic minority Chief Superintendents, due to an overall reduction in the number of Chief Superintendents in the Met.

Figure 9.3.3: Percentage of Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers in every rank below Commander in the Met, 2012-13 to 2021-22

Black, Asian and ethnic minority	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Chief Superintendent/ Detective Chief Superintendent	4%	5%	5%	7%	8%	9%	8%	11%	13%	12%
Superintendent/Detective Superintendent	7%	7%	9%	9%	9%	7%	7%	6%	5%	7%
Chief Inspector/ Detective Chief Inspector	5%	5%	4%	3%	3%	4%	6%	6%	8%	10%
Inspector/ Detective Inspector	5%	6%	6%	6%	7%	7%	8%	9%	9%	10%
Police Sergeant/Detective Sergeant	6%	6%	7%	7%	8%	9%	9%	10%	10%	11%
Police Constable/Detective Constable	12%	12%	13%	13%	14%	15%	16%	16%	17%	17%
Total Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers	10%	11%	11%	12%	13%	14%	14%	15%	15%	16%

In 2021-22 Black, Asian, and ethnic minority women made up less than 2% of Superintendents and 3% Inspectors in the Met. As of 31 December 2022, there are no female Black, Asian or ethnic minority Chief Superintendents in the Met.

“The lack of diversity in senior leadership puts off good people from applying to the Met.”

Our qualitative engagement made it clear that officers of colour are very aware of this situation. The explanations we had for this disparity were varied, but included:

- limited help or support for Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers to progress
- stigmatisation of those officers who do take advantage of specific support initiatives
- an assumption that all senior Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers have benefitted from positive action initiatives.

“BAME officers are consistently overlooked for jobs and promotion. If a BAME officer is promoted it is openly discussed how they only got the job because of diversity and quotas. BAME staff are viewed with suspicion and seen as outsiders.”

“The development programmes for BAME officers and all the initiatives that have been set up have been helpful for some. However, all this good work is undermined by the fact the majority of White officers have spoken out publicly against it. This means that officers who would benefit from such programmes do not apply because they do not want to be stigmatised by their colleagues.”

A senior officer recalled being openly asked in a large meeting of officers in 2022 *“Did you get to where you got to because you are Black?”*

Both retired and serving officers of colour reported a pattern of applying for promotion, not getting it, and being told that they didn’t have sufficient ‘experience’:

“It took me 11 years to get promoted from Inspector to Chief Inspector, despite putting in countless applications to get promoted. I was always told that I needed more experience in a specific area.”

A serving officer spoke about struggling to find opportunities for acting-up, often necessary for promotion:

“I was told opportunities are few and far between and we should really give it to people who are experienced and have been here a while.”

It later emerged he was the only officer of his rank not to have been given acting-up experience, and he was the only Black officer.

The absence of ethnic minority officers at a senior level creates a lack of role models in a rank-based organisation:

"In 2022, going into 2023, nationally you've got two female chief officers of colour, and I think it's an absolute disgrace."

"I didn't believe in myself until I had an Asian Sergeant...[they] pushed me and told me go for the next rank...That leadership helped me to believe in myself and for the first time I brought myself to work and was open about myself...that's what it meant having a Sergeant I could identify with."

Many Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers reflected that those who put up with discrimination stood a greater chance of getting by. They said challenging discrimination or showing offence would stymie progress:

"You have to try and be invisible as a Black woman...If you complain, you get a reputation as being trouble and then supervisors try and pass you on to other teams."

A former Met officer reflected:

"The ugly truth is that the organisation is riddled with racism – how much have people like me acquiesced?"

Attrition

As well as falling short in recruiting and promoting Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers, the Met also struggles with higher attrition rates among Black, Asian, and ethnic minority staff. This excludes retirements, which currently reflect the historically White, older, male profile of Met officers. Over the past 10 years, every year Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers have been leaving at a faster rate than their White colleagues.

Many are likely to have been put off by a lack of progress. Officers and staff also told us that the leadership, culture, and mission are leading some Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers to consider leaving the Met. The Review heard from numerous people of colour who said they had had enough, and would be leaving at the first opportunity.

Data shows that the proportion of new recruits resigning during their probationary period is relatively low, though it has increased slightly in recent years to 10% in 2021-22. However Black, Asian and ethnic minority probationer officers are resigning at more than double the rate of probationers as a whole. They accounted for 22% of all probationer resignations in 2021-22. This is set out in the table below.

Figure 9.3.4: Police and Detective Constables in their probationary period at the Met, volume of resignations and proportion of all resignations, 2018-19 to 2021-22

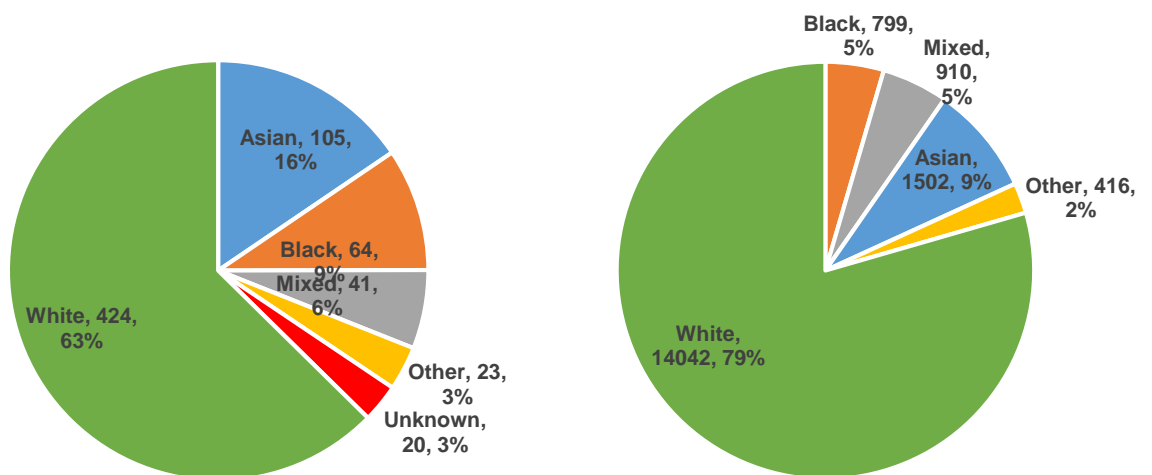
	All probationers		Black, Asian and ethnic minority probationers		
	Resigned	Resigned % of all probationers	Resigned BAME	Resigned BAME % of all resignations	BAME probationers
2018-19	167	8%	47	28%	24%
2019-20	227	6%	58	25%	19%
2020-21	294	7%	72	24%	18%
2021-22	353	10%	81	22%	22%

The Interim Report on the Met’s internal misconduct system noted that Regulation 13 of the 2003 Police Regulations, whereby a notice is served on an officer thought to be ‘unsuitable for policing’, is often a primary route for probationers to leave. Although the dismissal rate for Regulation 13 cases is very low, many probationers served with a Regulation 13 notice will, unsurprisingly, end up resigning.

Regulation 13 notices are disproportionately served on Black, Asian, and ethnic minority probationers, and they are disproportionately resigning.

Figure 9.3.5 (left): Ethnic group composition of all Regulation 13 cases, 2018-19 to 2021-22

Figure 9.3.6 (right): Ethnic group composition of all Police and Detective Constables with fewer than 2 years' service in the Met, 2018-19 to 2021-22



These figures show that between 2018 and 2022, when compared with White officers:

- Black officers are 126% more likely to be subject to a Regulation 13 case
- Asian officers are 123% more likely
- Mixed ethnicity officers are 50% more likely.

This Review has found the same themes of poor handling of grievances and disproportionality in the misconduct system identified in many previous reports and investigations.

[The disciplinary system: grievances and misconduct](#)

There are two primary routes available when a Met officer or staff member wishes to report or raise a concern around their treatment within the organisation.

If the issue potentially amounts to a breach of the standards of professional behaviour, an allegation of misconduct is made.

If the Met officer or staff member has concerns or problems with their work, working conditions, or working relationships, they can raise a formal grievance.

We have found concerns regarding the treatment of Black, Asian, and ethnic minority employees and the handling of discrimination allegations in both forms of disciplinary action.

Figure 9.3.7: Grievance allegations and cases raised in the Met by ethnic group of the person raising the complaint, probability of Black, Asian, Mixed, Other and Unknown ethnicity officers raising a grievance case or allegation relative to White Met employees, 2018-19 to 2021-22.

Ethnic group	Allegations	Allegations %	Cases	Cases %	Workforce (2018-19 – 2021-22)	Conditional probability (White vs BAME) allegations ¹⁹⁶	Conditional probability (White vs BAME) cases ¹⁹⁷
Asian	340	14%	158	12%	7%	+173%	+126%
Black	342	14%	149	12%	5%	+290%	+203%
Mixed	113	5%	58	5%	3%	+89%	+73%
Other	134	5%	57	4%	2%	+311%	+212%
Unknown	67	3%	35	3%	3%	+35%	+26%
White	1446	59%	811	64%	80%	-	-

As the table shows, from 2018-19 to 2021-22, Black, Asian, or Mixed ethnicity officers and staff were considerably more likely to raise a grievance than their White colleagues. Black people in the Met were nearly four times more likely than their White counterparts to raise a grievance allegation.

In 2016, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) published a report which found significant weaknesses in the Met’s handling of discrimination complaints.¹⁹⁸ This included poor data collection and inconsistent application of legislation and policy. Overall, the report found a ‘[general reluctance within the MPS to admit mistakes and apologise for them](#)’.

It said that the policy requiring all claims of discrimination to be escalated to misconduct meant there was a widely held perception that raising a discrimination grievance would lead to the complainant being the subject of formal and informal victimisation within the organisation.

Due to poor data, the report could not conclude whether there was indeed any victimisation of those who made discrimination grievances. The report concluded that the perception was sufficiently widely and strongly held to suppress these grievances being made.

¹⁹⁶ How much more likely than a White officer or staff member is a Black, Asian, or ethnic minority officer or staff member to raise a grievance allegation

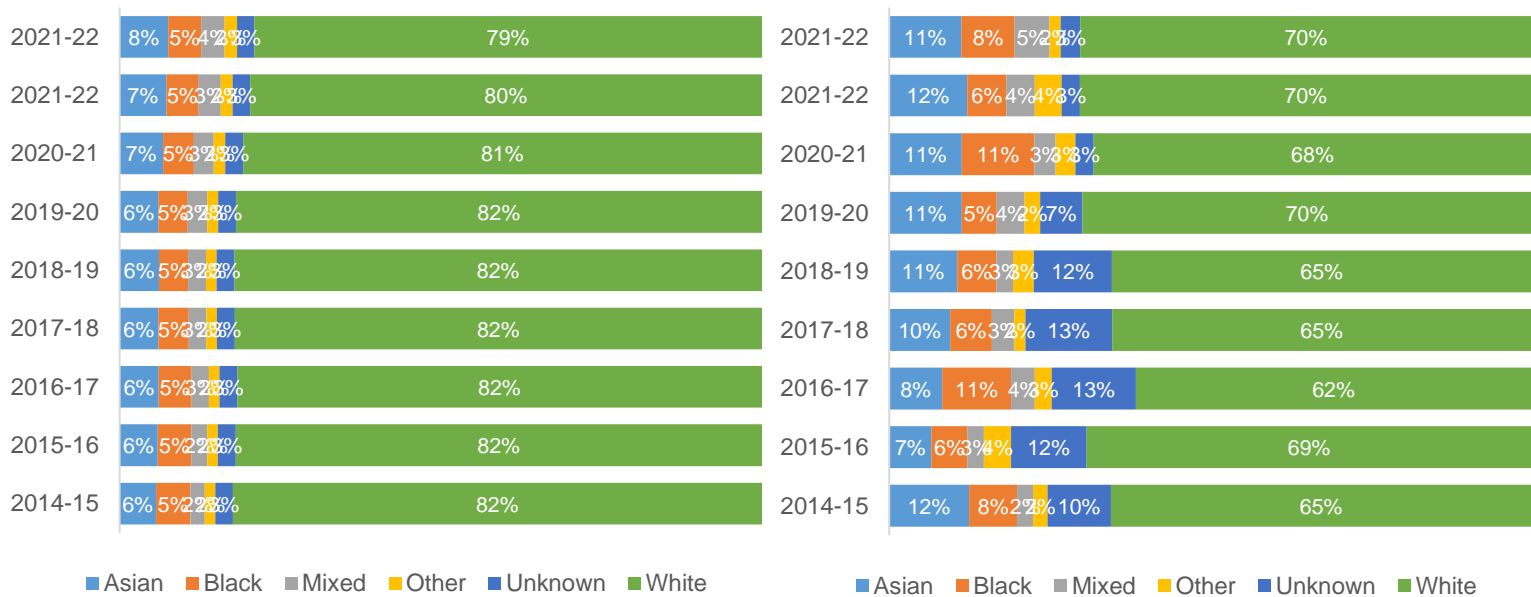
¹⁹⁷ How much more likely than a White officer or staff member is a Black, Asian or ethnic minority officer or staff member to raise a grievance allegation

¹⁹⁸ [EHRC, September 2016, Press Release: Investigation into Met police reveals significant weaknesses in handling discrimination](#)

The misconduct system indicates a different form of disproportionality. The data shows that in every year since 2013-14, Black and Asian officers and staff are significantly more likely to be the subject of a misconduct allegation.

Figure 9.3.8 (left): Ethnic group composition of the Met, 2013-14 to 2021-22

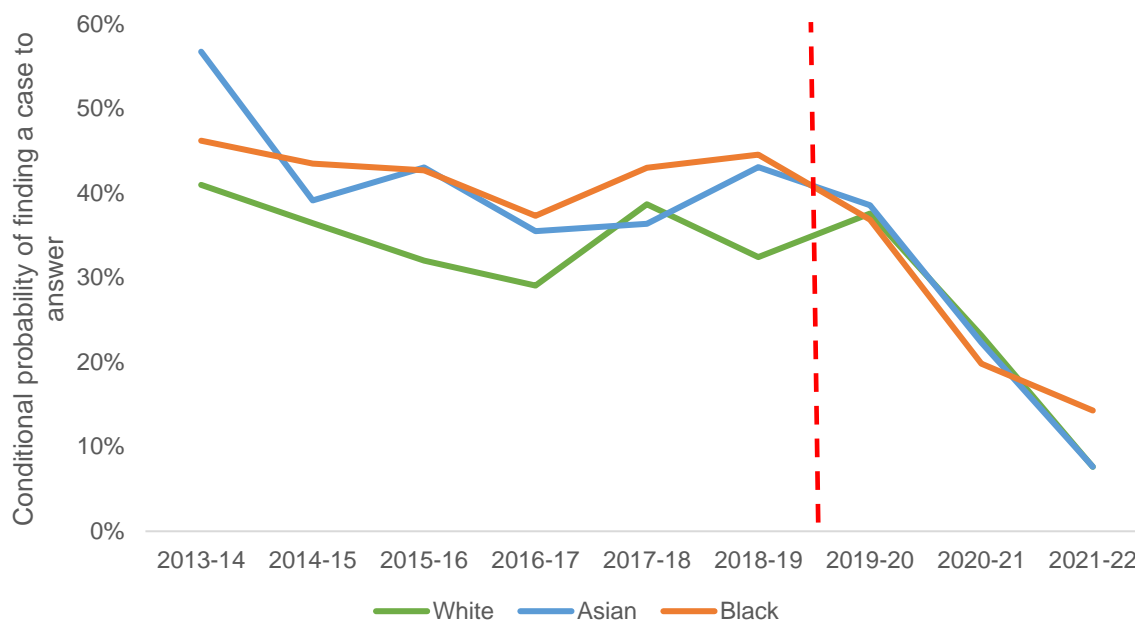
Figure 9.3.9 (right): Ethnic group composition of each misconduct allegation made against an officer or staff in the Met, 2013-14 to 2021-22



This data shows Black officers or staff members in the Met in 2021-22 were 81% more likely to receive a misconduct allegation than their White colleagues. Asian officers and staff were 55% more likely. There are few, if any, signs of improvement over time.

Allegations against Black and Asian officers were also more likely to result in a 'case to answer' decision, as shown in the figure which follows.

Figure 9.3.10: Percentage of all misconduct allegations given a case to answer decision by ethnic group, 2013-14 to 2021-22. The dotted red line signifies that after 2018-19 the proportion of unresolved allegations is too large to reliably compare proportions of outcomes, which is why we see the case to answer percentage for all groups drop



In 2018-19, misconduct allegations against Black officer or staff members were 41% more likely to be given a ‘case to answer’ decision than those against White officers. For Asian officers or staff, a case to answer decision was 34% more likely than for their White counterparts. The disproportionality here is much smaller, but still evident.¹⁹⁹ Cases heard in more recent years have yet to receive an outcome.

It has not been possible for the Review to connect the grievance data to the misconduct data, as the Met’s misconduct data only shows information on the person complained about, and grievance data only shows information on the complainant. However, the disproportionate representation of Black, Asian, and Mixed ethnicity Met employees in misconduct cases raises questions around the grievance process as well.

¹⁹⁹ In 2016, MOPAC also found in their [analysis of misconduct allegations from 2010-2015](#) that ‘[A]llegations against BAME police officers are more likely to be substantiated, whilst allegations against White officers are more likely to be unsubstantiated’. More recent (unpublished) research suggests that finalised allegations from 2018-2020 did not show this pattern, the Review has taken the view that the proportion of allegations that had yet to be finalised after 2018/19 was sufficiently large to impact overall proportions of outcomes, so has not passed comment on allegations received after this time period

The disproportionality within the front-end of the misconduct system, reflected in the number of allegations, is now a well-established fact. MOPAC, the EHRC, and the NPCC have all reached this same conclusion.²⁰⁰

The Review found that the prevailing explanation for the stubborn ethnic disproportionality was that managers were ill-equipped to have informal conversations about poor performance or practice, so relied on the formalised misconduct system to resolve lower-level issues.

They say that this is particularly pronounced when the person being managed is Black, Asian, or another ethnic minority, because the manager fears being labelled 'racist' for having a conversation about behaviour.

We also heard this explanation on multiple occasions in our wider engagement with Met officers and managers:

“We have disproportionality because line managers are so scared because they are worried about employment tribunals...they think ‘I’m not going to have a conversation, I might be accused of racism.’”

It is entirely possible that the disproportionate number of misconduct issues faced by officers and staff of colour are in part the product of managers not having the tools to tackle low level behaviour. However the use of this 'excuse' for disproportionality in misconduct ignores two potential alternatives:

First, the issue might not be too *many* allegations against Black, Asian, and ethnic minority officers and staff, but too *few* allegations against White officers and staff who benefit from greater leniency from their line managers. The Interim Report showed that White officers fare much better in the misconduct system than their Black, Asian or Mixed ethnicity counterparts.²⁰¹

Second, allegations against officers and staff of colour might follow when they raise their head above the parapet to call out poor behaviour. This is a pattern embedded across Met culture: speaking out often results in adverse consequences for the complainant.

²⁰⁰ [MOPAC, December 2016, *Disproportionality in Misconduct Cases in the Metropolitan Police Service*](#); [EHRC, September 2016, *Investigation into Met police reveals significant weaknesses in handling discrimination*](#); [NPCC, January 2020, *Understanding Disproportionality in Police Complaint & Misconduct Cases for BAME Police Officers & Staff*](#)

²⁰¹ [Baroness Casey Interim Report on Misconduct](#)

“I have never raised anything because in this job to raise a concern is to condemn your career and make your life miserable. Before anyone can even complain, officers will purposely say how we all use the ‘race card’, in order to put people off from complaining.”

Like the EHRC, who tried to test this theory of victimisation in grievances, the Review has found the data available is also too poor when it comes to misconduct. Whilst details on the subject of a misconduct complaint are well-recorded, details on the person making the complaint are not.

When the Review asked for a corresponding dataset of complainants, which would allow us to match the identities of those who make complaints and those who have complaints made against them, the DPS informed us that an analyst would need to manually comb through every complaint to pull out the identities. Given the sample size of nearly 19,000, this was deemed implausible.

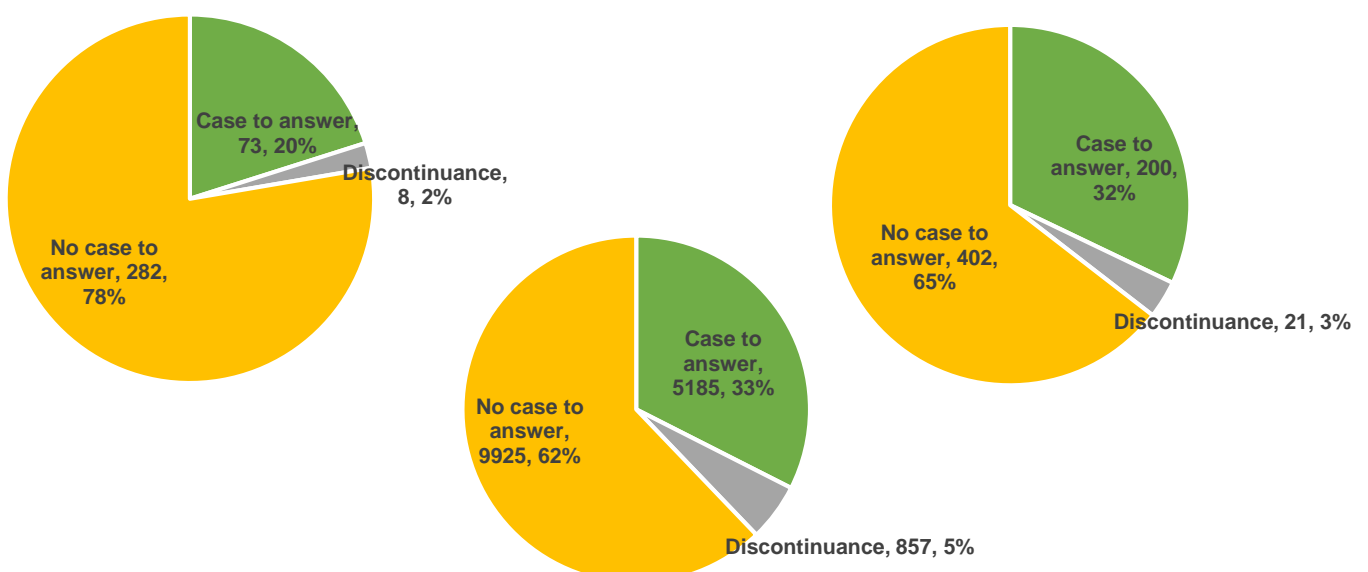
As well as hearing about the fear of victimisation following a complaint, and the perception that it was akin to putting one’s head above the parapet, we were frequently told that claims of racism and discrimination were not recognised or taken seriously by managers and colleagues:

We found further evidence of this in the misconduct system. Allegations regarding race and faith-based discrimination are poorly recorded. But from what we can see, they are less likely than other allegations to have a ‘case to answer’ found.

Figure 9.3.11 (left): Decision taken on all finalised misconduct allegations categorised as breaching rules around equality and diversity, 2013-14 to 2021-22

Figure 9.3.12 (middle): Decision taken on all finalised misconduct allegations, 2013-14 to 2021-22

Figure 9.3.13 (right): Decision taken on all finalised misconduct allegations involving a race or faith-based discrimination claim, 2013-14 to 2021-22



The Review has been told by many officers of colour of direct experiences of racism or discrimination which has resulted in inappropriate action, or no action at all.

“Management are ineffective in dealing with unacceptable behaviour. Our discipline process is too bureaucratic and certain behaviours should lead to automatic dismissal. The standard needs to be set and should be set high in order that professionalism is brought back into policing.”

“Management action is consistently used to deal with racist incidents when officers should be fired.”²⁰²

Experience of racism in the Met

The Met continues to say that only a tiny minority of officers display discriminatory behaviour. But our survey of Met officers and staff found a different picture:

- 46% of Black and 33% of Asian Met respondents report personally experiencing racism while at work²⁰³
- Only 18% of Black Met respondents think the Met treats everyone who works there fairly regardless of race, compared with 63% of White employees surveyed

Officers of colour recounted the daily indignity of discrimination and wrongdoing. A former senior officer told us that before and after they joined the Met, they were often stopped and searched.

“I’m probably the only person at my level who has been stopped and searched...it didn’t matter that the officers did it right and were procedurally just, they still searched me, it was still humiliating.”

Another officer recounted:

“I have been stopped and asked for ID on multiple occasions inside police stations. I understand the need for security but the amount is abnormal. I have

²⁰² Management Action is a form of intervention which is not disciplinary action. The purpose of Management Action is to: a. Deal with misconduct or performance in a timely, proportionate and effective way that will command the confidence of staff, police officers, the police service and the public. b. Identify any underlying causes or welfare considerations. c. Improve conduct and to prevent a similar situation arising in the future – [Home Office, July 2014, Guidance on police officer misconduct, unsatisfactory performance and attendance management procedures](#)

²⁰³ Due to the survey wording this may refer to experiences from working with the public as well as experiences with other Met employees

been mistaken for a lawyer or FME [force medical examiner] or a prisoner (despite being in suits) on numerous occasions and on one occasion I was actually reviewed by an inspector in custody who thought I was a prisoner he had to complete a PACE [Police and Criminal Evidence] review on!"

Another officer told us:

"A lot of officers are coming in who are not from London...none of them have been stopped and searched in their lives...I was stopped and searched 50 times before I joined."

Nor is overt racism a thing of the past.

A Black female officer was with a more senior officer, when they intercepted a White female member of the public buying drugs from a Black person. The senior officer called the White woman a "*n***** lover*", a "*slag*", and a "*dirty woman*." The Black female officer was left feeling like she wanted to resign.

"I've been told to shut up and get back in your caravan."

"In my first ever briefing on street duties I was told to 'get out there, give a few Gypsies warnings.'"

A senior officer said he was mentoring a Black officer:

"Some of the stuff he tells me I'm like woah...He's like 'I have got to keep my mouth shut'. A lot feel as soon as they open their mouth, they think there will be complaints made against them."

"A young man [an officer] comes to me maybe [a] few months ago...and he gets stopped [and searched] in a way which really upsets him. What upsets him more is what his Inspector says to him: 'are you sure you want to take this forward?'. He [the young officer] is a Black man. He knew there would be repercussions for him no matter how much I tried to reassure him."

A former senior officer told us that officers of colour across the Met tell him "*when they see racism, they don't tell their superiors*."

Officers from a Black, Asian, or ethnic minority background felt leant on to deal with race issues.

"When the race action plan was published I was bombarded with emails asking me to shut down [...] intranet comments. DMC [Directorate of Media &

Communications] said 'we need senior officers and the BPA [Black Police Association] to respond'. I said 'no this is not my problem.'"

In many organisations and across wider society, the murder of George Floyd in 2020 and the subsequent Black Lives Matter campaigns were critical in helping acknowledge peoples' lived experience of racism and discrimination.

However, Black officers and staff, as well as others of colour, described this as a particularly difficult and painful time.

"Nothing was said by the SLT [senior leadership team] through the whole of BLM [Black Lives Matter]. I can't tell you how alienated I felt...I wondered why [they] weren't saying anything, like 'we support our staff' or anything."

"What surprised me, if I'm honest...is the lack of emotional awareness – the lack of acceptance of community trauma. These are your Black staff; these are your people who will go home and be asked "what do you think about race and the Met?""

Instead, officers described insensitive and discriminatory comments from their colleagues. A former officer referred to comments on the intranet from a more senior officer who had said words to the effect of 'these communities [meaning Black communities] need to take responsibility for themselves.' The officer saw this post and challenged him on it. He refused to back down from his position. The officer spoke to someone more senior who agreed that it was potentially racist. But it wasn't tackled.

"You put something on the intranet and people feel entitled to write some horrendous racist, homophobic, sexist things. We call them the keyboard warriors. I take them on and email them individually or my equivalents but it's about line managers taking them on."

The tone of these comments caused upset:

"It felt like they were saying you need to decide what side you're on. Are you law enforcement, or are you Black? I've given...years to this job, given it my all, why am I being asked to choose? Those kind of comments made me question my place in the organisation."

"I'd walk into the office and conversations would stop, whispering would begin. They'd be talking about BLM, saying things like 'all lives matter'. For the first time ever I felt uncomfortable in my workplace with colleagues who I'd felt I was on a level with. Since then I've never felt equal."

This was recognised in our Review survey of Met officers and staff:

- Half of Met employees surveyed (49%) think Black people are underrepresented in the Met
- 83% of Black respondents think this compared with 47% of White respondents
- 75% of Asian respondents think Asian people are underrepresented compared with 40% of White respondents who feel the same way
- 59% and 71% respectively of respondents from mixed or other ethnic minority backgrounds think people from other ethnic minority backgrounds (including mixed) are underrepresented compared with 41% of White respondents who feel the same way.

Their experiences make it difficult for ethnic minority officers to recommend other people of colour to join the Met. Many ethnic minority officers told us that they are doubly isolated: Isolated at work by virtue of their colour; and isolated in their community by virtue of having joined the Met.

“I still don’t feel comfortable advising Sikhs to join the Met.”

“I can’t in good faith recommend this job to my own community...If someone from my community wants to join, I’ll support them, but...I can’t say ‘this is the best job in the world for you.’”

9.3.4. The Met and Black Londoners

As chapter 1 described, the Peelian notion of policing by consent relies on trust. The Mayor recently wrote:

The public entrust police officers with powers – including powers to use force or deprive someone of their liberty – to help keep us safe. Trust and confidence are therefore essential to the police’s ability to do their job.²⁰⁴

We note elsewhere that where less than half of a population have a positive view of a service, that this should be a red flag for that service. Trust and confidence measures have been lower among Black and mixed ethnicity Londoners for some years but have now fallen to below 50% across three of the four indicators.²⁰⁵

²⁰⁴ [MOPAC Police and Crime Plan 2022-25](#)

The tables below show that in 2021-22 (the last year for which we have full financial year data)

- 43% of Black Londoners and 41% of mixed ethnicity Londoners agree that the Met do a good job locally
- 33% of Black Londoners and 27% of mixed ethnicity Londoners thought that the Met did a good job across London
- 53% of Black Londoners and 61% of mixed ethnicity Londoners trust the Met
- 46% of Black Londoners and 43% of mixed ethnicity Londoners agree that the Met would treat everyone fairly.

Across all these measures, White Londoners have higher levels of trust and confidence although these are also falling rapidly.

Figure 9.3.14: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of Black, Mixed Ethnicity and White British respondents who think that the police do a good job locally, 2014-15 – 2021-22 (whole financial years)

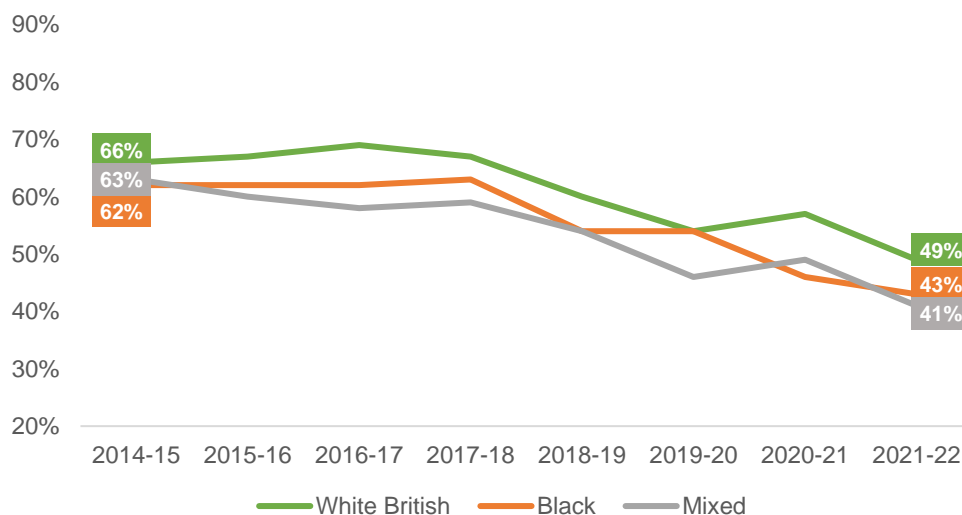


Figure 9.3.15: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of Black, Mixed Ethnicity and White British respondents who think that the police do a good job for London 2014-15 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)

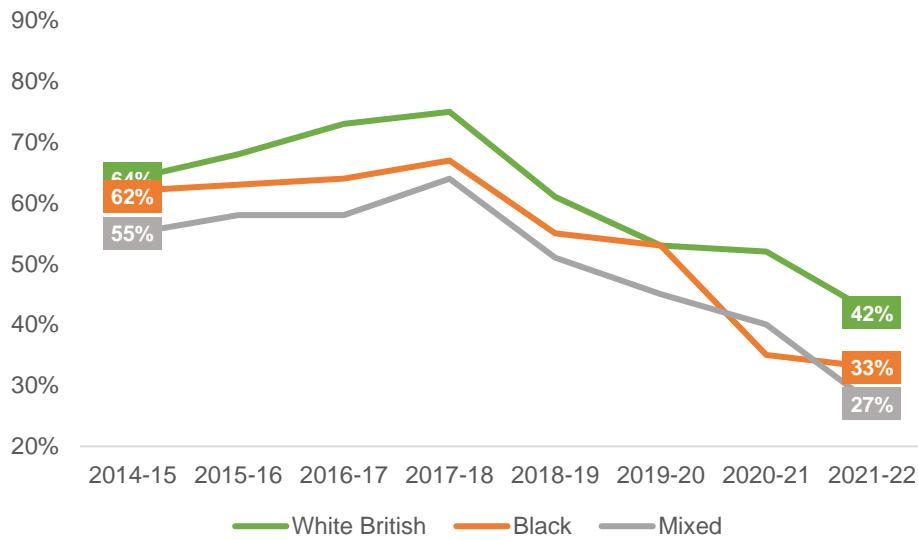


Figure 9.3.16: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of Black, Mixed Ethnicity and White British respondents who trust the Metropolitan Police Service, 2015-16 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)

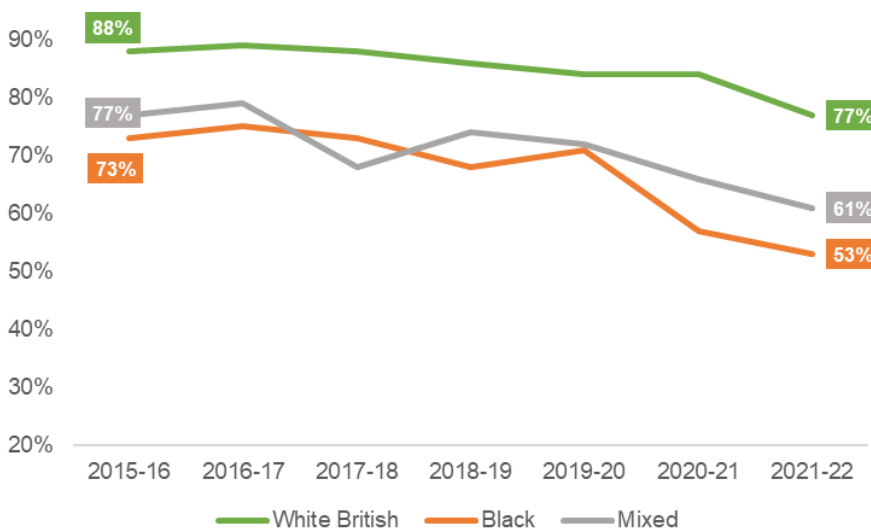
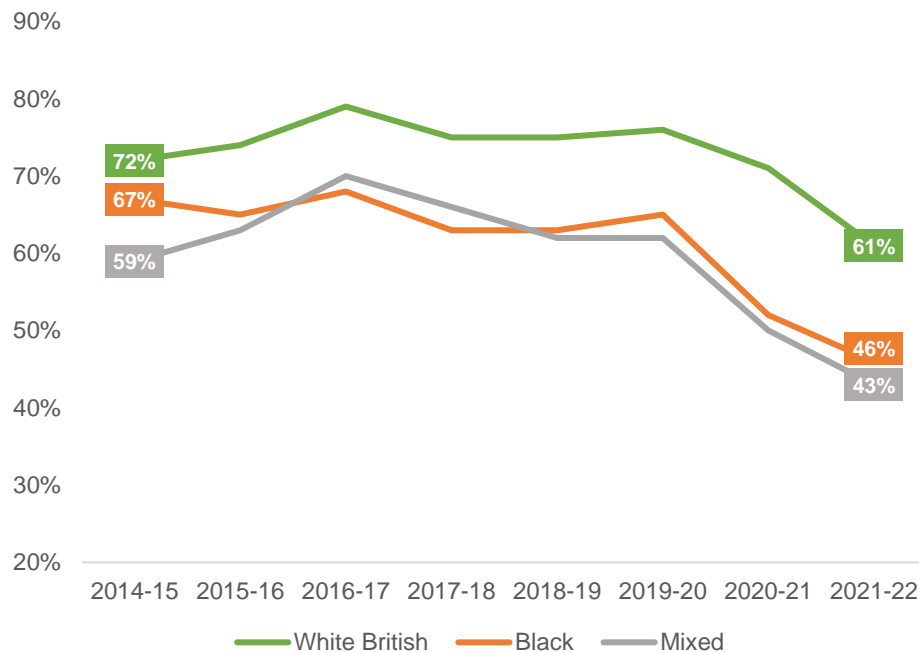


Figure 9.3.17: MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey, percentage of Black, Mixed Ethnicity and White British respondents who agree that the police treat everybody fairly regardless of who they are, 2014-15 to 2021-22 (whole financial years)



As Macpherson said:

Seeking to achieve trust and confidence through the demonstration of fairness will not in itself be sufficient. It must be accompanied by a vigorous pursuit of openness and accountability across Police Services.²⁰⁶

This statement shows that procedural justice, while important, is not sufficient. The organisation needs to be transparent and accountable for its mistakes, able to accept challenge, and prepared to hold itself to a higher standard.

Met colleagues and members of the Black community report that following the Macpherson report's publication, there was intense training for officers and the involvement of Black and other ethnic minority groups and leaders in that training, and very proactive engagement meant they believed things were better for a couple of years.

However, now more than twenty years have passed. The Met must be prepared to take action to build trust and confidence in this community.

²⁰⁶ [The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, February 1999, Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson](#)

Under-protection of Black communities

Despite being subjected to substantially higher levels of policing in London, Black Londoners remain considerably more likely to be the victims of several serious and violent crimes than White Londoners. This leads to the view that London's communities of colour are both over-policed and under-protected.

Recorded crime only tells us part of the story of victimisation, as both trust and confidence in the police service will inform a decision to report a crime. Despite this, a comparison of Census 2021 data and the Met's crime data shows us that in the last three calendar years: Black people in London were 70% more likely than White people to be a recorded victim of violence against the person.

The disproportionality becomes more stark as the violence becomes more serious. The charge rate for some of these serious crimes has also fallen significantly in recent years.

In the three years from January 2020:²⁰⁷

- Black people in London were nearly twice as likely to be a recorded rape victim than White people
- 66% more likely to be a reported victim of domestic abuse
- and over 2.5 times more likely to be a victim of a hate crime
- In the same period, Asian people were nearly twice as likely (87%) to be the victim of a hate crime

Black people were also over 1.5 times (167%) more likely to be a reported missing person in London in the last 12 months than White people.²⁰⁸

And in every year since *at least* 2002-03, Black people were *at least* twice as likely to be the victim of a homicide. The most recent data shows Black people were nearly six times more likely to be murdered in London.²⁰⁹

Victim satisfaction and the investigation of racist crimes

MOPAC conduct an annual survey of people in London who have reported a crime incident to the Met. After a period of decline, the most recent survey saw an increase

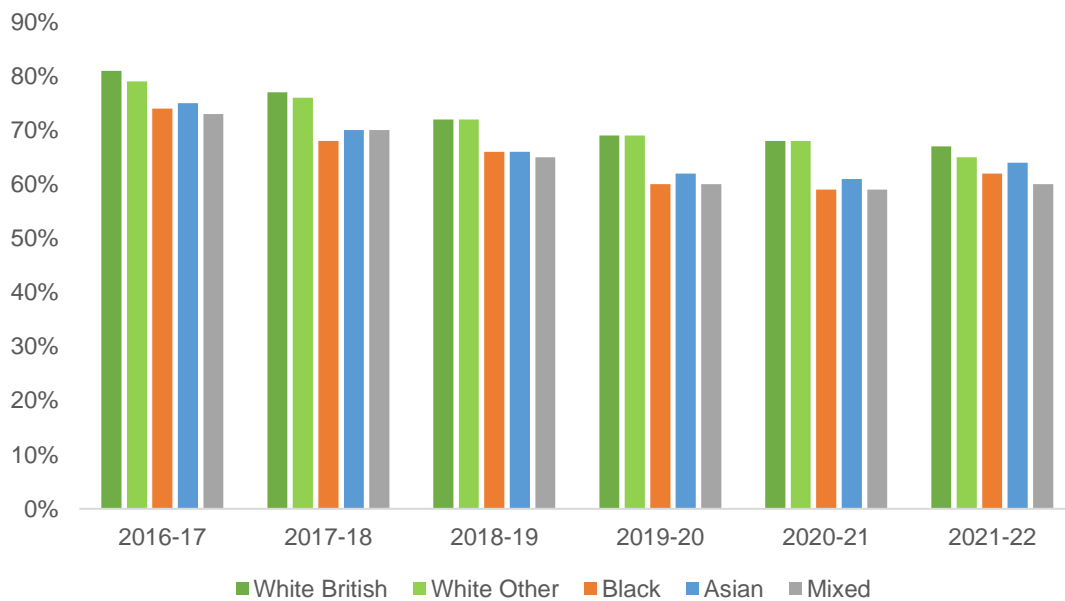
²⁰⁷ Met Crime Data Dashboard

²⁰⁸ Met MISPER Dashboard (not public)

²⁰⁹ Met Homicide Dashboard (not public)

in user satisfaction among Asian, Black, and Mixed ethnicity respondents. However, these respondents have consistently lower levels of satisfaction in the Met’s service than White respondents. Black and Mixed ethnicity respondents report the lowest levels of satisfaction.²¹⁰

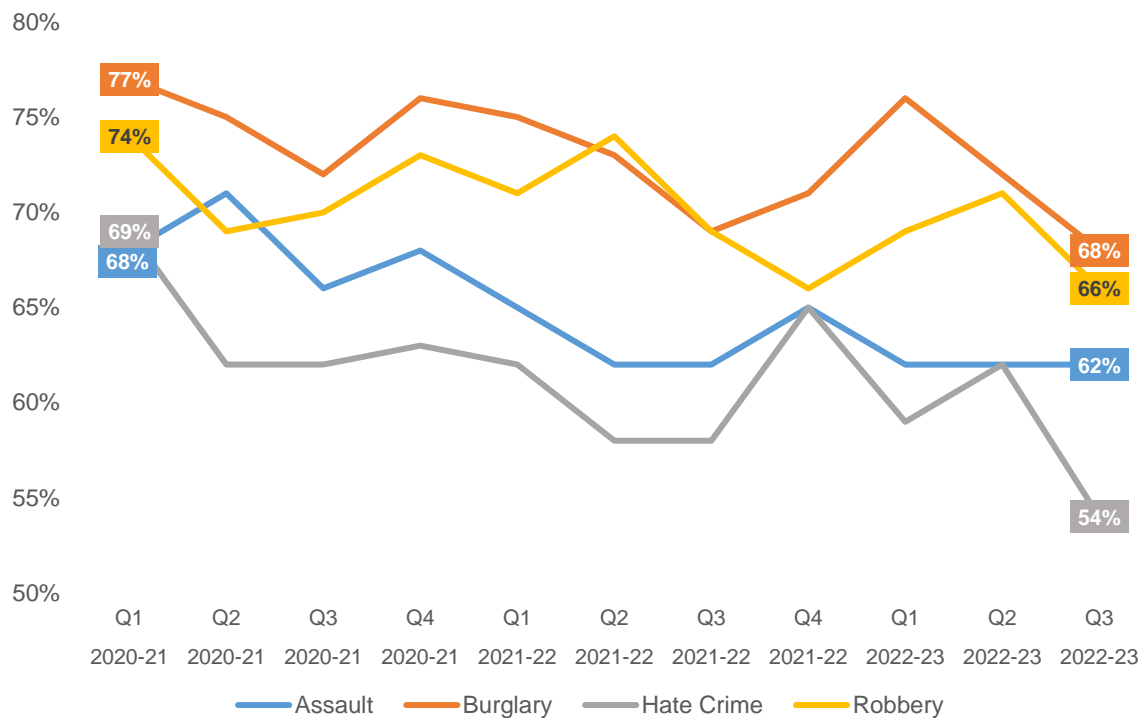
Figure 9.3.18: MOPAC User Satisfaction Survey, overall satisfaction with the Met by ethnic group



The same survey tells us that respondents who experienced and reported hate crime were the least satisfied group of the four crime types included. This has remained consistent over time.

²¹⁰ [MOPAC Victim and Witnesses dashboard](#)

Figure 9.3.19: MOPAC User Satisfaction Survey, overall satisfaction with the Met by offence type,



Black, Asian, and Mixed ethnicity Londoners are substantially more likely to be the victims of a reported hate crime. We know that hate crime offences and incidents are growing in London, but also that hate crime and other racially motivated crimes are among the least reported crime types.

When it is reported, the conviction rate for racially motivated crimes has been lower in the Met (66% in 2020) than for England and Wales (71%). It has been gradually rising, but this is in the context of plummeting proportions of racially motivated crimes reaching trial in the first place. Between 2010 and 2020 there was a 44% decrease in volume of racially motivated crimes reaching trial in the Met.²¹¹

²¹¹ [Ministry of Justice, 20 May 2021, Criminal Justice System Statistics publication: Outcomes by Offence 2010 to 2020: Pivot Table Analytical Tool for England and Wales](#)

The survey for this Review shows that Londoners from ethnic minority backgrounds are less likely to be confident in the Met compared with White Londoners across a range of indicators:

- Only a third of Black Londoners are confident in the Met's ability to treat people fairly and equally (36% compared with 62% of White Londoners) and only half are confident in its ability to reduce or prevent crime (50% compared with 57% of White Londoners)
- They are also less likely to be confident in the Met's ability to respond to emergency calls (66% compared with 73% of White Londoners) and to protect the public (61% compared with 67% of White Londoners)
- Londoners of all ethnicities are most likely to think the Met treats White people fairly (69%) whereas only 30% think the Met gives fair treatment to Black people. 32% think the Met gives fair treatment to ethnic minorities and 35% think the Met gives fair treatment to Asian people
- Under half (46%) of Black Londoners say they are confident in the ability of the police in London to treat people fairly, compared over 60% of White British Londoners
- Black Londoners are less confident than White Londoners that they would be treated fairly by the Met if they were reporting a crime (49% Black vs 72% White British)
- They are far less confident than White Londoners that they would be treated fairly if they were suspected of committing a crime (26% Black vs 63% White)
- Just 14% of Black Londoners think that the Met treats Black people fairly, while only 26% of Asians think the Met treats Asians fairly
- For White Londoners, however, 67% believe the Met treats White people fairly, 36% believe the Met treats Black people fairly and 41% believe the Met treats Asians fairly.

A lot has changed in policing since Macpherson. The ways in which racist incidents are recognised and dealt with is one of the enduring positive legacies of the report.

Yet the continued gap in satisfaction levels by ethnic group is evidence of disparity in the experience Black, Asian, and ethnic minority Londoners have with the Metropolitan police.

Black Londoners have continuously made allegations against Met officers at a much higher rate than any other ethnic group relative to their population. Black Londoners make 26% of complaints when they make up only 13.5% of the population. There was also an increase in the volume of complaints linked to race discrimination in 2020-21.²¹²

So Black Londoners are disproportionately represented among those making complaints about the Met despite their lower levels of trust and confidence in the organisation.

This takes us to disproportionality in the Met's use of policing powers in London.

[Use of powers: Stop and search, and 'every contact leaves a trace'](#)

The MOPAC Public Attitude Survey shows that there is widespread support for the use of stop and search among the public in London. This rose over time from a low of 66% in 2014-15, to a high of 85% in mid-2019, reducing again to 70% by 2022. This public support is not shared equally among respondents' demographic groups, with 77% of White British respondents agreeing stop and search should be used compared to 53% of Black respondents in the most recent survey.²¹³

The Met Police make the greatest use of stop and search powers of any force in the country. They consistently account for 40-50% of all stops carried out in England and Wales.²¹⁴ Stop and search is deeply embedded in the Met's culture.

It is disproportionate

Racial disparity continues in stop and search in London. This has been repeatedly confirmed in reports and research.²¹⁵ Our Review corroborates these findings.

²¹² [MOPAC, June 2021, MPS Oversight Board: Public Complaints and Conduct](#)

²¹³ [MOPAC Trust and Confidence dashboard](#)

²¹⁴ [Home Office, 27 October 2022, Police powers and procedures: Stop and search and arrests, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2022](#)

²¹⁵ By way of example: [HMICFRS, December 2017, PEEL: Police legitimacy 2017](#); [HMICFRS, February 2021, Disproportionate use of police powers: A spotlight on stop and search and the use of force](#); [Home Office, 27 May 2022, Stop and search - Ethnicity facts and figures](#); [Open Society Justice Initiative, 23 January 2012, London's Police Rethinks Stop and Search Tactics](#)

In every year since 2016, those between 11 and 61 who appear to be Black have been at least 3.5 times more likely to be stopped and searched by the Met than their White counterparts.²¹⁶

In the previous year, 1 in 4 Black males aged 15-24 in London were stopped and searched in a three-month period.²¹⁷ This is broadly the same level of disproportionality described in the Macpherson Inquiry in 1999.²¹⁸

Figures like these are neither new nor unreported. Enough evidence and analysis exists to confidently label stop and search as a racialised tool.

The Met accepts it is disproportionate

Indeed, the Met accepts that it is used disproportionately. They have said publicly that this happens because they target areas of high crime which tend to be poorer areas where Black communities are more likely to live. It has also said that the Met is saving young Black lives by using stop and search in the way they do, as young Black boys and men are not only more likely carry a knife, but also more likely to suffer from someone else using that knife. Pictures of obtained knives and other serious weapons are posted online to back up the use of stop and search.

“We are targeting young people who are likely to be carrying knives and guns and drugs, we’re in among the drug markets and what it means is, overall, a higher proportion of young Black lads being stopped than White lads.”²¹⁹

“We’re seizing something like 300 knives a month off the streets. It’s huge. People talk about disproportionate, ‘you are stopping young Black men’. Young Black men are dying on the streets of London and are being stabbed on the streets of London and, candidly, are also stabbing on the streets of London.”²²⁰

The reality of stop and search does not appear to reflect the policy intention.

²¹⁶ Met stop and search data

²¹⁷ [Home Affairs Committee, 30 July 2021, *The Macpherson Report: Twenty-two years on*](#)

²¹⁸ [The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, February 1999, *Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson*](#)

²¹⁹ [Dame Cressida Dick in The Times, 28 November 2020, *Cressida Dick: Black boys ‘nine times more likely to be murdered’*](#)

²²⁰ [Sir Stephen House in The Evening Standard, 1 February 2021, *Met chief: We will continue ‘disproportionate’ stop-and-search*](#)

The facts around stop and search

The facts relating to stop and search are:

- around 70 to 80% lead to no further action²²¹
- the more stop and searches are done, the greater the proportion of no further actions²²²
- the Misuse of Drugs Act is consistently the most used reason to stop and search in London, not weapons²²³
- in 2019-20, 12% of stop and searches in London led to a subsequent arrest²²⁴
- the most common reason for arrest is drugs, followed by theft, then weapons²²⁵
- around 15% of arrests from stop and search are due to weapons being seized²²⁶
- the Met was ranked 31 out of 44 forces in England and Wales for their average arrest rate as a result of stop and search²²⁷

A 2019 research study has questioned its efficacy as a tactic of policing:

Overall, our analysis of ten years' worth of London-wide data suggests that although stop and search had a weak association with some forms of crime, this effect was at the outer margins of statistical and social significance. We found no evidence for effects on robbery and theft, vehicle crime or criminal damage, and inconsistent evidence of very small effects on burglary, non-domestic violent crime and total crime. When we looked separately at S.60²²⁸ searches, it did not appear that a sudden surge in use had any effect on the

²²¹ Met stop and search data

²²² Met stop and search data

²²³ Met stop and search data

²²⁴ Home Office, Stop and search open data, 2006/07 to 2019/20

²²⁵ Met stop and search data

²²⁶ Met infographic provided to the Review

²²⁷ Home Office, Stop and search open data, 2006/07 to 2019/20

²²⁸ Section 60 (S.60) of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 allows a police officer to stop and search a person without suspicion

[underlying trend in nondomestic violent crime.](#)²²⁹

A forthcoming study of stop and search shows evidence of crime reduction.²³⁰ Based on an analysis of 40 pieces of research on stop and search, conducted largely in the USA, the research found that they were 'associated with a statistically significant reduction in crime of approximately 13%'. However, it also noted that:

- 'Existing scientific evidence does not support the widespread use of [police stops] as a proactive policing strategy'
- Those stopped by the police suffer far more mental and physical health problems than those who live in the same neighbourhoods but have not been stopped by police
- Those who had been stopped showed a significantly more negative attitude towards the police than those who had not been stopped
- Level of distrust in police was twice as high among those who had been stopped compared with those who had not been stopped.

Done fairly

If the Met is going to use this tactic, it has to be able to show transparently that it can carry out stop and search fairly and in the right circumstances.

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, there is support overall for the use of stop and search. However, the MOPAC Public Attitude Survey also asked whether the use of stop and search is fair. The number of people who agreed rose from 72% in 2014 to 79% at the end of 2019, then reduced to 60% in the most recent survey.²³¹

However, around half of respondents under 25, and fewer than 50% of Black or Mixed ethnicity respondents were confident that stop and search is being used fairly in London.

Throughout the Review, we heard numerous examples of stop and search being carried out badly on Londoners from Black, Asian ethnic minority backgrounds. This included examples where officers:

²²⁹ [Ben Bradford and Matteo Tiratelli in the Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 28 February 2019, *Does Stop and Search Reduce Crime?*](#)

²³⁰ Weisburd, Petersen and Fay in the Oxford Journal of Policing, 17 January 2023, *Does Scientific Evidence Support the Widespread Use of SQFs as a Proactive Policing Strategy?*

²³¹ [MOPAC Trust and Confidence dashboard](#)

- Had justified carrying out a search based on a person's ethnicity alone
- Had been rude or uncivil while carrying out a search
- Had used excessive force, leaving people (often young people) humiliated, distressed, and this damaged trust in the Met

But the Met's response, both to these examples and to complaints, was to focus on whether the search was *lawful*, rather than considering whether it was done well, or fairly, or examining the impact on the person being searched and their view of the police.

In a system of policing by consent, considering whether an act was lawful or not is not sufficient. As the Peel principles state, while officers should:

“Demonstrate absolute impartial service to the law” they should do so “by ready offering of individual service and friendship to all members of the public without regard to their wealth or social standing, by ready exercise of courtesy and friendly good humour, and by ready offering of individual sacrifice in protecting and preserving life”.

Throughout this Review, officers at every level repeatedly told us that they understood that ‘every contact leaves a trace’, meaning that every interaction a police officer has with a member of the public has an impact. Yet the Review has not seen evidence of how the Met has built this approach to its application of stop and search as a crime fighting tool.

Transparency

The Review was unable to identify any indications that the Met had explored the impact of stop and search on the trust and confidence of Londoners, especially the young Black men who are disproportionately the victims and perpetrators of police recorded violence in London.

We heard that being stopped and searched can be humiliating and traumatic. Yet we could find no evidence of the Met considering how this would impact on how those who had been stopped would use the police service (including their willingness to report crimes, provide vital intelligence, and seek help if they or their families are in danger) and how to mitigate this.

The Met Direction and Strategy to 2025 says:

Our focus on violence will not come at the expense of legitimacy and trust. Police efforts to suppress violent crime have had a positive effect, and the activity is strongly supported by the public. However, some of the activities we use in order to save lives and reduce crime can impact on levels of trust in some communities. We will continue to work with communities to tackle violence in a way which is evidence-based and effective.²³²

Instead, the Review found that the Met's response is to explain controversial tactics in what they consider to be a more accessible way, as if this were only a problem of the public not understanding what the police do clearly enough. For example, the STRIDE 2022-23 action plan says:

Through accessible public-facing videos, we will provide explanations of how Met officers and staff use our powers and perform our functions within the law... This ensures that there is the widest explanation of police powers available in short social media friendly clips. We know getting these interactions are critical [*sic*] in ensuring both trust and confidence in the Met. Therefore, these videos cover the legal powers associated with stop and search, what training officers receive, including how we involve community members in that training.²³³

This is an example of how the Met engages with the public. The belief is that it is for the public to understand the Met better, not for the Met to listen or understand public concerns regarding stop and search.

Attempts on the part of MOPAC to hold the Met to account and understand better their approach to stop and search, have been met with resistance.

The Review was told of a joint Met and MOPAC Body-Worn Video Camera research project aimed at better understanding stop and search interactions which had caused significant frustration due to lack of progress.

The research project was first discussed between MOPAC and the Met in 2018 but disagreements over the project's aims, terms of reference and other matters meant that it wasn't announced until November 2020 as part of the Mayoral Action Plan.²³⁴

²³² [The Met's Direction: Our Strategy 2018-2025](#)

²³³ [STRIDE Action Plan 2022-23](#)

²³⁴ [Mayor of London, 2020, Mayor's Action Plan: Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing](#)

Despite this announcement, there continued to be disagreements over the project including who would have access to the raw footage and how the videos would be coded. In February 2021, the Met agreed that the project could proceed as an initial pilot as long as it was Met staff only who were accessing and coding the footage, with their training delivered by MOPAC. This training for the pilot was due to start in summer 2021 but was not carried out until December 2021 due to Met staff illness and absences.

In January, February and March 2022 the Met started coding videos for the initial pilot. In June 2022 the first Advisory Group meeting for the project took place with academic, statistical and youth group members.

In July 2022, the Met provided their data to MOPAC. When MOPAC reviewed the work, they found huge variation across coders' level of detail and on key information including use of Taser, use of PAVA,²³⁵ subjects fleeing the scene, and subjects in possession of a weapon. Officers were often coding the same encounter in very different ways. MOPAC held debrief sessions with the Met in October 2022 to discuss the issues, but the Review was told only four of the initial 20 coders attended, some of whom had not done any coding. In November 2022 MOPAC paused the project indefinitely as they were unable to fully understand or address the coding variation or amend the coding framework without the ability to review the footage.

In January 2023, discussions took place between the Met and MOPAC around a potential solution to allow research to progress and the Met set up a specific group to progress the work. This was due to meet in February 2023. MOPAC say that they were not invited to the meeting.

Stop and search is currently deployed by the Met at the cost of legitimacy, trust and, therefore consent. To date, the Met has been unable to explain clearly enough why its use is justified on the scale it uses it, and in the manner and way it is carried out, particularly on Black Londoners. It has damaged trust. If the Met is unable to explain and justify its disproportionate use and the impacts of these, then it needs a fundamental reset.

Use of force

The Mayor's 2020 Action Plan recognises the issue of disproportionality in the use of force against Black Londoners. During a consultation period with Black Londoners, participants discussed the use of handcuffs. They spoke of:

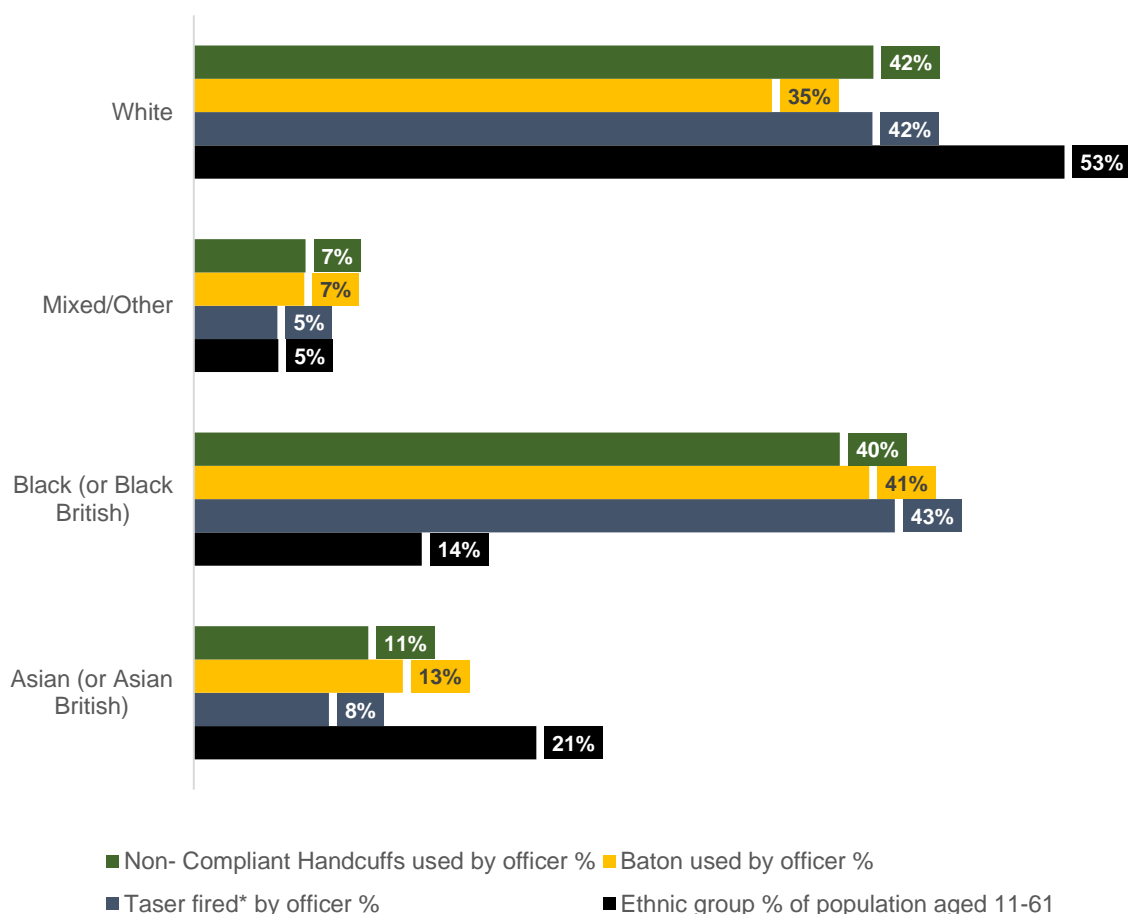
²³⁵ PAVA is a defence spray which can be used to stop people from resisting

a widely held perception that it has become the norm for Black people to be handcuffed during stops and searches which ‘feeds community perceptions and anger around racial profiling and unfair treatment.’²³⁶

From 2020-2022, our analysis of Met data found that Black appearing people in London aged 11-61 were over 3 times more likely to be handcuffed than White appearing people of the same age, 4.5 times more likely to have a baton used against them, and nearly 4 times as likely to have a Taser fired on them by a Met officer.²³⁷

Mixed ethnicity people in London of the same age group are also around twice as likely to have been handcuffed by a Met officer and have had a baton used against them than White appearing people. There appears to be very little, if any, disproportionate use of force against Asian appearing Londoners.

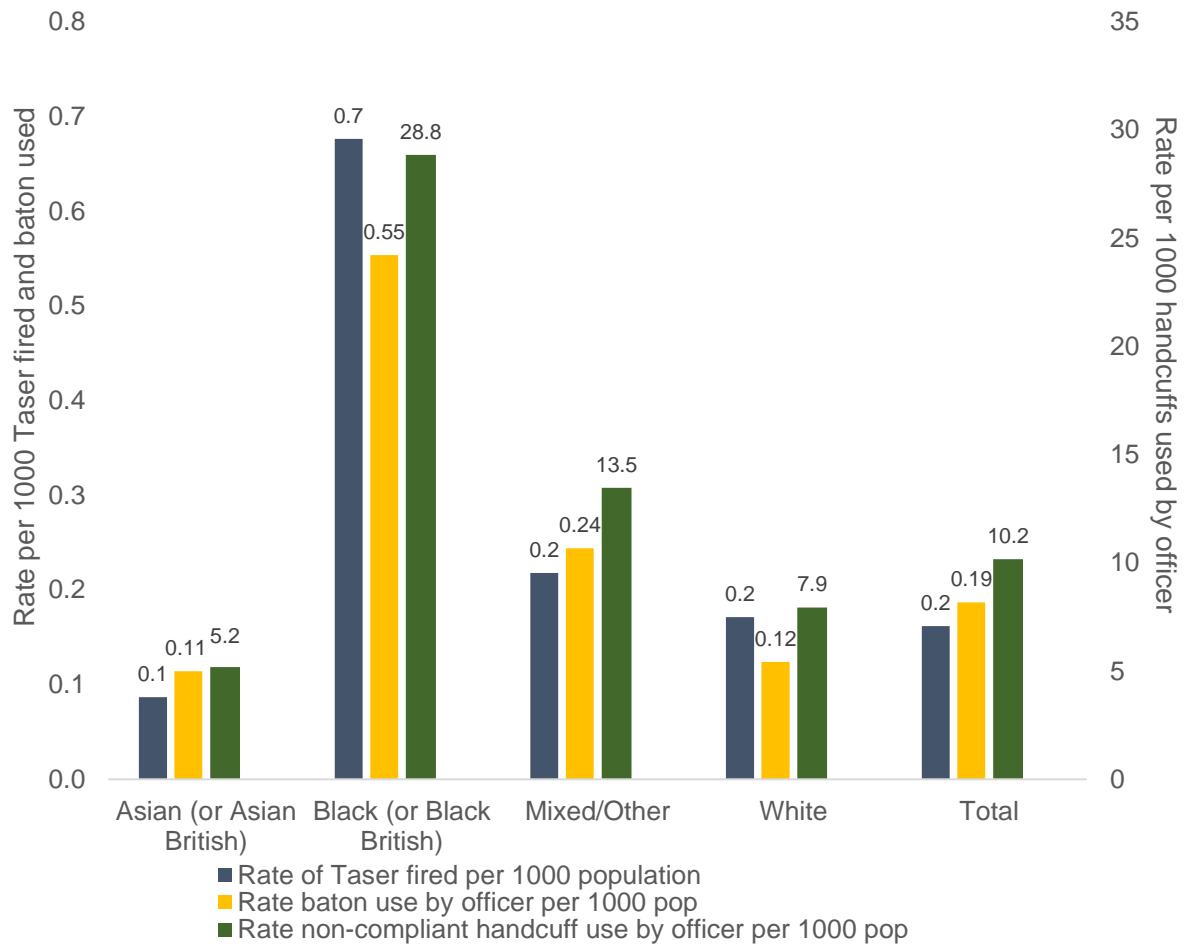
Figure 9.3.20: Percentage of compliant handcuffs used, non-compliant handcuffs used, baton used, and Taser fired by a Met officer by ethnic appearance of the subject August 2020 to August 2022 and percentage of London’s population aged 11-61 in 2021



²³⁶ [Mayor of London, 2020, Mayor’s Action Plan: Transparency, Accountability and Trust in Policing](#)

²³⁷ Met use of force data - there is minimal use of force outside of these age groups

Figure 9.3.21: Rate of Taser fire, baton use, and non-compliant handcuff use per 1000 population aged 11-61 in London, August 2020 to August 2022



HMICFRS found similar levels of disproportionality, comparing those who have force used against them with the overall population, based on the 2011 Census.

The Review’s own data shows significant levels of disproportionality. When sharing our findings with the Met, the Review was informed that they had conducted their own internal analysis in December 2020 that reached a very different conclusion – little to no ethnic disproportionality.

After requesting the evidence used to reach this conclusion, the Review found that the Met was not using London-wide population data as a baseline, but rather, the demographic composition of the custody population:

“using the London-wide population as a baseline can give a misleading perception of how our officers are making decisions...an alternative approach is to use our custody population as a reasonable representation of the types

of people our officers encounter in situations that could lead to the use of force.”²³⁸

Using the ethnic composition of the custody population, they conclude that use of force incidents are only 18% more likely to involve a Black person than a White person.

The Review agrees that using the entire London population will not be the most accurate baseline to ascertain disproportionality in the use of force. For instance, Home Office analysis²³⁹ shows that nationally 0.1% of use of force were recorded against children under 11 and 0.7% of use of force incidents were recorded against adults over 65. For this reason, the Review has used 2021 Census data for the London population aged 11-61, rather than whole population data.

Using the custody population as a baseline for understanding potential disproportionality in the Met’s use of force is concerning for several reasons. By trying to assess ethnic proportionality of “*the types of people our officers encounter in situations that could lead to the use of force*” assumes no disproportionality or bias exists in any and all encounters the Met have with the public. Using the custody population as a proxy for these “*types of people*” assumes there is no disproportionality or bias in the make-up of this population, including how and why they (and not others) were arrested and taken into custody in the first place. For this reason, we do not accept the results of this analysis.

The ability of an officer to use force during an incident to protect themselves, their colleagues, and the public is critical. It is also the most obvious additional power given to police officers over citizens and, therefore, they have to be trusted to use it fairly and appropriately.

Strip searching children: ‘adultification’

In December 2020, a 15-year-old Black girl (‘Child Q’) was strip searched by two Met officers at her school in Hackney. A Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review, published in March 2022, found that ‘[racism \(whether deliberate or not\) was likely to have been an influencing factor in the decision to undertake a strip search.](#)’²⁴⁰

There is an ongoing IOPC investigation into the officers involved in the search, including whether discrimination played any role in it. This ongoing investigation prevents the Review from discussing or making any conclusions on the incident itself.

²³⁸Metropolitan Police Service, December 2020, Internal Management Board paper, ‘*MPS use of force analysis*’

²³⁹ [Home Office, Police Use of Force statistics](#)

²⁴⁰ [Jim Gamble QPM, March 2022, Local Child Safeguarding Practice Review](#)

However, the case prompted national examination of the issue of strip searching children, and particularly Black children. The Office of the Children’s Commissioner initiated an investigation into the Met’s practice of strip searching children during stop and searches which took place between 2018 and 2020.²⁴¹ Over that time period, 650 children were strip searched, a quarter of whom were aged between 10 and 15 years old.

Of these 650 searches:

- In 23% of instances an Appropriate Adult was not present
- In 53% of instances no further action was taken
- In more than half of the searches the location was not recorded.

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner also found significant racial disproportionality in the use of strip searches on children. 58% of the boys who were strip searched were described by the officer as Black. In 2018 this figure was 75%.

The prevalence of widespread racial disproportionality in intimate searches lends weight to the claim that ‘adultification’, where Black children are treated as adults and as a threat, therefore justifying greater use of force or intrusive interventions, is present in the Met.

The Review heard of a Black child in London who sought help by disclosing to a non-police safeguarding professional that they were carrying a knife for protection. They said that that they were involved in a gang but wanted help to leave. At a later date, the child made the same non-police safeguarding professional aware that they had been assaulted by an adult. The safeguarding professional made arrangements to protect the child, and contacted the police to report the assault and to hand in the knife. A different unit attended and they arrested the child.

“We completely lost him, he totally disengaged. He lost trust in the safeguarding professional, he didn’t trust the authorities.”

“We do deal with criminality, yes that person did present a risk to other people, but you have to look at the full circumstances. He asked for help, we could have helped.”

²⁴¹ [Children’s Commissioner for England, 8 August 2022, *Strip search of children by the Metropolitan Police Service – new analysis by the Children’s Commissioner for England*](#)

In January 2023, the Runnymede Trust recommended that the government should end the power of the police to strip search children, and should require all Safer Schools Officers to be withdrawn from schools in England, due to the disproportionate impacts on Black and ethnic minority communities and their failure to support a safer school environment.²⁴² The Government has also released new guidance for schools on strip searches.

The Review has seen evidence that the Met are willing to consider that procedural mistakes and policy breaches may be committed by their officers in relation to their actions towards Black children.

However, the Review has also seen an unwillingness inside the Met to interrogate whether there are broader issues around race, desensitisation and systemic bias towards Black children.

“It’s more incompetence rather than a deliberate act...It’s not institutional racism or corruption, it is incompetence.”

“We accept cops makes errors. Whereas, the perception is that it is targeted action and malicious thought. There is a discord between what [a] member of public thinks and what we know.”

It is symptomatic of the Met’s approach to understanding, recognising, and responding to allegations of racism within its ranks.

Black Londoners and lack of trust

Earlier in this chapter we referred to lower levels of trust and confidence particularly among Black and Mixed ethnicity Londoners. However, it is important to emphasise that their attitudes and experiences are cumulative.

We heard from Black Londoners about a deep mistrust of the Met resulting from years of over-policing and under-protection. The Met deals with each incident by explaining the lawfulness or correctness of a procedure, but it ignores a much wider and deeper experience.

Lack of trust is generational. While many families teach their children that police are there to keep you safe, many Black Londoners have to teach their children something different: that they should avoid contact with the police in case they are stopped or searched without cause. With each generation, that mistrust deepens.

²⁴² [Runnymede Trust, 16 January 2023, *Over-policed and under-protected: the road to safer schools*](#)

“We have been living in this hostile environment my whole life, I was born into this hostile situation. We carry that trauma.”

“It has always been the burden of the Afro-Caribbean community, since Windrush there has been this relationship with the police.”

“There is such a fundamental lack of trust in the Metropolitan Police, specifically within the Black community: we just don’t trust them.”

Officers working in schools report children saying:

“I don't want to be a police officer when I grow up; they're all racist...Children of nine who have this perception of officers and it breaks my heart.”

Addressing this requires humility, accepting mistakes and a commitment to sustained change:

“The public don’t want to hear an apology. They want to hear that it won’t happen again. They want to hear that people have been held to account and that steps have been taken so that things will be different now.”

9.3.5. Conclusion

The findings in this chapter are not new. We have highlighted what others have identified: the lack of representation of Black, Mixed and ethnic minority individuals across the ranks in the Met; the day-to-day experience of Black and ethnic minority officers in the Met; the disproportionality in the misconduct system which sees Black officers 81% more likely to find themselves in the misconduct system; the level of grievances raised by Black officers and staff; and the fear of speaking out; as well as the silence within its senior ranks in responding.

We have also highlighted the big gap between Black and Mixed ethnicity Londoners and others in terms of trust and confidence in policing; that Black and ethnic minority victims are less likely to be satisfied with their treatment; the ongoing disproportionality in the use of stop and search; the absence of cogent explanations of why this happens; the disproportionate use of Tasers and batons on Black Londoners and the overuse of intrusive searches on Black children.

These point to a collective and continued failure by the Met to understand, accept and address the existence of racism at all levels in the organisation. We have found complacency in the Met to tackle problems, a lack of curiosity about what people of colour are telling them; and a wilful blindness to seeing the evidence all around them, within and outside the Met.

There is cynicism that the Met is capable of changing itself in relation to race. Officers, staff and community representatives we spoke to said they felt little had changed. Many expressed a weariness about the persistence of these problems.

"If you left it to the police, there will be no change. It always takes an external force to make the organisation act."

"We've had so many watershed moments we should be swimming."

"People I know live at the sharp end of policing, you might have the handle but we have to live with the blade."

We have found institutional racism in the Metropolitan Police.

Chapter 9.4. Conclusions on discrimination

Chapter summary

We have identified institutional homophobia, misogyny and racism in the Met. This can be seen in overt discrimination, mistreatment and abuse of LGBTQ+, women and Black, Asian and ethnic minority officers and staff; unfair outcomes for these groups inside the organisation as a result of bias in processes and systems and in attitudes and behaviours; unfair outcomes in communities that result from under-protection, from over-policing, or from both; and a culture of downplaying and denial of discrimination and repeated unwillingness to accept and deal with institutional failures that let down Londoners.

The preceding sections of this chapter have given examples of the presence of racism, sexism, misogyny and homophobia.

It shows that supervisors and senior officers look the other way, ignore their management responsibilities and actively engage in discrimination.

Although supposed to provide formal routes to challenge, uphold policing standards and public confidence, the Met's processes for grievances, complaints, and misconduct in particular, are perpetuating racism, misogyny and homophobia by failing to take action when misconduct is reported.

This bakes discrimination into the system. So does the failure to record accurate data on protected characteristics, or to ask questions about whether discrimination is happening.

Attempts to improve diversity in the Met are not succeeding. Recruitment drives are focused on quantity and there has been insufficient planning and a lack of regard for retaining officers. Women and ethnic minority recruits are leaving faster than their White male counterparts.

These are institutional and systemic failings for which the Met needs to take responsibility.

The Met's response to discrimination is wholly unsatisfactory. Deep in its culture, it is uncomfortable talking about racism, misogyny, homophobia and other forms of discrimination.

“People like to grasp things that are operational that they can get their minds around – they don't like confronting those bigger difficult challenges.”

Leadership is not about comfort. Failure to grasp difficulties means that issues at the heart of how the organisation runs, its values, and policing London, get ignored. Things that are not talked about are not addressed.

As the Review's misconduct interim report and so much of the evidence gathered for the Review clearly show, statements about zero tolerance are untrue. The challenge for leaders is that fake change and hollow statements only serve to reinforce negativity, cynicism and hopelessness in the culture.

Those who take on, and call out, inappropriate behaviour often do so at immense personal cost. At times it was a huge and almost cataclysmic step for an individual to complain about their treatment by colleagues

The Met has not gripped the extent and scale of the problems that exist in its organisation

There have been numerous high-profile instances of racism, misogyny and other forms of discrimination that have been uncovered in the Met, often with HMICFRS, the IOPC or other bodies reporting on how things went wrong.

In this context, the description of institutional racism should come as no surprise. The Review has stood on the shoulders of others, allowing us to clearly see a landscape where, in particular, London's Black communities have been over-policed and under-protected by the force that are supposed to protect them, whilst not asking itself if there is any connection between that and their failure to recruit and retain Black officers and staff.

During the course of this Review the institutional racism label attracted much attention and disquiet. Senior Met officers referred to "*being weighed down by it*" and said "*It's an albatross around our neck.*"

We have also seen institutional misogyny, sexism and homophobia in the organisation and are concerned about those with other protected characteristics, in particular those with disabilities.

It is our wish that the evidence we have gathered will precipitate further action, including systematic research and improvements to data gathering to better understand how these forms of discrimination are institutionalised within the organisation.

Inevitably, the review will provoke questions about the definition of institutional racism, misogyny and homophobia we are applying. We do not seek to replace the definition of institutional racism coined by Sir William Macpherson in the 1999 Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, which was:

The collective failure of an organisation to provide an appropriate and professional service to people because of their colour, culture, or ethnic origin. It can be seen or detected in processes, attitudes and behaviour which amount to discrimination through unwitting prejudice, ignorance, thoughtlessness and racist stereotyping which disadvantage minority ethnic people.²⁴³

However, in relation to racism, misogyny and homophobia, we have seen and set out evidence in this Review of:

- overt acts of homophobia, misogyny and racism by serving officers and staff in the Met
- systems that have bias and are discriminatory in the outcomes they deliver
- bias in the policing of London, including under-protection and over-policing of Black communities and under-protection of women and girls
- a culture of denial with leadership and systemic failures to root out racist behaviours and address discrimination.

The new leadership of the Met must accept and address these issues in order to move forwards.

²⁴³ [The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry, February 1999, Report of an Inquiry by Sir William Macpherson](#)

Chapter 10: The missing voice of Londoners

Chapter summary

The Met's engagement of Londoners has become one-way, lacking candour, transparency and openness, feeling 'tick-box' and not genuinely valued. Examples of good engagement exist but are patchy and inconsistent. Advisory groups exist and have proved valuable at times but are not maintained or used effectively or strategically. Alongside this, restructuring in recent years has seen local police teams becoming larger in geographical coverage, within 12 Basic Command Units covering the whole of London, and reductions in visible Neighbourhood Policing teams have reduced day-to-day contact with communities. The Met has become less connected and less accountable to Londoners, and needs to turn this round if it is to rebuild public consent.

10.1. Introduction

This chapter looks at the Met's engagement and communication with Londoners.

Effective and regular communication and engagement between the public and the police is integral to the UK model of policing by consent. The Peelian principles discussed in chapter 1 make clear that this is vital for the legitimacy of policing:

To recognise always that the power of the police to fulfil their functions and duties is dependent on public approval of their existence, actions and behaviour and on their ability to secure and maintain public respect.

Effective community or neighbourhood policing requires a visible police presence providing reassurance, a clear and transparent purpose for engagement, and regular formal and informal interaction.²⁴⁴

These factors make it more likely that the public will report crime, share intelligence and concerns and enable the police to respond to public priorities. Legislation also requires police to consult with the public in each neighbourhood, provide local information about crime and policing and hold regular public meetings.²⁴⁵

Engagement is therefore an operational imperative for effective policing, not a separate function or an add-on. The main way in which this is fulfilled is through the interactions between citizens and the police in day-to-day policing.

²⁴⁴ [College of Policing, 2022, Neighbourhood policing guidance](#)

²⁴⁵ [Section 34 of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011](#)

However, with resources becoming more stretched, the police presence less visible, and the changing crime profile (in particular, the proliferation of crimes in people's homes such as domestic abuse and sexual violence), different strategies are needed to seek and maintain the public's confidence to continue to report crime and provide intelligence. Community engagement helps to underpin and reinforce that confidence.

In this context, community engagement is not just about individual interactions between police officers and citizens. Rather, as one evidence review identified, it is an ongoing "process" of collaboration between police and citizens in which local people are 'willing, purposefully enabled and empowered to participate.'²⁴⁶

10.2. Neighbourhood policing

As chapter 4 demonstrated, like the rest of frontline policing, the Met's neighbourhood policing functions are under acute pressure and this has a direct knock-on to community engagement more broadly.

The Neighbourhood Policing teams posted on wards across London are considerably smaller than their predecessors the Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNTs) introduced by the Met in 2004. The SNTs comprised 5 PCSOs, three PCs and a Sergeant for every ward in London. These numbers have been eroded over the last ten years. The blueprint commitment was to have two DWOs (Dedicated Ward Officers) and one PCSO for each ward.²⁴⁷

The Met reorganisation in 2018 ring-fenced neighbourhood policing to prevent abstractions. But the day-to-day reality is that neighbourhood teams are seriously depleted, and have been described as a resource for other parts of the frontline. Officers said they were not being given a chance to get to know their ward, due to regularly being deployed elsewhere in the BCU.

As chapters 4 and 5 show, we do not underplay the resourcing struggles on other parts of the frontline. The reduction in strength of neighbourhood teams reflects the decline in a model of policing that relies on visibility, familiarity with a small area and local residents, in order to hear their concerns and pick up intelligence.

An officer reflected that since the team were "*always being taken off to do other things...this isn't an SNT anymore.*"

Increasingly, Londoners' engagement with the police will be in an emergency or confrontational context. This places a greater imperative on Response teams and

²⁴⁶ [N8 Policing Research Partnership, *Community Engagement: Evidence Review*](#)

²⁴⁷ Ward boundaries reflect electoral wards

public order teams such as TSG to ensure their interactions are polite, respectful and proportionate as they have become the face of policing in London. It also increases the importance of ensuring other forms of community engagement are effective and constructive.

10.3. The Met's approach to communications and community engagement

There are many local structures, such as Independent Advisory Groups, Safer Neighbourhood Boards, Neighbourhood Watch and Youth and Schools Officers to promote engagement. Each BCU should have its own locally tailored engagement strategy agreed by the BCU Commander.

The Crime Prevention, Inclusion and Engagement team (CPIE) in New Scotland Yard is responsible for centrally-driven community engagement initiatives and oversight of the four Met-wide Independent Advisory Groups (IAGs). IAGs are unpaid community groups who provide the police with advice on areas of expertise. They are intended to be critical friends to the force.

The Met has four pan-London IAGs: Race IAG; LGBT+ IAG; Disability IAG and the Somali IAG. The Met set up the first IAG in anticipation of the Macpherson Report in 1999.

There are a range of ways in which the public can engage with the police. There is a Safer Neighbourhoods Team resource on the Met website listing a 'menu' of 24 types of community contact session, including bike marking schemes, Ride-alongs, Safer Neighbourhood Boards, and Police Encounter Panels.

The quantity of engagement mechanisms is commendable, as are the intentions behind them. However, the falling levels of public trust in the Met tell a different story, and suggest that the plethora of activity around community engagement is not building public trust and confidence.

The Met's approach to community engagement is summarised in STRIDE, which says:

We want the Met to be a trusted and effective social institution so we will engage with communities and partners about the challenges London faces and how we can address these together, as well as how we can make a wider positive contribution to society and support the values that matter to Londoners.²⁴⁸

²⁴⁸ [The Met's Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement \(STRIDE\) 2021-2025](#)

The STRIDE Action Plan sets out three activities specifically aimed at improving engagement.²⁴⁹

- We will ensure that every ward has a ward panel which people can engage with online
- We will transform our two-way communications with the public (focused on better use of social media)
- We will engage with, understand and celebrate all of London's communities (focused on making IAGs more diverse and getting involved in celebrating events through the year).

With characteristic optimism bias, the Met makes no mention here of the critical need to address falling trust and confidence levels. These should have been flashing lights for the Met leadership to consider their legitimacy with the public of London.

These commitments have the feeling of a tick-box exercise. They include a wide range of activities but they lack substance or a clear sense of purpose. We found this reflective of the Met's approach to engagement both with the public, and with public representatives and other stakeholders more broadly.

We identified three ways in which the Met's approach to community engagement and public communications might be problematic:

First, the Met's engagement is one way

The Met's approach to engagement tends to focus on the need for the public to understand the Met and the difficult job it faces.

The Review team were invited to go out on a ride-along by a BCU Commander who told us that everyone loves taking part in them, and said that after a trip out with officers, *"they realise what we're up against."*

"[Liaising] with the community... basically involves telling them what the Met's doing and why and if they only understood what the Met was doing they would realise that the Met was doing the right thing."

A senior official who worked with the Met talked about engagement work:

"There were a lot of events such as faith breakfasts. But they were very defensive of the Met in tone. A lot of it was just explain it better or more, i.e.

²⁴⁹ [The Met's Strategy for Inclusion, Diversity and Engagement \(STRIDE\) 2021-2025](#)

don't accept criticism and then actually change, just defend practices and don't change. That's not community engagement."

This was particularly the case in relation to controversial issues within the Met. An officer talked about some of the specialist teams including armed police having engagement teams:

"It's more about ill thought-out community PR. They would never ask the public 'how do hard stops make you feel?' It would rather be from the arrogance of 'Oh you don't understand why we're doing hard stops. And if you did, you would agree that it's the right thing to do.'"

One IAG member described the engagement as: *"lots of one-way...PowerPoint presentations."*

They said sitting through these presentations can feel like the Met is *"ticking a box"*.

A senior figure in local government talked in similar terms about the one-way communication:

"When the relationship really suits them we are partners. When there was likely to be a riot, [the Chief Superintendent] is calling me every minute asking if I can speak to community leaders. When it doesn't suit them, you're in a different league."

Second, there is a lack of candour in the Met's engagement

The consequence of one-way communication is that when the Met is forced to respond, it doesn't know how to do so properly.

We heard and saw for ourselves examples of where the Met focused on a particular *incident* but seemed unable to respond to the *context* of a situation. Responding in this way denies peoples' lived experience.

In particular, we heard from a senior stakeholder in London that where there are concerns about use of force which is judged to be excessive or without grounds, the Met's focus is on legality and whether it was within the rule and regulations. There is often little recognition of how such incidents are felt and experienced in communities.

"If it's in the regs then they think it's okay."

The example of the Clapham Common Vigil following the murder of Sarah Everard, discussed in the Introduction, was highlighted to the Review several times. The policing of the Vigil was undertaken without due regard to the context in which it was

taking place. The police insisted their approach was in line with regulations and therefore they had no choice but to observe the Peelian principle of upholding the law and not pandering to public opinion.

Listening and responding to concerns is not pandering to public opinion, but understanding what it feels like to be on the other side and whether, considering the context, their approach should be different.

The Met's Media and Communications Directorate gives out official 'lines' to BCUs to pass on to communities on issues of pan-London concern. A number of people highlighted that these lines unnecessarily limit information, are too bureaucratic, or too legalistic. A London Borough Chief Executive reported three recent cases where the initial response of the police was simply not true and said this made him sceptical:

"The first story that comes out is always inaccurate, and that undermines faith and confidence."

These responses do not inspire trust. They do not convince the public and partners that the Met is sharing the whole story or even telling the truth.

Many were tired of taking part in engagement activities when the Met so often failed to provide the whole picture, or to listen and learn from errors. They did not want to hear an apology for hurt feelings only for something similar to happen again.

Third, the Met doesn't value external engagement.

"The organisation does not value community engagement. The organisation values a technocratic skill set. The 'correct answer' to questions about community engagement in promotion exercises are 'I'll set up the gold and silver and there will be a bronze community engagement person and they'll do all that and that's end of story.' It's about not wanting your decisions challenged."

Several people, including members of the Met-wide IAGs, strongly held the view that the Met's community engagement had 'gone backwards' in recent years. The Race IAG talked about the period after the Macpherson Report where community engagement activity increased in breadth and intensity:

"The Met opened its doors and they went around London [listening]. We were empowered to challenge. At that point the Met wanted to be challenged."

People we spoke to from outside the Met who had been involved in community and stakeholder engagement over time, felt that in recent years, the Met had become

more internally focused and less interested in engaging with external audiences and, in particular, those with more challenging views.

A London MP talked about a public meeting she organised about gang crime. Understandably, members of the public felt very concerned about this issue. Senior officers attended:

“150 people attended the meeting on gang crime but none of the [senior] police...would sit down and talk to people...it felt very us and them...it was mortifying...they were stood together in a corner.”

The function and purpose of community engagement had been ‘deprioritised’ and members of the public who wanted to work with the police had been side lined and not valued:

“The leadership either doesn’t understand the concept of engagement or doesn’t want to.”

Senior officers within the Met agreed that community engagement had been more perfunctory:

“We tick a box. We have an IAG because we have to, invite them to things because we ought to. Really they should be a critical friend. They should be the people we go to, trusted partners that we should run things by. But they’ve morphed into something else.”

Local IAGs set up by BCU commanders were said to be

“mushrooming in size but not challenging in style.”

A volunteer member of a board told us that they previously sat on numerous New Scotland Yard forums. They said that they had worked hard on these forums, but that suddenly they were stopped, with *“No thank you, nothing.”*

“I don’t like the centre, they take Black engagement and squander it, treat you like nothing when you’ve given time and expertise, totally dismissing and diminishing my experience...when I’m putting my name out to my community.”

This kind of treatment is a fast-track to losing the co-operation of people who want to try and improve policing.

The Met was regularly criticised for too often involving stakeholders at the validation or sign-off stage, not at the outset, when there was something to shape.

The Disability IAG told us of being shown newly installed and expensive facilities which were unsuitable and lacked necessary accessibility adjustments. The Met hadn't thought to consult ahead of time.

“There's no forethought to come and talk to us in advance. They come to us when it's all gone wrong to ask how they engage with the community, often it's too late.”

One prominent coalition of organisations reflected that engagement feels like a PR exercise rather than real consultation. The Met came to them with an action plan a few days before it was due to be published, not allowing for any shaping of the plan.

“It's always about perception, optics, and being seen to be doing something... it's motivated by trying to achieve quick results... There's an illusion of impact but nothing is changing.”

The traditional engagement structures were felt to be in need of renewal. One member of an IAG commented:

“If a new Commissioner is going to succeed with IAGs there needs to be a refresh and a review of whether we are worth retaining.”

Others commented that engagement structures included:

“All the same people all the time, so [are] going to get the same thing every time... The Met's been lazy with how we pick our IAGs and what their Terms of Reference are.”

The CPIE function in the Met was similarly felt to be under-used and unfocused.

The CPIE team looked after the Staff Support Associations even though these are Met employees. The outreach team is charged with attracting more diverse recruits into the Met. Both would seem to have a more natural fit in Human Resources.

The Met has not seen engagement as important, or as an ongoing process which enriches their work and provides important support at critical times, but as an exercise which needs to be ticked off before completing the job.

Elsewhere in this Review we talk about the distance between the leadership and the frontline and the leadership and Londoners. In an echo of this we were told:

“Some senior Met officers do not speak to a Londoner from one year's end to the next. They drive their car into the car park and they talk to other police officers all day, maybe the occasional high-ranking official from another

organisation but they do not speak to Londoners and understand their needs and feelings. For them it is not important. Across the Met, it's somebody else's job to liaise with the community.”

We saw good engagement in our time at the Met. Good engagement was consistent and led from the top. In one instance, senior officers had forged links with members of the Black community over stop and search and significant youth crime and exploitation issues. This had led to practical changes in the way the BCU policed the area. BCU senior officers and members of the public felt that there was better understanding of what the police had to do and why – and how the community could help. The police had started with a state of mind that was open, humble and valued the public as part of the solution rather than a problem.

“You can't not want to work with someone like that, who is truly reflective, has critical thinking. His humility allowed me to feel comfortable to fill him in on cultural context, race, and disproportionality.”

Only those who see the value of community engagement and are most passionate about it have continued to prioritise it amidst all the operational pressures. Staff in most BCUs spoke of not having the time to do it well.

One BCU talked about the success they had by investing in community engagement. It meant that people from the local community would approach the police when they had problems or concerns. As the Inspector said, *“There's no price for that.”*

10.4. Public complaints

Public complaints systems are another means by which organisations can listen and seek to understand how they are engaging with the public as well as demonstrating accountability and a willingness to learn from failings.

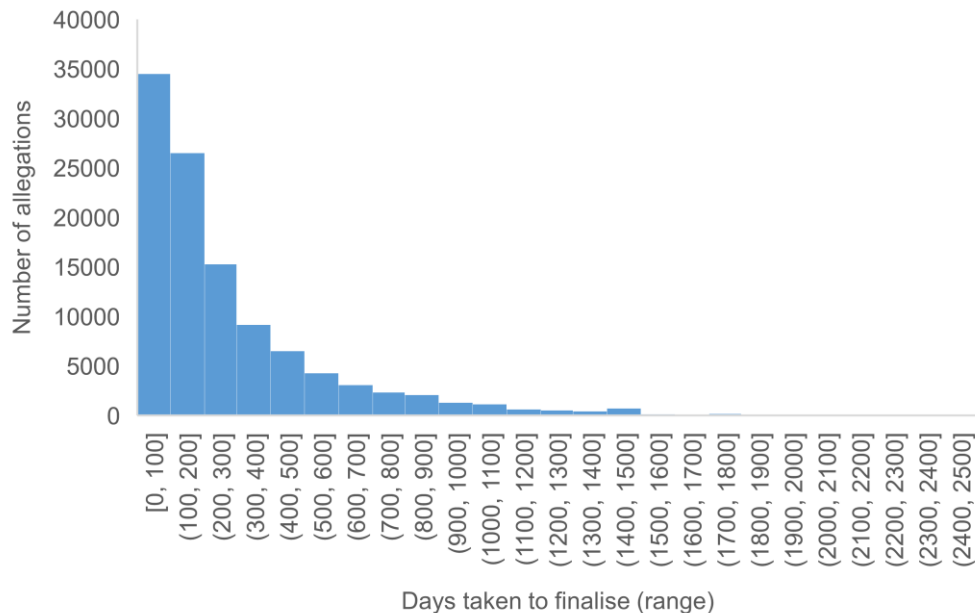
We reviewed all public complaint allegations and cases received by the Met between April 2013 and March 2022. The public complaints system in the Met shares similarities with the internal misconduct system discussed in chapter 7 and our October 2022 Interim Report.

In the last three financial years, the Met has received between 12,000 to 16,000 public complaint cases each year, made up of around 20,000 to 30,000 allegations ('cases' refer to the number of complaints recorded and 'allegations' relate to the breakdown of each individual complaint).

On timeliness, the time taken to finalise a public allegation of wrongdoing varies considerably. Between 2013-14 and 2018-19, around a third of cases are finalised in under 100 days but nearly another third (30%) took over 300 days, as shown in the

chart below. Public complaints received after 2018-19 are not included in this analysis as the proportion of allegations still unresolved is too large to reliably compare averages.

Figure 10.1: Distribution of days taken to finalise public complaint allegations against Met officers and staff 2013-14 to 2018-19 (more recent allegations omitted due to large numbers still being unresolved)



However, when public allegations are finalised, no action is taken 90% of the time. This is considerably higher than the rate of ‘no case to answer’ in the internal misconduct system, which is around 55-60%.

In a small percentage of cases (6%) management action is taken in the form of monitoring, reflection or training organised within the subject’s team. Formal action against the officer is taken in response to less than 1% of allegations.

The attitude which underpins was expressed to the Review as ‘officers who get complaints are just busy’ alongside a view that many public complaints are ‘malicious’ or ‘frivolous’.

Despite an average resolution time of just under a year, and an extremely low rate of action taken in response, Black Londoners have continuously made allegations against Met officers at a much higher rate than any other ethnic group relative to their population. Where the ethnicity of the complainant is known, Black Londoners

make up 26% of complaints though they represent only 13.5% of the population.²⁵⁰ In 2020-21, there was also an increase in the volume of complaints linked to race discrimination.²⁵¹

The Met and MOPAC have recognised the issues with the public complaints system and have carried out work aimed at ensuring the Met handles complaints more effectively. Since April 2022, a new system has been introduced around handling public complaints with a different approach taken in the Met.

10.5. The voice of Londoners

In chapter 1 we set out the views from our surveys of Met officers and staff and Londoners on how the Met prioritises crime in London. This showed agreement on several main issues, but also some divergence, most notably on sexual offences including rape, domestic abuse and violence against children, which Londoners felt should be given greater priority.

Our survey of Londoners also indicated low levels of consultation with Londoners on priorities amongst those who responded.

In the Review survey of Londoners we asked about consultation on crime priorities:

- Over half (54%) of Londoners responding feel that they have *never* been asked for their views on what policing priorities should be in London
- Fewer than one in ten (9%) say they have been asked within the last year
- Londoners who did recall ever being asked, or felt they had the opportunity to express views, were slightly more likely to be White than from an ethnic minority background, and were more likely to be men than women.

The scale of London and its policing has a significant impact in terms of the Met's capacity to engage with the public, hearing Londoners' concerns and responding to their priorities. Every London BCU is at least the size of a county force in England and Wales. Even the smallest BCU is bigger than four other forces.

The largest BCU (Central West; 2,097 officers) has more officers than 27 other UK police forces, including Norfolk, Staffordshire and North Wales.

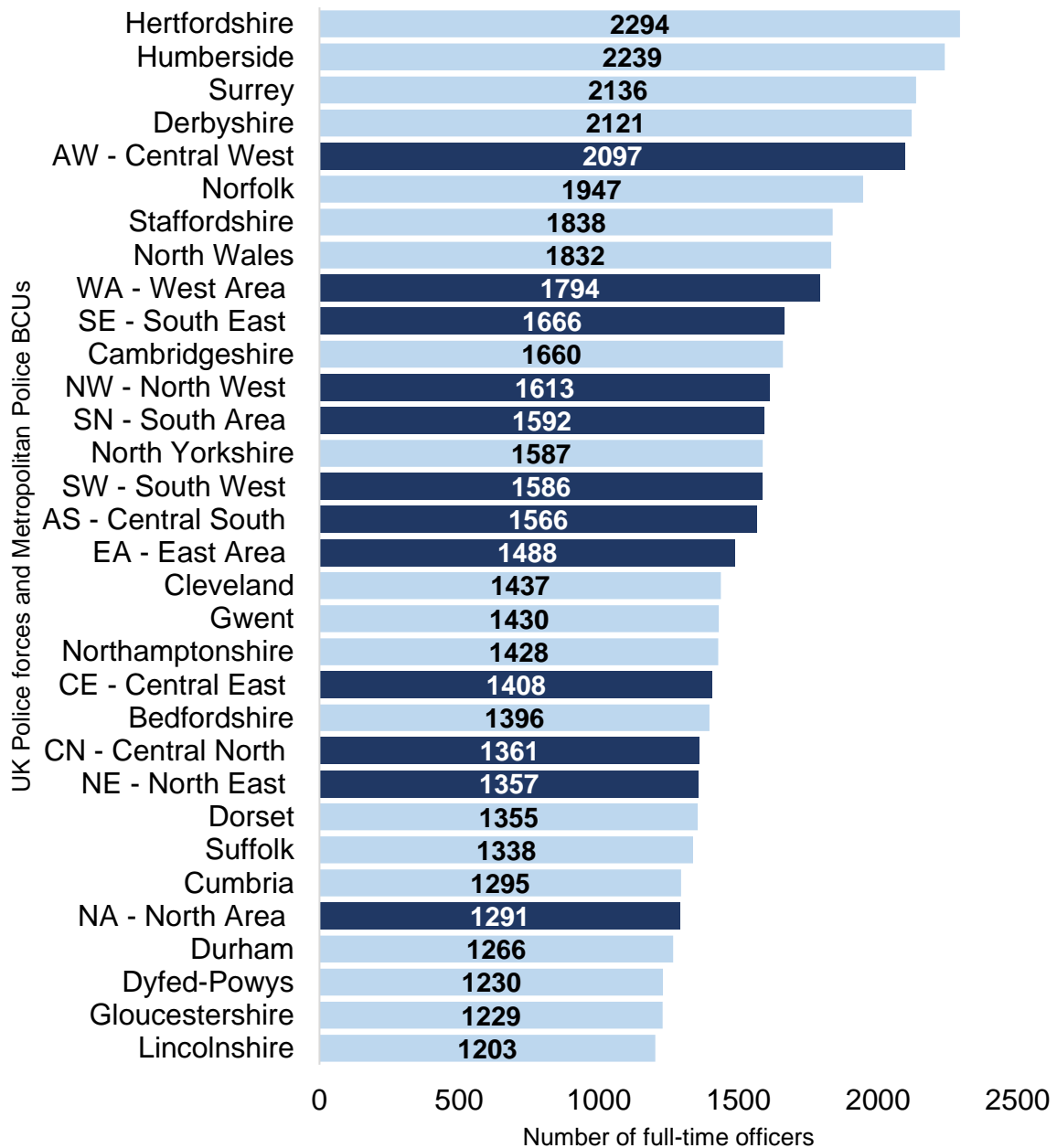
²⁵⁰ Around 50% of allegations do not include information on the complainant's ethnicity

²⁵¹ [MOPAC MPS Oversight Board, June 2021, Public complaints and conduct](#)

Taken together, the boroughs of Enfield and Haringey (North Area) are policed by a greater number of officers than the following UK police forces: Lincolnshire, Gloucestershire, Dyfed-Powys and Durham (all less than 1,300 officers).

The table below shows how a number of London BCUs (in dark blue) compare with some of the police force areas in England and Wales (in light blue).

Figure 10.2: UK police forces and BCUs by number of full-time officers



BCU Key:

Metropolitan Police BCU
UK Police Force

Central North: Camden, Islington; Central East: Hackney, Tower Hamlets; Central West: Kensington & Chelsea, Hammersmith & Fulham, Westminster; East Area: Barking & Dagenham, Havering, Redbridge; West Area: Ealing, Hillingdon, Hounslow; North West: Barnet, Brent, Harrow; North Area: Enfield, Haringey; North East: Newham, Waltham Forest; South Area: Bromley, Croydon, Sutton; South East: Bexley, Greenwich, Lewisham; Central South: Lambeth, Southwark; South West: Kingston, Merton, Richmond, Wandsworth.

If a BCU were a county force, it would have its own Chief Constable and an elected Police and Crime Commissioner acting on behalf of that county's population. In contrast, each BCU is headed by a Chief Superintendent. As we have discussed elsewhere in this report, they do not have full authority over their patch, with New Scotland Yard running BCUs almost as satellites in the name of pan-London consistency.

In his report on Policing in Northern Ireland, Lord Patten stated that policing by consent is contingent on proper accountability.²⁵² One component of accountability is transparency, the means 'by which the community is kept informed, and can ask questions about what the police are doing and why'.

Although there are Borough-level Community Safety Partnerships which include local partners and, indeed, there are other structures like safer neighbourhood boards and other community engagement activities established by MOPAC, despite this, there isn't a clear way for local authorities and their residents to hold the Met to account for how they police and tackle crime on a Borough basis.

The Met's engagement with the public has been stripped right back through the loss of neighbourhood policing; the one-way, dial-out attitude to engaging the public; the frequent lack of candour in its responses to incidents, and an absence of understanding about the value of community engagement. The Met has become disconnected from Londoners. Their consent can no longer be assumed. Londoners' voices are missing from London policing.

²⁵² [Lord Patten, September 1999, *A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland*](#)

10.6. Conclusion

Active and purposeful engagement is an operational imperative for effective policing, not a separate function.

Public confidence and trust in the Met have been falling, calling public consent into question, and the relationship with Black Londoners in particular remains unfixed. Weaknesses outlined in chapter 8 exist in the system of accountability to politicians elected to represent the public. In these circumstances, good communication, consultation and engagement with the public – giving them a real say in how London is policed – becomes more important than ever.

The main way in which ongoing and consistent engagement between police and the public occurs is through the interaction between citizens and the public in day-to-day policing. But with the decline in numbers of officers undertaking neighbourhood policing, and officers constantly abstracted, interaction is now less regular.

This drives up the imperative to make every opportunity for engagement count.

The Met cannot afford to squander the valuable contributions of people who want to make policing better. It needs to be prepared to listen, to understand that communication goes both ways and that they have to be humble and learn what they can give. The Met does not always know better, and cannot have all the answers.

“If the Met can rid itself of this tendency to want people to reaffirm what they’re doing as opposed to genuinely looking for insights and changes so it can improve relationships with local communities, then it might start to turn a corner.”

Annex A. Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference were agreed by the former Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police Service, Dame Cressida Dick DBE QPM, and Baroness Casey of Blackstock DBE CB, prior to commencing the Review.

Purpose

To undertake a review into the standards of behaviour and internal culture of the Metropolitan Police Service and make recommendations on the actions required.

Scope of review

- Examine the extent to which there is sufficient clarity (and consistency) on the standards of behaviour expected by officers, staff and volunteers working in the MPS, and consider whether current expectations are appropriate
- Examine adherence to those standards across the MPS and what changes might be required to ensure the high standards expected are routinely followed
- Consider what changes are required to the Met's internal culture to build high levels of public trust in the service, and the highest levels of employee engagement
- Listen to and engage with a broad range of current and former Met personnel and other stakeholders, to understand the lived experience of current Met culture and standards
- Review as appropriate relevant systems, policies or processes in the Met to understand whether change is required
- Consider the impact of the wider regulatory context in which the Met is operating and whether this creates any barriers
- Review the relevant programmes of work the Met already have in train that link to the above and suggest improvements and prioritisation, and how learning is embedded, applied consistently and communicated publicly
- Examine the Met's approach to transparency as an organisation
- Consider learning from other sectors and internationally

- Make overall recommendations for change by the Met and by its key partners, including City Hall and Government, having regard to the work of the forthcoming QC-led inquiry recently announced by the Home Secretary.

Annex B. Methodology

The Review has been conducted through a wide range of approaches over the last year, described in more detail below. We have heard from thousands of serving and former Met officers and staff, Londoners, and individuals working in stakeholder organisations which engage with the Met, including Government, City Hall, London Boroughs, politicians, and oversight and advisory bodies.

Our work has included over 350 meetings with Met officers and staff, external organisations and Londoners; over 50 private meetings with individual serving or former officers and staff and families of victims; visits to 23 of the Met's different Operational Commands; numerous listening events with officers, staff, bereaved families and victims of crime; a survey completed by 6,571 serving or former Met officers and staff; and polling of 1,218 Londoners. The Review team has also attended and observed many other Met meetings and activities.

Additionally, we have received many hundreds of written submissions to the Review and analysed a wide range of research and published and unpublished data to evidence our findings.

Inside the Met

The Review has been given an unprecedented level of access to Met documents, data, staff, officers and sites.

Over 200 meetings and roundtable discussions were held with Met officers, staff and former personnel across all different ranks and levels

Over 50 anonymous, personal accounts from both current and former officers and staff who asked to speak to us, including both current and former officers and staff. These took place in a private and confidential, setting.

Visits

We carried out visits to different parts of the Met. These included:

- Visits to all 12 of the Met's Basic Command Units where we met each Senior Leadership Team and then separately held a discussion group with officers, probationers and staff
- Visits to 11 of the Met's Operational Command Units (OCUs):
 - The Directorate of Professional Standards

- Inquiry and Review Support Command
- Parliamentary and Diplomatic Protection
- Taskforce including Territorial Support Group and Mounted Branch
- Specialist Firearms Command
- Met Command and Control
- Counter-Terrorism
- Central Specialist Crime
- Specialist Crime Review Group
- Royalty and Specialist Protection
- Commander Lead for Violence
- Observation of day-to-day activity inside the Met including:
 - Shift parades
 - Custody suites
 - Special operations room which manages pan-London events
 - Met Command Control where call handlers work
 - Shadowing officers on shifts
 - Taking part in ride-alongs

Staff groups, representative bodies, Trade Unions and Staff Support Associations

We met with a number of representatives from groups which represent officers, staff and volunteers, including:

- The Met Police Federation
- The London Branch of the Superintendents Association

- The Chief Police Officers Association
- The Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS)
- Prospect
- Unite

We held listening events attended by a total of 140 officers and staff, including:

- The Chairs of Staff Support Associations
- The Network of Women
- The LGBT Network
- LGBT women officers
- The Disability Network
- The Met Black Police Association
- Staff Support Associations for Black, Asian, and ethnic minority groups (including the Black, Muslim, Chinese and South East Asian, Sikh and Hindu Staff Support Associations)
- The Black Police Networking Strand
- Staff Support Associations representing 'non-visible' ethnic minorities

Four listening events were held for Met staff only:

- Corporate Services (two events)
- Operational Support Services
- Forensic Services

We also held a listening event with call handlers from Met Command and Control who interact with the public.

Surveys of officers and staff

To ensure we engaged with as many people as possible, we commissioned Ipsos, a data survey specialist, to conduct a quantitative survey of current Met officers, staff and volunteers between 5 December 2022 and 3 January 2023.

The survey attracted 6,751 respondents. An open link survey was sent to all current Met employees and volunteers via email and shared through online forums. Demographic quotas were monitored during fieldwork, but it was not possible to set or achieve exact quotas. The sample achieved resembled the known profile of current Met staff and the data was weighted by length of tenure, current role and officer rank to further reflect the profile of the Met workforce. Due to the survey methodology, the findings reflect the perceptions of those who opted to take part and are not necessarily representative of every Met officer, staff and volunteer.

A qualitative questionnaire, comprising a small number of open questions, was also issued to 30 current and former Met officers, staff and volunteers who wanted to contribute to the review but with whom we were not able to meet with individually.

Outside the Met

We spoke to a wide range of people and organisations outside the Met including public bodies, representatives, community groups and Londoners.

Meetings

We held over 150 meetings and listening events with external stakeholders including:

- Government and Parliamentary bodies:
 - Ministers and Shadow Ministers
 - The Home Office
 - The Mayor of London and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), and City Hall
 - Local councils
 - MPs
 - House of Lords representatives
- Oversight and Advisory Organisations:

- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services
- The Independent Office for Police Conduct
- The National Police Chiefs' Council
- College of Policing
- Community and special interest groups across London, including Independent Advisory Groups.

We also held:

- Two listening events with 15 victims of a broad range of crimes facilitated by the Victims Commissioner for London
- One listening event with five bereaved families, facilitated by INQUEST, a charity which supports bereaved people following a death in state care or detention
- Private and confidential meetings with families of victims, to gain anonymous and personal accounts of their experiences.

Polling of Londoners

A poll of Londoners was commissioned and conducted by Ipsos to gauge public views on Met culture and standards, identify their priorities for policing, and understand how the Met is received in communities.

Interviews with Londoners took place between 12 and 23 December 2022 through the Ipsos Online Access Panel. 1,218 adults between the ages of 18 and 75 completed the survey.

Quotas were set to reflect the known profile of the London adult population by age, gender, work status, and the relative population in inner and outer London. Results have been weighted to account for any shortfalls in quotas, including interlocking weights by ethnicity and social grade, age and ethnicity and ethnicity and working status. Boost samples were achieved with LGBTQ+ Londoners (203 interviews), Black African/Black Caribbean/Black British Londoners (173 interviews) and Asian/Asian British Londoners (213 interviews).

External advisory group

We have had the benefit of external advisors with a wide range of collective professional expertise. This ranges from roles as senior community leaders, senior police officers, roles relating to policing scrutiny and roles which involve partnership working with the Met.

Written submissions

We received many hundreds of written submissions to the Review by post and by email. These were accounts of lived experiences from Londoners, and Met personnel both past and present.

Data analysis

The Review has taken an exploratory approach to a wide variety of data held and produced by the Met and MOPAC, as well as several publicly available datasets. Data produced by the Met and MOPAC has been sent back to the relevant analytical teams for quality assurance and feedback. Publicly available data has been sent to the Home Office Police and Fire Analysis Unit. The Review would like to thank the Met, MOPAC, and Home Office analysts for their time, cooperation, and challenge in this process.

Where possible, data over time has been presented in financial years. Where notable amounts of data would be lost by using financial years, alternative 12-month groupings have been used. This is stated in the body of the analysis. Throughout, the Review uses complete years of data to compare long-term trends, sometimes omitting more recent monthly or quarterly data, the most recent year of data therefore will be 2021-22, unless otherwise stated.

Where considering and presenting data on ethnic composition and proportionality, Black, Asian, Mixed ethnicity, and Other ethnicities have often been combined unless each ethnicity is taken separately. White British and White other ethnic categories have been combined where appropriate. Where proportionality is measured, Black, Asian, Mixed ethnicity, and Other ethnicities are compared to the White category, rather than the average.

Publicly available data

[2021 Census Data](#): throughout the report, where the demographic composition of London's population is referred to or compared to, we have used the 2021 Census Results for London unless referring to a different year or group, in which case, Office for National Statistics ([ONS](#)) estimates have been used.

[MPS Crime Data Dashboard](#): where crime data for London has been referred to, primarily offence volume, type, and sanction detections, the data has been taken from the publicly available MPS Crime Dashboard. The data was collected in February 2023, and uses the period between February and January to present the most up to date data at the time:

- Where total crime or total offences are referred to, the Review has used ‘total notifiable crime’ in line with the Home Office definition of notifiable crime
- Where offence rates per population are presented, the Review has used the population of the 2021 Census as a baseline
- Where change in the number of offences over time is presented, the Review has used percentage change between two yearly volumes
- Where changes to the percentage of total crime is presented, the Review has used percentage point change
- Sanction detection rate has been calculated by dividing the volume of sanction detections by the volume of offences in a year
- Where changes to the sanction detection rate has been presented, the Review has used percentage point change.

[Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#): The Review has conducted a broad analysis of indicators of crime, demand, and outcomes in the Met and compared it to the national and most similar forces. Rates of victims not supporting prosecution are taken from outcomes tables (year ending March) ‘Evidential difficulties (victim does not support action)’.

The Review has conducted complementary analysis on the data provided by the [ONS on Domestic Abuse and the Criminal Justice System](#). This data is presented in calendar not financial years. The variety of metrics presented by the ONS means that the Met is not always the unit of analysis. Analysis includes:

- Charge/summons rate for Domestic Abuse flagged offences in the Met
- Average number of days to charge Domestic Abuse related cases by Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) area
- Outcomes assigned to crimes identified as domestic-abuse related in the Met, including the rates where cases are closed when the victim does not support action

- Proportion of domestic abuse-related prosecutions and convictions, by CPS area and police force area (combined MPS and City of London).

The Review has conducted an analysis of data on criminal court outcomes in London provided by the [Ministry of Justice](#) to understand the experiences of victims of different offence types in London's Criminal Courts:

- Change in the volume of offences at trial in London and nationally has been presented as percentage change from a 2014-15 baseline until 2021-22
- Conviction rates for trials in London and nationally have been presented as percentages for calendar years 2010-2020 ([last available data](#))
- Racially or faith-based offences included in this analysis are offences with the following codes: 125D, 58E-J, 66.5, 8.06, 8.07, 8.12, 8.13, 8.14, 8.15, 8.16, 8.17, 8H.

Data on the use and outcomes of stop and search [in England and Wales from financial year 2006-07 to 2019-20](#) has been analysed to provide a comparison of the Met's usage and outcomes relative to other police force areas. More in-depth and up to date stop and search data for the Met only has been provided to the Review, and constitutes the majority of the analysis of stop and search in the report.

MOPAC data

Trust and confidence: The Review received data on the MOPAC Public Attitudes Survey over time, including the measures and timeframes reported on the [dashboard](#), and others which are not publicly available.

- For London-wide long-term trends in the MOPAC Public Attitudes data, the Review has presented or referred to discrete quarterly data rather than rolling 12 months
- For trends in the proportions of different demographic groups, the Review presents and refers to financial year averages for each group ending in financial year 2021-22
- The demographic groups referred to in the Review's analysis reflects the categories used by MOPAC in their survey

Victim satisfaction: The Review received data on the MOPAC User Satisfaction Survey over time, including the measures and timeframes reported on the [dashboard](#) and others which are not publicly available.

- The review received data on the annual survey between 2016-17 and 2021-22. It should be noted that there was a methodological change in the survey in 2020-21 which limits the comparability of long-term trends
- The demographic groups referred to in the Review's analysis reflects the categories used by MOPAC in their survey
- The crime types included by MOPAC are hate crime, robbery, burglary and assault only.

Further information can be found at ['Taking Part in MOPAC's surveys'](#).

Met data

The Review received several datasets collected and managed by the Met throughout the Review. Where possible, financial years were requested and analysed. Where data did not fit into financial years, alternative 12-month periods have been used. All demographic groupings presented in the analysis of this data reflect those reported and captured by the Met's systems. These datasets included:

[Met HR systems data](#), including:

- Workforce data: detailing monthly volumes of Met employees from April 2012 shown by rank, role, staff type, ethnic group, gender, length of service, business group, and team. All workforce data presented is organised by full time equivalent (FTE) rather than headcount unless the figure refers to the numbers of people in each rank. Yearly figures have been calculated by averaging monthly figures so are an average for the whole year presented. Financial years have been used ending in 2021-22 as the last complete financial year
- Attrition data: detailing the numbers of all Met employees leaving the workforce that month. This included information on reason for leaving, rank, role, staff type, ethnic group, gender, length of service, business group, and team. Attrition rates have been calculated by dividing the yearly attrition figure by the number in the workforce for that financial year
- Internal moves: Referred to in the report as 'churn', this details the volume of Met employees entering and leaving a BCU or OCU in each financial year.

Churn rates have been calculated by summing the numbers in and out and showing the total as a percentage of the BCU or OCU workforce for that year. Due to inconsistent reporting on HR systems, this data is limited and unlikely to be entirely accurate, but should instead be used to indicate a general pattern

- Recruitment: The Review received data for the recruitment profile of the Met's incoming officers over a 10-year period ending in 2021-22. Recruits were shown by gender and BAME or non-BAME categorisation only
- Recruitment predictions in this report are built on the following assumptions: the average percentage of Black, Asian and ethnic minority and female recruits over the last three financial years, and the average rate of change in the proportion of Black, Asian and ethnic minority and female recruits are indicative of the Met's current recruitment course; the average rate of attrition for all officers, Black, Asian, ethnic minority officers, and female officers over the last three financial years will broadly stay the same over time; an uplift in officer numbers to net 4,557 until 2024-5 will take place, and after this point, officer numbers will broadly stay at the same level. The yearly workforce average FTE for BAME and female officers in 2021-22 is the start point for the model.

[Finance and budgetary information](#) in the form of financial year Outturn Statements from 2015-16 to 2021-22. Outturn summaries detailing overall cost element group spending from 2010-11 were also provided by the Met:

- Consultancy spend and external costs reported on are only those classified on the Met ledger as such. There will be additional external and consultancy expenditure that has been capitalised so will not be contained in our analysis
- Our analysis of Met finances is based on outturns not budgeted spend
- Real-term spend adjusted using [Bank of England Inflation Calculator](#) with the 2022 Consumer Price Index. This was accessed in November 2022
- Anonymised data produced from the Met's bi-annual staff survey from 2019 onwards. All groupings and demographics presented from the analysis of this survey reflect those used by the survey.

[Data on the Met's internal misconduct system](#) extracted from the Met's Centurion systems, covering the period from April 2013 to March 2022. This dataset contains information on all allegations (18,589), cases (10,252), and officers or staff (12,856) involved in misconduct issues (formally) from April 2013 to March 2022. The

difference in these numbers reflects the fact that one case may involve several allegations against several individuals. As several officers may also be involved in more than one misconduct case during this time period, the actual number of individual officers and staff is 8,917.

- These allegations are internal only (initiated by Met staff, officers, or their families. They do not include complaints from the general public, which are held on a different dataset)
- This dataset includes information on the nature of the allegation; the outcomes and decisions made; information on the subject of the allegation and key data around times, dates, and jurisdictions
- It should be noted that this data is significant, but can never be fully accurate as it depends on individual recording practices, which can vary between people and across time.

[Data on the Met's internal grievance system](#) extracted from the Met's Centurion systems, covering the period January 2018 to July 2022. This dataset contains information on all grievance allegations (2,292), cases (1,163), and officers or staff (294) raising a grievance (formally) in the period.

- Due to the data cut, analysis of grievance data uses calendar years not financial years
- This dataset includes information on the nature of the allegation; the outcomes and decisions made; the person making the allegation and key data around times and dates.

[Information on claims to employment tribunals against the Met](#) from 2017-18 to 2021-22. The data included information on the claim type(s), information on the complainant, including gender, age, ethnic group, rank, role, staff type and length of service, and the outcome of the claim.

[Data on each of the 619 usages of Regulation 13 of the 2003 Police Regulations](#), (whereby a notice is served on an officer thought to be unsuitable for policing) covering the period April 2018 to March 2022. This data included only information on the start and end date of the Regulation 13 case, the business group, ethnicity and gender of the subject and the outcome of the case. Each data row pertained to another Regulation 13 case, so the same officer may appear in the data multiple times.

[Data on the Met's public complaints system](#), extracted from the Met's Centurion systems covering the period April 2013 to March 2022. These are allegations of wrongdoing against Met officers and staff submitted by members of the public. This dataset contains information on all allegations (175,997), cases (102,357), and officers or staff (58,276) who were the subject of public complaints from April 2013 to March 2022. The difference in these numbers reflects the fact that one case may involve several allegations against several individuals. As several people may also be involved in more than one conduct case in the time period, the number of individual officers and staff in the data is actually 32,129.

- This dataset includes information on the nature of the allegation; the outcomes and decisions made; information on the subject of the allegation and the complainant (where it is known); and key data around times, dates, and jurisdictions.
- It should be noted that this data is significant, but can never be fully accurate as it depends on individual recording practices, which can vary between people and across time

[Data on the victims of crime extracted from the Met's Crime reporting system \(CRIS\)](#), detailing the gender and ethnicity of victims of crime during the period January 2020 to January 2022. Offence types included: violence against the person, with and without injury; rape and other sexual offences; offences flagged for Domestic Abuse; and Hate Crime. Subject data on people reported as missing to the Met in the 12 months (ending January 2023) and victims of homicide in the Met from 2002-03 to 2022-23 (incomplete financial year ending January 2023) was also provided.

Data on the Met's use of stop and search in the period from April 2016 to April 2022. This included information on the time, date, justification, location, and outcome of the stop, as well as information on the subject of the stop.

- Ethnic appearance is used in the Review's analysis of proportionality, rather than self-defined ethnicity, as this indicates how the stopping officer perceived the subject's ethnicity
- The baseline for proportionality for stop and search used in the report is the 2021 Census data for London, but only ages 11-61 due to the population typically stopped by the Met
- Comparative analysis of other forces, and national usage of stop and search does not use this dataset as a comparator, but the publicly available stop and search data.

Data on the Met's use of force between August 2020 and August 2022. The data set is taken from 'use of force' forms submitted by officers. Each officer must submit a different form for each force tactic used in an incident. For this reason, a single incident can generate several rows of data, from several officers, using several tactics against a single subject. Filtering by tactic avoids over-counting subjects, though two officers may use the same tactic against the same subject in single incident.

- It should also be noted that by the Met's own estimates (in December 2020) this data only includes 65% of the use of force incidents
- Ethnic appearance is used in the Review's analysis of proportionality, rather than self-defined ethnicity, as this indicates how the stopping officer perceived the subject's ethnicity
- The baseline for proportionality for use of force used in the report is the 2021 Census data for London, but only ages 11-61 due to the population typically the subject of use of force tactics by the Met
- Taser incidents in this analysis are only those where the Taser was fired (CED (Taser) Fired). Other Taser tactics which also involve being fired on (Angle Drive Stun, Taser arced, and Drive stuns) were analysed for disproportionality but were omitted due to small numbers.

Conduct issues

Where the Review has identified potential misconduct cases, and where the victim's permission has been obtained, the Review has shared information with the Met for further investigation.

Omissions

The Review has exercised particular caution when referencing or referring to cases where live criminal or misconduct investigations remain ongoing, or where IOPC investigations are currently taking place, to avoid prejudicing ongoing investigations.

Acknowledgements

We thank Camden Council for their generous support in providing the Review team with use of their accommodation and facilities.

We would also like to thank the head of the Operation Soteria Bluestone team, Professor Betsy Stanko, and her team for their work and their contribution to the report.

We have been struck by the willingness of so many people to speak to us, honestly, candidly and bravely about the many difficult and painful issues contained in this Review.

We have replayed their voices throughout the report. To protect their identity, we have not attributed quotes to individuals in the report, except where quoting senior individuals was necessary for the integrity of the Review.

We record here our sincere thanks to all of those who have spoken to us, and so generously given their time.

Finally, we thank the Metropolitan Police Service for their openness and support for the Review.

Annex C. The Review Team

Supporting Baroness Casey of Blackstock:

- Diane Caddle
- Sara Callan
- Isobel Fisher
- Dame Christine Gilbert
- Lucie Hilton
- Sarah Kincaid
- Jessica Lumley
- Niamh Mohan
- Neil O'Connor CBE
- Nishat Rahman
- Sara Williams
- And other team members