



Norfolk's Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) response to inspections published by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)

Section 55 of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017) requires local policing bodies to respond and publish comments on all inspection reports pertaining to your force within 56 days of report publication.

Inspection Title:

State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024-25

Published on:

10 September 2025

Publication Types:

Annual reports

Police Forces:

All local forces in England and Wales

Link to Report:

[State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024–25 - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

Section 55 Response Deadline:

5 November 2025

Key Findings

This is the first annual report since the new Government came into power in July 2024. As part of its 'Plan for Change', the Government has established the Safer Streets mission, which is an important recognition that reducing crime and improving access to justice are two of the most pressing problems facing society. Achieving the mission will require a contribution from nearly all government departments and public services, however the police service has the largest role to play. The Inspectorate have been pleased to see chief constables working towards the mission with a collaborative approach and vigour.

Police forces are making concerted efforts to improve public confidence. This year, Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) have again told HMICFRS about their efforts to improve how well their forces meet the fundamental and reasonable expectations of the public. Police forces are trying to improve how they respond to calls for service, investigate crime, meet the needs of victims and bring offenders to justice. They are

also continuing their efforts to improve their vetting and counter-corruption arrangements and to prevent and tackle misconduct in the workforce.

Another important area of focus is neighbourhood policing. The Inspectorate were pleased to see that during their Police Efficiency, Effectiveness and Legitimacy (PEEL) 2023–25 assessment programme, ‘preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability’ (which includes neighbourhood policing) has been one of the best performing areas. There are still elements of neighbourhood policing that need to improve, such as how often officers are diverted from their neighbourhood duties and how well police forces are tackling antisocial behaviour. Forces also need to improve how consistently they work with their communities, such as their work with external advisory groups. The Government’s Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee and associated £200 million in additional funding should help forces to further strengthen their approach. But with the continued financial challenges that most forces are facing, many Chief Constables are concerned this won’t be enough.

Police forces are now recording most types of crime more quickly and accurately. They have improved how well they can show that officers and staff treat the public fairly, appropriately and respectfully. This includes more use of body-worn video and an improved focus on safeguarding children and young people when using stop and search powers. HMICFRS have also seen better internal scrutiny of decision-making to provide assurance that stop and search and use of force is fair and proportionate.

HMICFRS found that many forces were struggling to perform adequately in their question areas on responding to the public, investigating crime and protecting vulnerable people. In part, this is due to the high demands placed on forces that frequently exceed the resources they have available. The Inspectorate also found that not all police forces were as well led, efficient, effective and sustainable as they could and should be. While forces have limited resources, HMICFRS believe many could do better with the resources they have.

After years of decline during the austerity period of 2010–19, in recent years the size of the police workforce has grown substantially. This growth in numbers should help forces to keep the public safe and bring criminals to justice, however the rapid decline and subsequent rise have led to high levels of inexperience in the workforce. In the year ending 31 March 2024, around a third of officers (35%) had fewer than five years’ policing experience. This lack of experience is a challenge for forces. The focus on increasing the size of the police workforce has been on police officers. While police staff numbers have also increased, Chief Constables haven’t been given the financial freedom to hire the balanced workforce of officers and staff they need.

For many in the service, morale is too low. One factor that may be contributing to this is the inconsistency in well-being provision between police forces. While support is improving, it still varies widely across England and Wales. Forces and the Government must do everything they can to help improve officer and staff morale and consistently support well-being.

Good leadership is critical at all levels of the police service, especially at the level of Chief Constable, who has overall direction and control of a force. They must be capable of

meeting the demands of the job. Unfortunately, HMICFRS are seeing a trend where there are not enough applicants for Chief Constable positions. Often PCCs have been successful in securing capable and highly qualified candidates, however, as a matter of principle, it isn't right that such important and influential senior positions are not attracting a diverse field of candidates. Police forces, the College of Policing, PCCs and the Government all have an important role to play in addressing this problem.

Overall, forces are improving in most areas in relation to vetting. HMICFRS welcome the new regulations that the Government has introduced to strengthen vetting and assist in dealing with misconduct, however there are still some aspects of vetting, counter-corruption and misconduct where forces need to do more. Chief Constables must maintain momentum in these areas.

A lack of clear national direction and fragmented performance frameworks have hindered improvement. The Home Office now plans to take a more active leadership role, including setting national priorities and introducing a new national performance framework. Strengthened powers for HMICFRS and earlier support and intervention from across the policing system will help to address underperformance; this will prompt struggling forces to become more responsive to concerns and more focused on outcomes for the public.

The 43-force structure helps to make sure that police are close to and understand their communities, but it also leads to inefficiencies, duplication and inconsistencies. Previous changes, such as the introduction of the College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council, have improved how forces work together, however overall progress has been too slow. The proposed National Centre of Policing could increasingly centralise many support functions that forces rely on, such as IT, to increase consistency between them and potentially lead to efficiency savings. The National Centre of Policing will need strong leadership and to be responsive to local needs. There are some problems it won't solve, such as when Chief Constables or PCCs need to reach a national agreement. A decision-making process is still needed to bind PCCs, Chief Constables and other parties to collective decisions that need to be made in the police services, rather than individual forces', interests.

Modern policing depends on the effective use of data and technology, yet many forces rely on outdated systems and struggle with poor data management. While science and technology have advanced rapidly, police forces haven't kept pace. Limited capital investment has contributed to this gap, and greater government support is needed. Forces must also embrace innovation to meet future challenges. Emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and facial recognition, will bring opportunities to operate more efficiently and effectively. Although some police forces have introduced impressive innovations, these have often been too slow to spread across the policing system, which has limited their impact.

The 'Spending Review 2025' has given a degree of medium-term financial certainty to forces, even if investment isn't as high as many Chief Constables had hoped. But the way the funding is distributed still needs to change because it is outdated and unfair, and the

absence of a capital grant for forces remains a major barrier to making some of the long-term investments that the police need.

Recommendations

There were no recommendations made. His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary noted that there is a great deal to do, and the police service will need focus and commitment. So that the service has the time and opportunity to make the necessary changes, he has chosen not to make any recommendations in his 'State of Policing' report this year.

Areas For Improvement

There were no areas for improvement.

Chief Constable response to report and any Recommendations/Areas For Improvement

The State of Policing 2024–25 report, authored by His Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Constabulary, offers a detailed assessment of the police service in England and Wales during a period marked by significant challenges and reform. It draws on inspections conducted between April 2024 and July 2025, including the full cycle of PEEL assessments across all 43 forces. The report is framed by the backdrop of a new government elected in 2024, which introduced the Safer Streets mission and a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee, both aimed at restoring public confidence and improving police effectiveness.

One of the central themes is the effort to rebuild trust in policing. While public confidence had been declining in previous years, the report notes signs of stabilisation, with forces making visible efforts to improve responsiveness, crime investigation, and victim care. This mirrors the journey of Norfolk Constabulary. Neighbourhood policing is highlighted as a key area of progress, with many forces showing strong performance in community engagement and crime prevention. However, concerns remain about the consistency of delivery, particularly where officers are frequently diverted from their neighbourhood duties. Avoiding such abstractions is a particular challenge in Norfolk given increasing demands and recently, the frequent requirement for our resources to police protests both locally and nationally.

The report also reflects on the police response to the tragic knife attack in Southport and the subsequent national disorder. While the bravery of officers was commended, the inspection revealed systemic weaknesses in intelligence gathering, coordination, and preparedness. These findings have implications for future public order policing and underscore the need for improved national mobilisation strategies.

Workforce challenges are another major focus. The rapid expansion of officer numbers following years of austerity has resulted in a high proportion of inexperienced personnel. This has placed pressure on supervision, training, and leadership development. Morale across the service remains a challenge, with police officers and staff reporting feelings of being undervalued, not least by the media. The report calls for more consistent well-being support and better leadership pathways, especially given the declining number of applicants for Chief Constable roles.

In terms of reform, the report supports the government’s plans to establish a National Centre of Policing and a new performance framework. These initiatives aim to address inefficiencies caused by the fragmented 43-force structure and to improve coordination, procurement, and technology adoption. This reform will only be deliverable if upfront investment is made available to support transition. The report also stresses the importance of capital investment in modernising police infrastructure and systems, noting that many forces still rely on outdated technology – however, no capital funding was provided to policing in the recent Comprehensive Spending Review.

For Norfolk Constabulary, which was among the forces inspected during this period, the implications are clear. The force must continue to build on its strengths in neighbourhood policing and public engagement, while addressing areas identified for improvement in crime investigation and workforce development. The national reforms offer opportunities for Norfolk to benefit from shared services and enhanced technological capabilities but also requires local leadership to ensure that these changes are implemented effectively and in a way that reflects the needs of Norfolk's communities.

PCC response to report and any Recommendations/Areas For Improvement

I welcome the HMICFRS State of Policing report 2024-25, recognising its value in highlighting the strengths, challenges and systematic pressures facing our policing services. This report is an important barometer of how policing is performing both nationally and locally and I recognise many of the pressures it identifies are equally felt here in Norfolk.

As your Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) my primary role is to ensure that the people of Norfolk receive a policing service that is effective, fair, resilient and responsive to local needs. I accept many of the observations and recommendations in the report and will use them to inform my ongoing governance arrangements to oversee the performance of Norfolk Constabulary, and to seek for continued improvements.

The report underlines that although funding in real terms is higher than in 2017/18, policing is still having to respond to rising and complex demands such as online exploitation, violence against women and girls, and mental health issues.

Norfolk is not immune to those pressures with the complexity of crime ever increasing which places constraints on resource allocation. I am supportive of reforming policing funding, and for multi-year settlements to offer greater certainty. In my role as PCC, I will continue to lobby government, with other PCCs, to ensure that Norfolk's funding reflects the demands and risks that we currently face and that Norfolk residents have a police service that is adequately funded.

The value of visible, local policing is recognised in the report, and it remains a crucial component to building public trust. In Norfolk, I will continue to place emphasis on transparency, accountability and meaningful public engagement which are essential in building trust and confidence in policing.

For Office Use Only:

- Response forwarded to the Chief Constable.
- Response forwarded to the Norfolk Police and Crime Panel.
- Response submitted to the HMICFRS monitoring portal.
- Response published on the OPCN website.