HMICFRS

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
and Fire & Rescue Services

PEEL: Police efficiency 2017

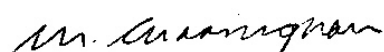## A national overview

Contents

Foreword

During the course of this year's efficiency inspection, there were several terrorist attacks in the UK that put into sharp relief policing's important role in keeping people safe. On each occasion, the police demonstrated bravery and dedication beyond the call of duty. From the horrific murder of PC Keith Palmer in the Westminster attack, and an off-duty police officer tackling an armed assailant during the attack in London's Borough Market to the dedication of those responding to the attack at Manchester Arena, we have seen how officers will put themselves between the public and danger. This bravery and professionalism in these dreadful circumstances shows that policing in England and Wales relies on the commitment and dedication of its workforce, whatever their rank or role, to help keep the public safe.

It is now even more important that forces' internal structures and processes are able to support those working on the front line efficiently and effectively. This is why in our efficiency inspections HMICFRS does not simply consider money, but also the degree to which forces make the best use of their resources to support police staff and officers to do their jobs. This includes police officers and staff having access to the information they need about local communities and local crime trends. It also includes them being given professional support to develop and improve their skills and their ability to police effectively. Ultimately, this requires adequate resourcing, investment and plans for the future, which increasingly means working efficiently and collectively with other organisations to protect and serve the public.

HMICFRS recognises that policing has had to make, and will continue to have to make, very difficult decisions about where to focus its resources. The policing workforce has shrunk over the last few years; in most forces, this has resulted in a better use of resources and a more focused policing model that is more efficient. There are undoubtedly things that forces could and should do to become more efficient, but, from speaking to staff and officers throughout every police force in England and Wales, we recognise that the pressures they face are significant and increasingly complex. The speed with which forces can improve efficiency relies on the continued resilience, adaptability and commitment of those working in policing.

I would like to thank all the forces that we inspected for welcoming and supporting our inspection teams again this year, particularly those forces that have been under more strain than usual because of the tragic terrorist attacks.

Michael Cunningham

HM Inspector of Constabulary

Summary and main findings

This is the third national report on police efficiency produced as part of the HMICFRS[1] PEEL programme. The report covers the financial year 2016/17, based on inspections carried out between April and July 2017, and is published alongside individual reports on the efficiency of each Home Office-funded police force in England and Wales.

The overarching question that this report considers is the same one asked in the last two years: "How efficient are the police at keeping people safe and reducing crime?"

This year's report focuses on the following three questions:

- How well does policing understand its demand?

- How well does policing use its resources?

- How well is policing planning for the future?

Each police force is given one of four grades for each of these three questions, as well as an overall grade. The four grades are: outstanding, good, requires improvement and inadequate. The grades for all police forces are available on the HMICFRS website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/peel-2017/

In writing this report, we have considered a range of data and documents that police forces have submitted, and have carried out fieldwork in each force, including interviews with the senior officers and staff responsible for finance, organisational change, human resources and performance. HMICFRS inspectors also held focus groups with officers and staff in each force. This year, we have examined closely the assumptions that each force has made about the future and have focused in greater detail on forces' plans to meet demand, develop the resilience and capability of the workforce and make the best use of technology. The complete information on last year's inspection and the full methodology used for this year's inspection can be found on the HMICFRS website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/peel-assessments/how-we-inspect/

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[1] These inspections were carried out before 19 July 2017, when HMIC also took on responsibility for fire & rescue service inspections and was renamed HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. The methodology underpinning our inspections' findings is unaffected by this change. References to HMICFRS in this report may relate to an event that happened before 19 July 2017 when HMICFRS was HMIC. Citations of documents which HMIC published before 19 July 2017 will still cite HMIC as the publisher.

Main findings

Our findings continue to be broadly positive, as most police forces can demonstrate that they are improving the efficiency with which they operate. Police forces face considerable difficulties and these positive findings reflect the huge effort that those working within policing have made. Policing is becoming increasingly complex, both in terms of the types of crimes that the police deal with and the number of different organisations with which they have to work, to provide the best service to the public. While policing budgets have been protected more than those in respect of some other public sector organisations, forces continue to face difficult financial decisions.

Individual force reports are available on the HMICFRS website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/peel-police-efficiency-2017/ Two forces have been graded as outstanding, thirty forces as good, ten forces as requiring improvement and no force as inadequate.[2] Two more forces this year have been graded as requiring improvement compared to last year. However, as was the case last year, most forces have been graded as good.

Every force faces different circumstances in terms of the problems it has to confront and its financial position. The findings from this inspection again show that even when their financial position is particularly difficult, it is possible for forces to gain a positive grade in relation to their efficiency. However, as a result of their financial positions, some forces have more limited opportunities for investment.

Almost every force has an adequate understanding of its current demand, while the best forces use sophisticated models and a range of data to understand trends. The best forces also have completed sophisticated analyses to identify where the greatest risks to them lie in terms of under-reported or otherwise hidden demand. However, the majority of forces could do more to improve their understanding of this area, which affects their ability to target activity effectively within their local communities.

HMICFRS remains concerned that few forces have taken sufficient steps to understand the skills they have, or need, in their workforce. Although it is encouraging that more forces have started to improve their understanding of this, most of them still focus on current skills, rather than on the skills they are likely to

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[2] After the terrorist attack at Manchester Arena on 22 May 2017, in which 22 people were killed by a suicide bomber, HMICFRS after consulting Greater Manchester Police decided that we would not undertake our early June inspection fieldwork. HMICFRS later completed a limited inspection, which included a series of interviews and visits to operational departments and police stations. Although we were unable to implement the full inspection methodology, our inspection was sufficient to allow us to report on the efficiency of Greater Manchester Police and to provide a descriptive assessment, although not to make a graded judgment.

need in the future. This makes it harder for those forces to plan effectively for skills, for example, those relating to digital technology, which are increasingly becoming a requirement for the whole workforce.

More and more forces are using some form of risk-based analysis to inform their allocation of resources, but some remain unable to allocate adequate resources to meet the needs of their demand models. There are many examples of forces using their resources flexibly. However, not many forces have carried out sufficient analysis to be confident of their ability to predict the overall effect of moving resources from one area of operations to another. Where resources are not adequately allocated, or the consequences are not adequately understood, those working within policing usually compensate for this shortfall with their own hard work and discretionary effort. In a small number of cases, this is not sufficient and the needs of the public are not adequately met.

This is particularly true within force control rooms, which primarily deal with public 999 or 101 calls. At the time of our inspection, some control rooms appeared to be struggling to meet demand, particularly in relation to 101 non-emergency calls. Many forces have found it difficult to retain control room staff and a number of them rely too much on outdated technology. HMICFRS inspectors regularly encounter highly dedicated control room staff who are frustrated by the processes and structures within which they have to work. Encouragingly, forces are considering different ways of managing demand through online tools, although only a small number of high-performing forces can demonstrate the effectiveness of these tools. Given how important a high-performing control room is to a force's overall efficiency, a sustained focus on the part of chief officers on improving performance in this area is vital.

Partnership working and collaborative approaches are now common in policing, although these arrangements assume many different forms. HMICFRS has observed a range of impressive collaborative arrangements between forces, local authorities, health authorities, fire and rescue services, charities and other organisations. The need to work across organisational and geographic boundaries is likely to continue to grow rapidly; higher-performing forces have drawn up ambitious plans in this area. We were encouraged this year to find that more forces were clear about the benefits they derived from collaborative work.

While police forces are investing more effort in planning for the future, the scope and scale of these plans vary significantly. It remains a cause for concern that many forces do not have investment plans or effective governance structures in place that will transform the way they will operate in the future. Too many forces appear to be making decisions without having an adequate understanding of demand and of how it is likely to change. While some forces take a clear approach to investing reserves in improving their efficiency, it is troubling that a small number of forces continues to

use reserves to shore up the ways in which they currently operate. At best, this is likely to provide only short-term benefits, and it could actively hinder the ability of these forces to operate efficiently in the future.

One of the distinguishing features of higher-performing forces is that they invest time in effective planning not just one year ahead, but over three to four years ahead. In these forces, leaders are asking: what does their force need to do now to solve, or better still, avoid the problems of the future? With sound information about the status of their current workforces and other assets – such as their performance, capacity, capability and wellbeing – they are starting to implement the changes to their workforces so that they can be better prepared to confront the complex challenges of the future.

To help all forces learn from the best – whether they are to be found in the police forces highlighted in this report or in other safety-critical, monopoly, essential public services – HMICFRS has developed a prototype self-assessment template for all forces to use. The product of this self-assessment will be an annual force management statement. Each force management statement, modelled on network management statements in other essential public services, will be a four-year assessment by the chief constable of the demand (crime and non-crime, latent and patent) which the force is likely to face, the state of the force's assets in those four years, and the force's projected income in that period. In relation to the force's assets (predominantly officers and staff), the assessment will cover their condition (wellbeing), capacity, capability, performance, serviceability (what it takes to look after them) and security of supply (how to deal with peaks in demand). The chief constable will also be required to set out the force's plans for improving the efficiency of the force in each of the four years in question. HMICFRS is consulting with forces to ensure that our approach is the most efficient to meet the intended purposes. More details about force management statements are to be found on the HMICFRS website: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs

On the basis of this inspection, HMICFRS concludes that while most police forces throughout England and Wales have risen impressively to the challenges they face, policing remains under significant stress. Forces' plans for the future need to be more ambitious and innovative; in the cases of those which fail in this, the problems facing those forces could potentially prove overwhelming. We will consider matters of operational performance in greater depth in our effectiveness reports in spring 2018.

Efficiency in numbers

£ Financial position

	2017/18	2020/21	Percentage change
Forecast total gross revenue expenditure (savings applied)	£12.3bn	£11.6bn	-6%
Forecast investment made by police service over the next ten years		£2.9bn	
Forecast investment in information, communication technology over the next ten years		£1.0bn	
Forecast savings made by police service over the next five years		£0.9bn	

📞 Calls for assistance

	2016/17
999 calls per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2017	155

¹²₃ Recorded crime

	2015/16	2016/17	Percentage change
Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population	60	67	+11%

Workforce

Planned change in officer numbers (full-time equivalents)

2016/17	2020/21
123,142	120,217

Percentage change

-2%

Planned change in police staff numbers (full-time equivalents)

2016/17	2020/21
65,012	63,573

Percentage change

-2%

Planned change in police community support officer numbers (full-time equivalents)

2016/17	2020/21
10,213	10,238

Percentage change

0%

Planned change in total workforce numbers (full-time equivalents)

2016/17	2020/21
198,367	194,028

Percentage change

-2%

For further information about the data in this graphic please see annex A

Context

According to the Office for National Statistics (ONS): "The latest [crime] figures show the largest annual rise in crimes recorded by the police in a decade. While ongoing improvements to recording practices are driving this volume rise, we believe actual increases in crime are also a factor in a number of categories."[3]

The number of police-recorded crimes has increased each year since March 2014, following a long-term decline. The latest police-recorded crime figures showed an increase of 10 percent from the previous year to nearly 5 million offences. In contrast, the Crime Survey for England and Wales showed a decrease of 7 percent compared with the previous year. The method used to gather these statistics could account for the differences,[4] but the continued upward trend of recorded crime in recent years could also indicate an increase in crime for some offence groups. As ONS states, some of the recent apparent rise is due to forces uncovering hidden crime and encouraging crimes to be reported/recorded that might otherwise be missed. An increase in reporting is a positive sign of trust in the police; it also leads to an increase in the volume and complexity of the demand the police face.

There is some evidence that demand that is not related directly to crime is also increasing, for example in relation to public protection. However, the quality of the data is not sufficient to draw conclusions. While policing budgets have been protected more than those of some other public sector organisations, forces continue to face difficult financial decisions. Police workforce numbers continue to fall, from 243,900 officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and other staff in 2010 to 198,400 in 2017. In addition, the expectation remains that forces must reduce costs in the long term. Policing has risen to the financial challenges of the last seven years but now faces sustained pressure, which is placing a greater strain on those working to keep the public safe. This underlines the need for forces to continue to look for ways to be more efficient.

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[3] Crime in England and Wales: year ending March 2017, Office for National Statistics, 2017. Available from:
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingmar2017

[4] See the ONS methodological note on why the two sources are showing different trends:
www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/methodologies/methodologicalnotewhydothetwodatasourcesshowdifferingtrends

Figure 1: Index of police funding, workforce and crime from 1996/97 to 2016/17 (1996/97 = 100)
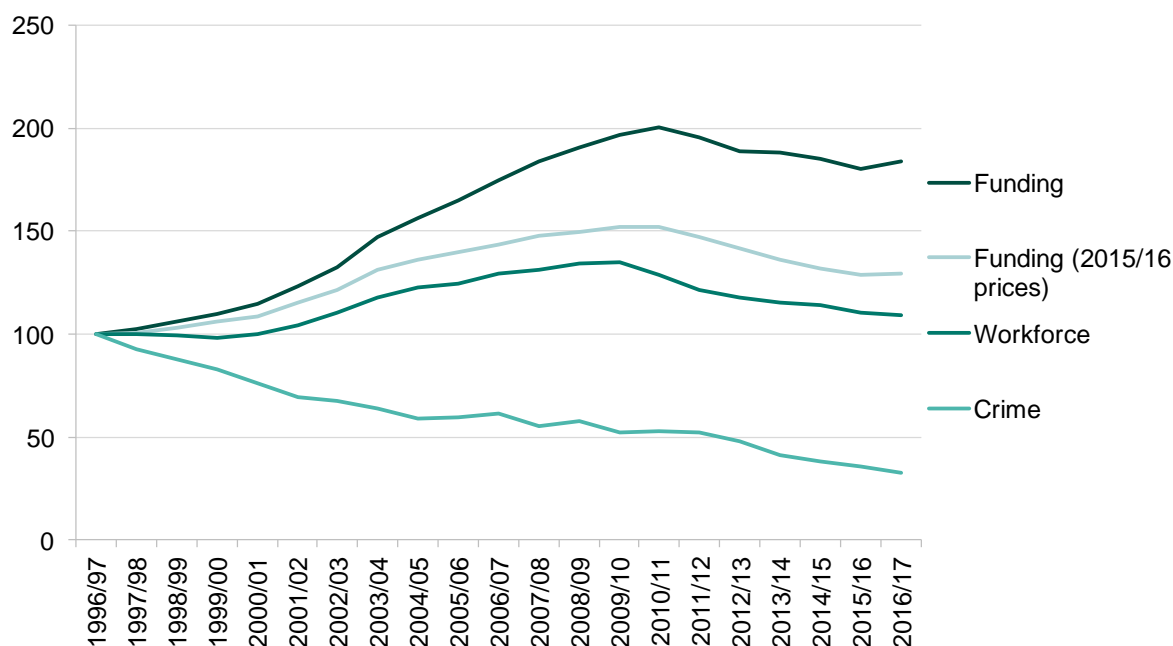
Source: Home Office financial data, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Home Office police workforce statistics and Crime Survey of England and Wales

Figure 1 demonstrates the complexity of understanding the balance between police funding, workforce numbers and crime rates. Although the police service continues to make considerable efforts to quantify the levels of resources it requires to meet changing demand, it struggles to do so coherently and consistently at a national level. While the official figures, shown above, demonstrate that crime has dropped by 67 percent since 1996/97, this does not take into account the complexity of individual crimes. HMICFRS continues to support work within the police service to improve its ability to explain what we believe are real, sustained difficulties concerning the level and type of resources required to meet a wider range of increasingly complex demand. It is too soon to say whether the very recent rises in crime mentioned above form part of a sustained trend, but they emphasise the need for police forces to plan effectively for the future.

Forces are making, and will continue to make, difficult financial decisions about how best to manage changes, such as those in crime and technology. But, as we pointed out last year, forces had been planning for bigger cuts, so in reality they had more funding in this financial period than they expected. It is possible for forces to continue to improve efficiency through sensible investment, including through access to the Home Office police transformation fund, which is intended to support innovative work in policing. Some forces are considering new ways of working, new systems and new ways of managing their estates. This will help them to reduce spending in the medium to long term, if well planned and managed. However, the ambition and pace of forces' plans to implement these changes vary considerably.

We do not underestimate the scale of change that police forces face. Technology has enabled new crimes to develop, from online bullying through to fraud cases, which require increased international engagement to investigate. Technological advances have also allowed old crimes to move online, where the internet magnifies and intensifies the negative effect on victims; for example, stalking and harassment via social media allows perpetrators to obtain direct access to victims' lives from a remote device, causing them immediate and lasting damage. Technology also enables criminals to reach and affect many more victims. However, advances in technology also enable police officers to access the information they need, when they need it, and improve the ways in which the public can obtain information and services from the police.

Technology should enable officers to spend more time on the streets, providing the service that the public expects of them. For example, where officers are able to use mobile devices to verify suspects' identities, or fill in forms without returning to police stations, they can use their time more efficiently. Fully effective policing depends on a range of complex systems, and on connections being easy to access and working well. This also informs operational improvements. However, many forces that adopted new technology early now have systems that are outdated and hold them back. Some forces that introduced new systems did not update their internal processes to take advantage of new technology but simply digitised existing paper-based systems, allowing inefficiencies to continue. The current financial situation requires forces to create clear and coherent plans to become more efficient, underpinned by investment in technology. HMICFRS continues to recommend that more forces work with each other and with local partners such as local authorities to take advantage of new technology. Despite some progress made in this area, several ICT leads within forces have expressed growing frustration that policing does not capitalise on changes in technology either quickly or coherently.

Similarly, HMICFRS continues to encourage forces to bring new, different skills into workforces that have relied traditionally on a very specific set of skills. Different ways now exist for forces to expand their workforces, and many are doing this through volunteers, new officers and staff and through schemes such as Police Now and Direct Entry. Forces should consider how they can increase their capabilities in strategic planning, digital technology and partnership working. They should also develop management teams that are likely to challenge one another to think innovatively and encourage diversity of thought rather than reinforce existing ways of thinking.

Whether the police have sufficient resources has been much debated. The complexity of policing, the difficulties in establishing future demand and how technological and societal changes will affect it, and the very different conditions of forces' financial circumstances, mean that there is no simple or standard way of establishing whether a force has or is likely to have sufficient financial resources. However, we know that these resources have been reduced significantly and that

while the demand on policing is growing and changing, workforce numbers are decreasing. New, growing areas of activity, such as modern slavery and non-recent sexual abuse, present the police with new problems. HMICFRS believes that it is important for forces to have a comprehensive, consistent approach to recording this demand from next year through the use of force management statements.

In general, police forces have responded well to the difficulties that spending cuts have created, and in the last few years almost every force has introduced a new model for policing. The vast majority of forces now use data and modelling to understand the demand for policing services and to match resources to that demand in a responsive and more efficient way. Most forces have invested in areas such as ICT and estates to make themselves more efficient, often working with other forces and other agencies. However, very few forces have a sufficiently sophisticated understanding of their demand to know the minimum efficient level of resources they need. This could mean that while some forces are under-resourced, they are unable to make the case for this cogently because they lack sufficient evidence.

Nationally, forces spend over three-quarters of their budgets on officers and staff, but very few forces have the necessary performance management and skills audits in place to ensure they are making the best use of their people. This is exacerbated in some forces by their inability to use their resources flexibly. Therefore, it is highly likely that forces could make better use of their existing workforce. Our findings indicate that every force could improve its processes, governance or deployment to some extent, which would help to absorb some of the negative effects of recent spending cuts. This does not necessarily mean that all the negative consequences of cuts could be absorbed by improving efficiency, or that every force could absorb any further cuts.

Understanding demand

Summary

To be efficient, it is essential that police forces have a good understanding of the demand for their services. They need to understand the sorts of incidents that are likely to be reported daily, and what they need to do to prevent crime. They also need to understand, and take action to uncover, the crimes and other activity in their areas that are hidden or are less likely to be reported, such as modern slavery and child sexual exploitation.

Forces should be able to identify and reduce unnecessary work that is created through inefficient internal processes. Similarly, forces must seek to identify more efficient processes and ways of working. Forces also have to make decisions about how they prioritise and respond to the demand for their services, and should be able to demonstrate that their approach to prioritisation does not result in some of their demand being overlooked.

Almost every force has an adequate understanding of its demand, while the best forces use sophisticated models and a range of data to understand trends. The best forces are looking beyond the limitations of their own data to predict demand in areas such as the protection of children and vulnerable adults, using evidence-based research to support them. More forces need to take this approach, rather than focusing on generic crime types. From next year, force management statements will provide a structured template to support forces in taking a sound and sustainable approach to understanding their demand.

It is still relatively rare to come across forces that ensure their governance arrangements extract the full possible benefits from change programmes. However, this year, we have seen some excellent examples of strong governance arrangements that identify and improve inefficient processes. It is important that such arrangements do not cause forces to suppress demand by failing to identify, acknowledge or deal with certain kinds of demand.

Understanding demand

Demand placed on police forces is the amount and type of service that the public and other organisations require from them, reflecting the obligation of the police to prevent crime and disorder. At its most simple, it encompasses the 999 and 101 calls the police receive, as well as work in communities, protecting victims of crime and pursuing offenders. Other types of demand need to be considered, such as public order incidents, traffic management and crimes such as child sexual exploitation –

which tend to take place behind closed doors and often are not reported or are hidden. These crimes generally require some action from the police or another agency to uncover them.

Figure 2: 999 calls recorded by forces in England and Wales, per 1,000 population for the 12 months to 31 March for each year from 2010/11 to 2016/17
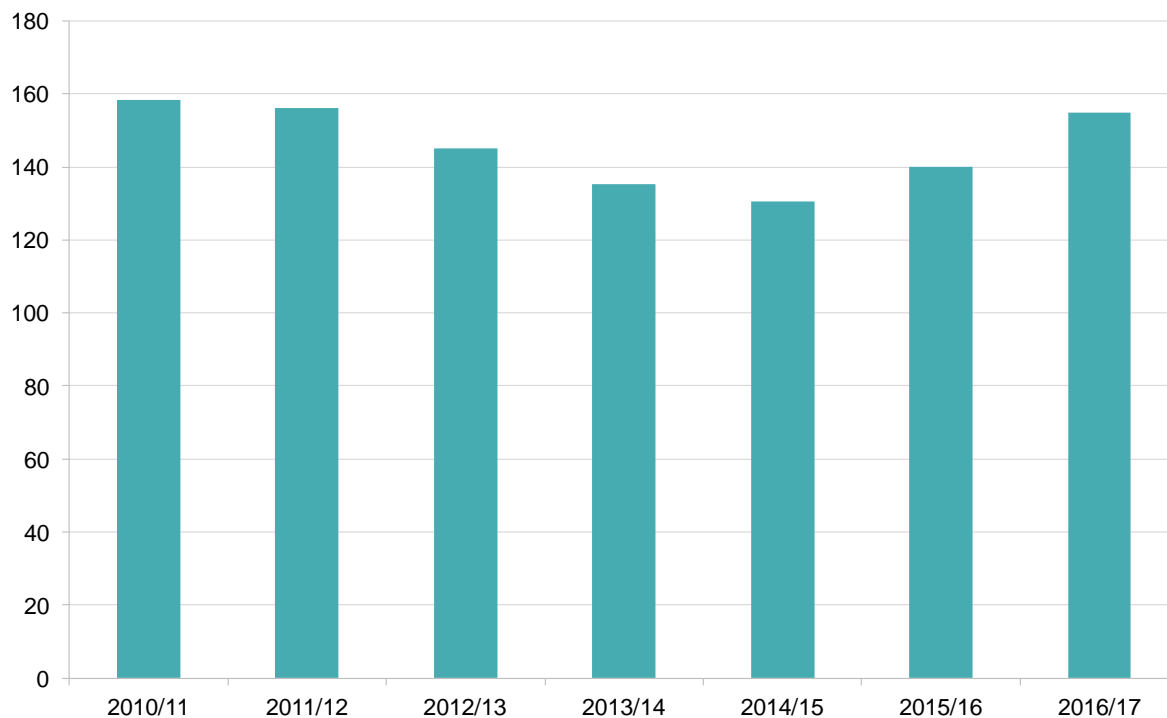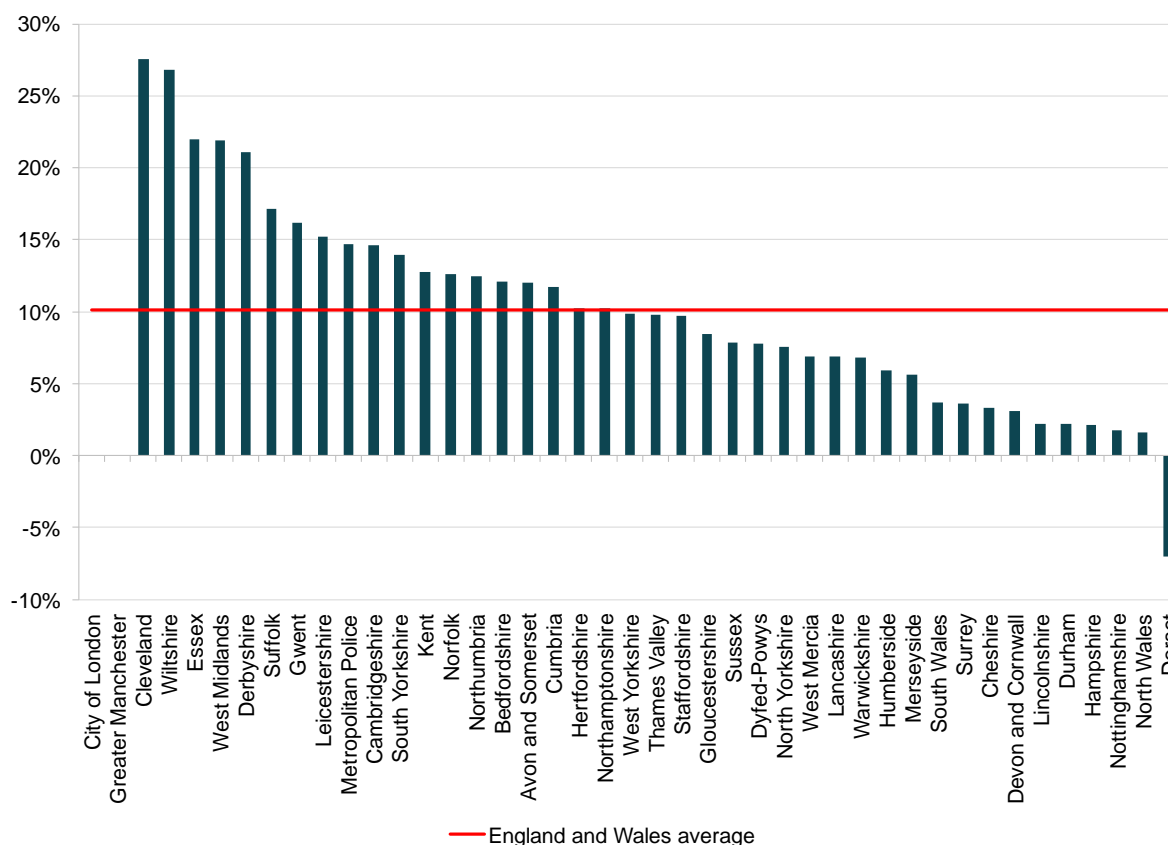

Source: Home Office annual data requirement
Note: City of London Police does not receive 999 calls; these are received by the Metropolitan Police Service on its behalf. Data for Greater Manchester were not available for the year 2014/15.

In 2016/17, the number of recorded 999 calls that police forces in England and Wales received was 154.7 per 1,000 population, an increase of 10.5 percent compared with the previous year. This follows a year-on-year increase of 7.1 percent between 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Figure 3: Change in 999 calls recorded by force from 2014/15 to 2016/17

England and Wales average

Source: Home Office annual data requirement
Note: City of London Police does not receive 999 calls; these are received by the Metropolitan Police Service on its behalf. Data for Greater Manchester were not available for the year 2014/15.

Figure 3 shows that this increase was not spread evenly throughout the forces; for instance, while Cleveland saw a 27.5 percent increase in the rate of 999 calls that it received per 1,000 population over the last two years, Dorset saw a 7.0 percent decrease. However, in 40 out of 41 forces for which data were available, the rate of 999 calls per 1,000 population increased over the last two years.

Almost every force has a functional understanding of its current demand, by which HMICFRS means the amount and type of service that the public and other organisations require of the police. This includes calls from the public (mainly 999 and 101) and other organisations, which is often referred to as reactive demand, and activity to prevent crime and uncover hidden crime, often referred to as proactive demand. In many forces, this has been based on a 'day in the life', or a similar study, where they record their demand on a typical day and extrapolate data from that. The best forces use complex models that bring together data from several different sources to generate a sophisticated picture of different types of demand. It is important that the desire to implement more efficient ways of working does not result in areas of demand being overlooked.

Gwent Police, for example, uses modelling software that analyses performance data about calls, emails, texts, visits and social media from every department, data on resources, and data provided by local authorities, fire and rescue authorities, housing associations, drug referral services, youth offending services and roads policing. The model can generate scenarios for any planned activity and can also help the force to understand the likely effect of its decisions. This force is also working with South Wales Police to develop an app that will predict where crime is likely to happen, enabling the force to organise patrols accordingly.

More complex demand

This year, in evaluating forces' understanding of demand, HMICFRS looked beyond how well forces deal with the crimes reported to them. We also examined proactive demand: the extent to which forces actively uncover demand that otherwise would not come to their attention. This includes crimes that are less likely to be reported, such as domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation; crimes in communities that are more reluctant to trust or work with the police; and demand passed to the police by other agencies and services. If forces do not fully understand all of these factors, it can result in them facing large amounts of new demand for services. (An example of this was the surge in the reporting of non-recent child abuse following several high-profile cases.) We expect forces to take steps to seek out this under-reported demand and plan their resources accordingly. We have also considered internal demand: the extent to which each force understands the unnecessary demands it places on itself, for example, through inefficient processes or by creating bureaucracy.

While HMICFRS has seen some forces making good progress in relation to more complex demand since 2016, the overall picture remains mixed. Almost every force is now taking action to uncover some crimes that are more likely to go under-reported. The best forces have completed sophisticated analysis to identify where the greatest risk to them lies in terms of under-reported or otherwise hidden demand. Avon and Somerset Constabulary, for example, uses a commercial software application to identify, and so predict, offending patterns and behaviour. The force works with a wide range of partners, such as Barnardo's, to exchange data, identify risks and obtain the best possible insight into patterns of offending, including those of sexual predators who may target children.

Managing, prioritising and filtering demand

HMICFRS inspected how well police forces reduce the demand that inefficiency can create. Forces can do this by identifying and then changing or eliminating inefficient processes; by monitoring work to get the best results; and by encouraging staff to suggest new and better ways of doing their jobs.

This year, we have seen some excellent examples of forces that have strong governance arrangements in place to identify and improve inefficient processes. In Durham Constabulary, the deputy chief constable chairs a board that regularly reviews critical processes, the experiences of victims and the quality of data, to help the force to continue to improve its efficiency. The force seeks to eliminate inefficiency wherever possible; for example, it has trained officers and staff in digital investigation techniques and placed them in control rooms to aid initial evidence-gathering and prevent the need to call people back. However, in many forces, this type of activity is limited to discrete and time-limited change programmes. While this may help to ensure the efficiency of new processes, it does not necessarily help forces to identify existing processes that are inefficient.

Police forces are often seen as the service of last resort and have to deploy their resources where other shrinking public services (especially mental health services) fail to do so. HMICFRS has encouraged policing to take a more sophisticated approach to this demand, to lessen its detrimental effect on other areas of operation. HMICFRS has long challenged forces to reduce demand, most notably by working to prevent crime. This year, we have come across many examples of forces that have done a lot of work to reduce their demand; in many respects, this has been very successful.

However, in reducing demand, it is important that forces do not simply suppress it, by which we mean fail to identify, acknowledge or deal with certain kinds of demand. HMICFRS is beginning to see examples of forces taking action to prioritise their demand in such a way that low-priority and less urgent incidents can be left unresolved for long periods. While the prioritisation of tasks is important, forces need to ensure that victims receive a quality of service that meets their needs. HMICFRS intends to return to this matter in more detail next year.

It is important to note that many forces are aware of these problems and are taking action. For example, Devon and Cornwall Police identified some difficulties with handling some lower-priority (non-999) calls, with the length of call waiting periods causing many callers to hang up. The force is addressing the problem through training, new shift patterns, new contract terms and new ICT systems. We saw several other police forces addressing similar problems. But it is troubling that some forces have not put adequate processes in place to uncover these problems in the first place. We intend, therefore, to explore this issue further in our next inspection.

Almost all forces have change programmes. Their levels of ambition vary. However, it is still relatively rare to find forces with governance arrangements that ensure they extract the full benefits from these programmes. Thames Valley Police does this well, with strong governance processes and monitoring arrangements in place. The force has an established system of assessing ideas for change, projects and programmes, and systematically reviews proposals to identify savings, benefits and any negative effects. Rigorous programme management processes monitor the

progress made, with sophisticated post-implementation reviews taking place when projects end. The force tracks potential benefits to help ensure it achieves them. The force's knowledge of demand and response allows it to simulate different scenarios that might result from a change programme, and to model the consequences that these may have on service to the public. It considers the effect of changes on its workforce and uses single points of contact in local policing areas and staff focus groups to identify and assist in removing any blockages to new processes. Thames Valley Police has also completed an impressive priority-based budgeting process. In this, every department in the force analyses the services it provides (internal and external), identifies priorities and costs, and so develops more efficient ways of working at an individual and team level.

Innovation and trialling new practices remain vital ways for forces to ensure that they meet demand. HMICFRS' findings on this will be discussed in our 2017 leadership report.

Meeting demand

Summary

Police forces have finite resources with which to undertake an increasingly complicated job, and so must ensure that they deploy their resources in the best ways possible. The most important resource available to each police force is its workforce; it is important that forces make sure they understand and have access to the skills they need to police effectively, now and in the future.

It is also important that forces make sound decisions about how to spend and invest their resources in order to obtain the best value for the public. This means that forces need to have a good understanding of what they can achieve within a particular budget.

Forces cannot provide services efficiently in isolation and must work with other police forces and organisations to ensure they provide the best service to the public at the most appropriate cost.

HMICFRS remains concerned that few forces have taken sufficient steps to understand fully the skills they need in their workforces. Although more forces have begun to audit the skills they need in specific roles, most are not doing enough to understand, develop or recruit the new skills they need now and in the future. For instance, many forces have now undertaken a skills audit of their workforces. However, often these focus on specific operational skills, such as public order skills, self-defence and first aid training, detective skills, firearms training and driver qualifications. As a result, training and recruitment also tend to focus on these skills.

More and more forces are using some form of risk-based analysis to prioritise demand, particularly calls for service, but some are still unable to deploy the levels of resources that their models require. Many forces are using their resources flexibly. However, we have still not come across many examples of forces that have carried out sufficient analysis to enable them to understand and predict the overall effect of moving resources from one area of the force to support another area in times of peak demand or crisis.

Collaboration is standard practice in policing. The range of arrangements in place with other forces, local authorities, health authorities, fire & rescue services, charities and other organisations, is impressive. This year, we were pleased to come across more forces that understood the benefits they had obtained from their collaborative work.

Workforce and skills

In this inspection, HMICFRS has considered how well forces understand the skills and capability of their workforces. On average, police forces in England and Wales spend over three-quarters of their budgets on their workforces, so any consideration of the police's ability to manage resources must consider forces' ability to manage their workforces. In the past, with the exception of some specialist areas, such as firearms policing, most forces concentrated simply on making sure that they had enough officers, rather than on assessing the skills that officers had, or needed.

Figure 4: Actual and planned workforce change (%) from 2010/11 to 2020/21
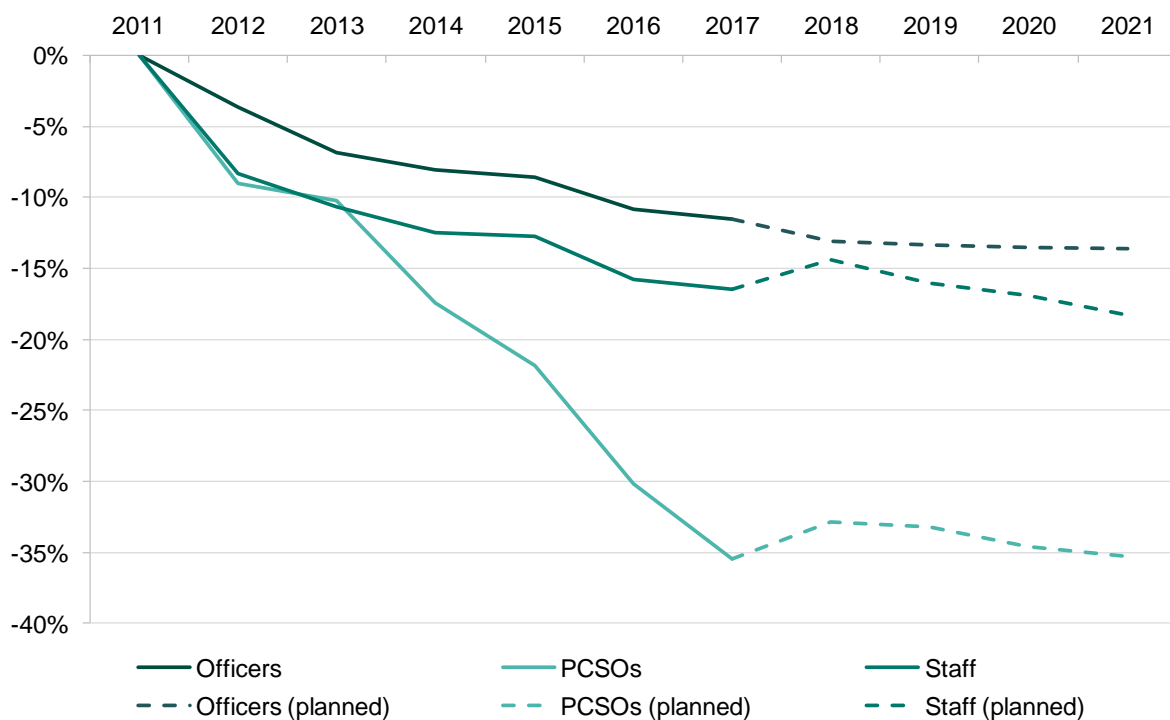
Source: HMICFRS Efficiency data collection and Home Office workforce statistics

Over the coming year, officer numbers are projected to decrease by 1.8 percent; however, both staff numbers and PCSO numbers are projected to increase by 2.5 percent and 4.1 percent respectively. Compared with 2011, the projected numbers are 11.5 percent lower for officers, 35.4 percent lower for PCSOs and 16.4 percent lower for staff. However, looking further ahead, the figures for officers are projected to be around 13.6 percent below 2011 levels for officers, 35.3 percent below 2011 levels for PCSOs and 18.3 percent lower for staff.

Figure 5: Planned change in total police workforce from 2016/17 and 2020/21 by force

Planned % change in workforce between 2016/17 and 2020/21
England and Wales force average planned change
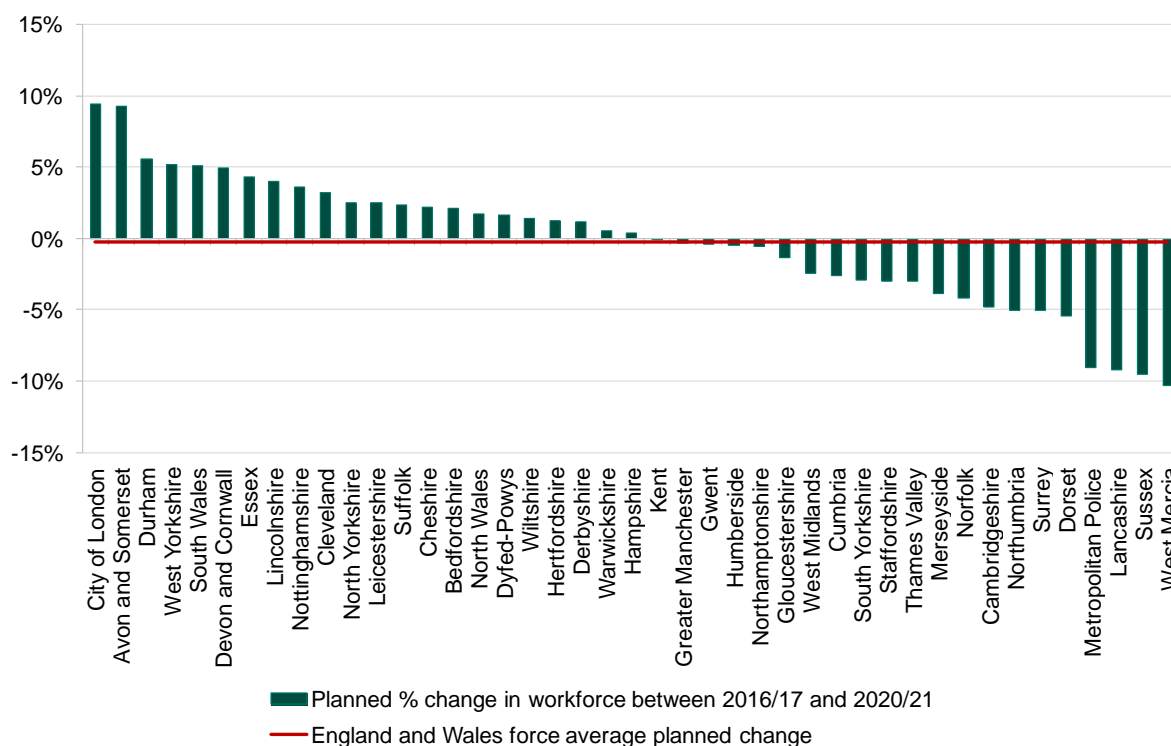
Source: HMICFRS Efficiency data collection and Home Office workforce statistics

Out of 43 forces, 22 project that their budgeted workforces will increase in size between 2016/17 and 2020/21. Most of this budgeted increase is in the number of PCSOs and police staff rather than officers, whose numbers are projected to fall by 2.4 percent.

The amount by which forces expect their workforces to change in size over the next four years varies considerably; for example, City of London is projected to increase the size of its workforce by 9.5 percent while West Mercia expects a decrease of 10.3 percent.

As workforces have reduced in size (as shown in figures 4 and 5 above), and as crimes such as modern slavery and cyber-crime make policing more complex, it is increasingly important for forces not only to have the right numbers of personnel to meet demand, but to have officers and staff with the right skills to deal effectively with the difficulties that policing will face in future.

Forces need to have a detailed understanding of the skills they need in their organisations and of the skills they have now. Comprehensive plans should be put in place to bridge any gaps. HMICFRS considered this to be the weakest area last year; we were pleased to note some improvement this year. However, the majority of forces still have an insufficient understanding of the skills of their workforces, particularly in terms of future requirements.

Last year, HMICFRS determined that very few forces had taken sufficient steps to understand the skills they needed in their workforces, and even fewer had done so beyond operational policing skills. This remains the case this year, although more forces have taken some steps. However, it is still a cause for concern that most police forces assume that they will need broadly the same skills in future. Following huge changes in technology in the last few years, certain skills that are needed for policing today differ significantly from those that were needed a generation ago. However, while many police forces have a workforce that needs to develop specific skills to meet certain current and future crime types, these skills are rarely brought in through recruitment. If forces do not take urgent and sufficient steps to understand the skills needed for modern policing, they will fail to be efficient, whatever other steps they take. HMICFRS understands that these matters are complex, but if policing does not invest in this area it will find that its workforces are not equipped to meet future demand. Comparison with other public and private sector organisations would prove beneficial.

Many forces have now undertaken a skills audit and have a good idea of which skills are present in their workforces. However, the usefulness of such audits is limited greatly by the failure of forces to understand the full breadth of skills needed in the future. Too often, these audits have focused on whether the force has the essential operational skills it requires to meet current demand, rather than the skills needed to prepare for future technological advances, changes in crime type and the complexity and changes in public expectations. As a result, forces rarely have adequate training and recruitment plans that are designed to meet these future challenges. This is especially true of those skills that forces look for in future leaders. This is discussed in more detail in our 2017 report on police leadership.

HMICFRS would like to see more forces adopt an approach similar to that taken by Thames Valley Police. This has reviewed its workforce's skills and has used demand analysis to identify the capability and capacity it requires now, and will require in the future, to implement its plans. For example, the force has identified that in future it will have a greater need for cyber/digital, safeguarding and firearms skills. The force has audited the skills currently available to it (principally through an effective personal development review system), maintaining a database of the skills of each member of the workforce. It then uses this detailed understanding to develop its personnel, ensuring that the skills of the workforce match what it will need.

Allocating resources

To operate efficiently, police forces must have a clear understanding of the resources available to them and of the demand they need to meet. In particular, a force must have a comprehensive, sophisticated understanding of its workforce. A higher-performing force should know what level of service it can provide within its current resources and be able to assess the level of service it could provide with

more resources – or less. This understanding should be detailed, to cover the full range of different services that police forces provide, such as managing road traffic incidents and investigating burglaries.

Figure 6: England and Wales average spend on policing functions, 2011/12 to 2016/17
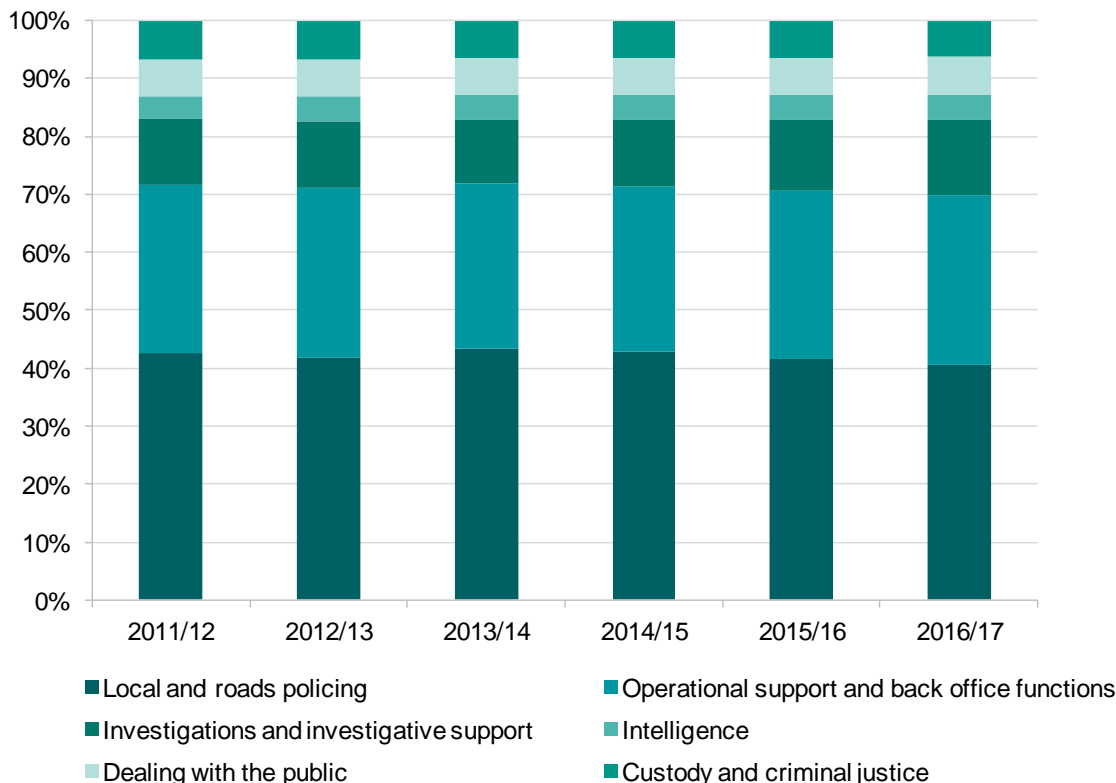
Source: Police Objective Analysis Estimates, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy

Figure 6 shows how, over the last few years, the allocation of resources to different policing functions has remained relatively stable.

The average proportion that forces spent on local policing (local policing and roads policing) has fallen by 1.9 percentage points since 2011/12. The average proportion spent on investigations (investigations and investigative support) has increased by 1.6 percentage points since 2011/12. The average proportion spent on back office functions (central costs, support functions and operational support) has increased by 0.2 percentage points since 2011/12.

Although the changes in proportions spent appear to be small, they can represent large changes in workforce numbers.

More and more forces are using some form of risk-based analysis to decide how to prioritise their work, most often by applying the THRIVE (threat, harm, risk, investigation, vulnerability and engagement) principles. HMICFRS continues to find that too many forces are unable to provide an adequate level of resource for their chosen operating model, resulting in the provision of a less comprehensive service than they had planned for. Many forces, such as Durham Constabulary, are

introducing new training and specialist skills in their contact centres to help ease this problem, but HMICFRS remains troubled that shortages of police staff in contact centres are causing demand to go unmet (sometimes due to forces recruiting staff from within their contact centres to become police officers).

HMICFRS assessed how well forces understand the level of service they can provide at different levels of cost. For example, a force with a firm understanding of service levels and costs may find that it can decrease costs by 10 percent in one area with little detrimental effect, while a decrease of 1 percent in another area could be very damaging. Forces in England and Wales generally are ready to deploy officers at short notice to deal with unforeseen operations, and there are many examples of forces acting flexibly with their resources, such as in the very difficult circumstances following the terrorist attacks in London and Manchester. However, we have still not come across many forces that have carried out sufficient analysis to be confident about predicting the effect of moving resources, or that fully understand the overall effect on services, once resources have been moved.

Cheshire Constabulary is one of the better forces in this regard. Its sophisticated priority-based budgeting process enables it, as needed, to redistribute resources to meet known and anticipated demand. It backs this up by undertaking detailed analysis of the effect of reducing or increasing resources in different areas. This information is used at daily management meetings. Here, local and force demand is reviewed and resourcing adjusted throughout the force in response to specific incidents, in line with the force's priorities but with a full appreciation of the likely effect. This helps ensure an efficient way of working. This approach is not yet standard practice across policing, however. Many forces tend to react to operational imperatives first and then try to understand the effects of these afterwards.

Last year, HMICFRS reported that some forces had shortages of police staff, particularly in their contact centres. While this has improved, some shortages remain. At least in part, this is because many forces cut costs by reducing the numbers of police staff much more than police officers.

At the time of this inspection, some forces still appeared to be struggling to meet demand, particularly in relation to 101 non-emergency calls. Many forces have had problems in retaining staff working in control rooms. Some are overly reliant on outdated technology. Investment in this area can bring benefits; for example, Avon and Somerset Constabulary has made several positive changes to its force control room following an in-depth review of the demand profile. Changes included developing a coherent view of service provision, workforce plans and technology. Through this investment and through the effective use of technology to give the public different options to make contact with the force (for example, by email, social media and a call-handling message, diverting non-emergency callers to relevant

departments), the control room can manage current demand. It can also help ensure that officers are in the correct locations to carry out preventative patrolling and uncover hidden demand.

HMICFRS remains concerned that some forces are now recruiting new police officers without considering all the possible recruitment options, by identifying the capabilities they require in each role to meet current and predicted demand. Some forces have achieved this by recruiting police staff to perform specific roles that police officers performed in the past.

Collaboration

Working with other forces and agencies is an essential part of the provision of more efficient and effective services. Most forces have a range of collaborative work in place, from shared procurement frameworks to fully joined-up services covering all areas, up to and including members of the chief officer team. As collaborative work between forces become more mature, HMICFRS recognises that while this increase is generally positive, forces need to examine the benefits of collaboration and make informed, intelligent decisions about the form that collaborative working arrangements should take. HMICFRS has seen forces develop a range of impressive arrangements with other forces, local authorities, health authorities, fire and rescue services, charities and a range of other organisations.

Norfolk Constabulary is strong in this area. It has an impressive range of working arrangements, including the early help hub in South Norfolk, where the force works with children's services, an independent living team and a family intervention project as a one-stop shop to help the public. Following a thorough evaluation, a similar hub is now operating in Broadland District. Others are being developed in four more locations. The force is also aware of the risks of reduced funding for other public services, and has taken steps to reduce the negative effect on the public, for example, by using the Special Constabulary to help community action groups deal with local priorities.

Similarly, Northamptonshire Police has an early intervention hub with other local partners such as education, health and social care to identify and support children at risk. The project focuses on three main areas: increasing awareness and reporting of child exploitation; intervening at the earliest opportunity to divert young people from being victims or offenders; and improving the safety of young people online.

The project involves PCSOs based in three schools working closely with families and other agencies. The force estimates that this promising initiative may require ten years of investment before the full benefits are seen. HMICFRS has seen similar examples and we are pleased that forces are taking such a long-term focus. We hope to see more forces building on their existing joint work with these sorts of far-reaching projects.

This year, HMICFRS found more forces that were clear about the benefits arising from their collaborative work. For example, Cleveland Police has produced a clear rationale for its strategic collaboration, including whether a service needs to be provided locally; whether the management of risk, threat and demand can be improved by working with others; and whether collaboration is a more efficient option. The force has an established track record of saving £10m a year from collaboration projects.

Planning for future demand

Summary

Forces plan to make savings of approximately £0.9 billion in the next five years. The majority of forces plan to invest some of those savings in improving the provision of their services.

To be efficient, a police force needs to understand its present needs while at the same time making reasonable predictions about how demand will change, how its workforce will change and how its partner organisations will be affected. It needs to have adequate, realistic and innovative plans in place to meet the operational and financial difficulties of the future.

The forces with the best understanding of trends in current demand are best placed to predict their future demand accurately. HMICFRS found that the best forces were using predictive technology to analyse a wide variety of data to provide a more detailed basis for their assessment. However, too many forces still rely on very general assessments, or assume that current demand will remain more or less unchanged.

We have observed that forces are aware that they need to take account of changing public expectations and technology. However, many forces are not developing coherent plans to address the constant developments in both of these areas.

Most policing plans set out a clear vision for the direction of the force. Almost all forces have changed the way they operate, and will change further in order to meet future budgetary requirements and public expectations. Too many of them, however, still lack innovative plans to transform the way they will operate. Some forces' plans appear to focus on maintaining their current approach and services. Summoning up the energy and enthusiasm required for continued change can be very difficult, and a pause to assess and evaluate future opportunities can be tempting. However, inevitably, those forces that do not act will struggle in future years. The pace of wider change in society and technology is so rapid that a force that does not change will fall behind.

Predicting likely future demand

HMICFRS has evaluated how well forces analyse trends in their current demand in order to predict demand. We also assessed the extent to which forces take account of changing public expectations and technology.

As one might expect, generally, the forces with the best grasp of current demand have the best understanding of trends, and so have the best understanding of future demand. Only the higher-performing forces are able to demonstrate that they do this

sufficiently well. Suffolk Constabulary, for example, uses data from a wide range of sources and other agencies, supported by rigorous academic evaluation, to enable it to understand demand and identify trends. The force is also contributing to HMICFRS' Response and Neighbourhood Policing 'Big Data' project. This aims to provide insight into how different forces manage and respond to the wide range of demands they face – for example, how different incidents are prioritised, how well deployment matches demands, how different types of incident are managed, and how the public makes use of different routes to report their concerns.

We found that forces know they need to take account of changing public expectations and changing technology, but often have no coherent plan to respond to these developments. For example, rather than developing a sophisticated understanding of the way public expectations are changing, and responding to this, many forces simply consult the public to ensure that their plans are not unpopular. Few forces are fully rising to the challenges and opportunities presented by technology. While many have cyber-crime units, these focus usually on the more sophisticated technological aspects of policing, rather than on educating and training officers, or considering the benefits and challenges to policing as a whole.

Too many forces rely still on very general assessments of demand, or assume that current demand will continue. Last year, many forces said that they would welcome greater support at a national level to help them develop their approaches to assessing future demand. This would appear to be a natural extension to the work that the College of Policing has been leading with the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) in relation to demand. However, we have yet to see any significant improvement in the service's ability to forecast demand.

HMICFRS would like to see more examples such as the way that Wiltshire Police has responded to changing public expectations of channels of communication. The force has a channel management strategy, which sets out how the public can access services and receive updates on criminal investigations through social media, the internet and voice-activated services. The force is developing this with a commercial partner that has expertise in consulting with local communities and in the design of access routes to police services. Similarly, West Midlands Police uses academic research and public perception surveys to understand changes in the population in the force area, and how changing public expectations may affect future demand. This includes academic studies relating to different perceptions in certain communities, such as young people and black, Asian and minority ethnic groups. The force uses its understanding of public expectations in the development of its recently introduced self-service website portal, designed in consultation with members of the community.

Essex Police has a strong understanding of what technology can do to help both policing and criminals alike. It acknowledges that emerging technology and new types of behaviour have changed patterns of crime and provided opportunities for

police to work with the latest digital technology to act more effectively. Working with Kent Police, the force's digital strategy is based on the assumption that almost every crime now leaves a trail of data, called a digital footprint, created when using the internet. Good progress has been made in many areas, including recruiting digital media investigators and installing mobile phone triage kiosks, where personnel can download and assess mobile phone data. The creation of a joint cyber-crime unit with Kent Police to investigate pure cyber-crime, such as distributed denial of service attacks[5] is another very positive development. More recently, the force has purchased three drones and it plans to buy more. The drones are expected to reduce demand and enable the police to respond more rapidly and effectively in traditionally resource-intensive activities, such as open area searches for missing persons.

Durham Constabulary has introduced the cyber-bungalow, which is a replica of a house with examples of all the potential issues of which an investigating officer needs to be aware when identifying evidence. This training facility is currently being used for officer recruits and on a phased basis for frontline officers and crime scene investigators. Once the facility has been firmly established, the intention is to offer it to other forces.

West Yorkshire Police is developing new approaches to working with others, such as the Early Intervention Foundation.[6] The force has held workshops with partner agencies such as local charities to help formulate the aims, objectives and areas of focus for its early intervention strategy. The force is also working with a group of universities to carry out research into areas of policing. This has allowed the force to access skills and specialist consultancy at limited cost and bring new ways of working into the organisation.

Future plans

HMICFRS assessed how adequate, realistic and innovative forces' plans for the future are, and the extent to which forces are planning to make savings, including saving to invest in new systems and approaches. In all they do, chief constables must have regard to the police and crime plans of their police and crime commissioners. Police and crime plans are the statutorily-established priorities of police and crime commissioners, and therefore have considerable constitutional and

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[5] A cyber-attack where the perpetrator seeks to make a machine or network resource unavailable to its intended users by temporarily or indefinitely disrupting services of a host connected to the internet. Denial of service is typically accomplished by flooding the targeted machine or resource with superfluous requests in an attempt to overload systems and prevent some or all legitimate requests from being met.

[6] The Early Intervention Foundation is an independent charity which champions and supports the use of effective early intervention for children with signals of risk.

democratic significance. It must be remembered that police and crime commissioners have a statutory obligation to secure – not merely to facilitate or promote – the efficiency of their forces, and police and crime plans are an important part of that regime, and require appropriate accommodation and respect. HMICFRS found that all forces do take due account of the objectives of police and crime plans when they make their plans.

It is encouraging to see force plans setting out a clear vision for the future. However, an insufficient number of forces have the plans, governance or investment in place to transform how they will operate. Some have changed already, some are in the process of changing, but too many still do not base their policing on an adequate understanding of future demand.

Some forces' plans are innovative and achievable. We found that Kent Police's plans clearly brought together its analysis of future demand, its identification of new ways of operating and its future provision of services. The force carried out extensive consultation during its planning phase, which included over 60 sessions with its workforce; organisations such as local authorities and parish councils; health and social care providers; and members of the public from a range of communities throughout Kent. The force's plans for its new model include the investment of new resources and a realignment of existing resources into the following areas:

- mental health;

- investigation of domestic abuse, child and adult abuse and sexual offences;

- vulnerable persons' investigations;

- community safety units;

- CID;

- a missing and child exploitation bureau; and

- a wanted persons' bureau.

The force's plans have been subjected to invited external scrutiny throughout the planning process. As a result, the plans remain prudent, are based on realistic assumptions about future income, costs and benefits, and make good use of information about future demand and workforce capabilities.

Savings and investment

Forces plan to make savings of approximately £0.9 billion in the next five years, with approximately £275m in the forthcoming financial year. The majority of forces plan to invest some of those savings in improvements.

Avon and Somerset Constabulary, for example, intends to make £20.6m of savings over the period 2017/18 to 2021/22, of which it will invest £4.7m in better infrastructure. All of the force's investment decisions are supported by comprehensive business cases, which chief officers and the PCC have reviewed. The force has invested in a new operating model supported by the most up-to-date software; a new estates strategy to ensure buildings are efficient and reflect modern policing needs; and technology to enhance its comprehensive understanding of demand, including providing tablets to all frontline personnel. The force aims to ensure that benefits are tracked, understood and realised. For example, one benefit that the force has realised from the investment it made in a mental health triage facility in its control room is that fewer people are being held in police custody, saving 1,300 hours of police time.

Cheshire Constabulary was early to recognise the need to invest through collaboration and began to work with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service in 2015, reducing the duplication of estate, ICT provision, management and staffing roles. The force has plans to achieve £6.9m savings, so that it can invest in future service improvements. It is already seeing returns on invest-to-save programmes in its estates. The Widnes police estate has been reduced in size by two-thirds, saving 40 percent of the previous running costs. The force has invested in buying property outright instead of leasing it, and the result is a reduction in overhead costs. The force and PCC are using reserves to pay for ambitious new ICT projects that will improve both the efficiency and effectiveness of policing.

Thames Valley Police and Hampshire Constabulary collaborate on decisions about how to invest using a change prioritisation matrix which helps to rank problems, based on clear evidence. This includes an assessment of expected returns and the extent to which an investment will support the PCC's plans. At the initiation stage of each project, Thames Valley Police identifies what the returns on an investment should be and uses programme management expertise to help ensure that these are tracked and benefits are realised. The force considers not only the financial return but also how those investments provide efficient services and the extent to which savings support the changes it is making to work more efficiently. For example, Thames Valley Police will spend £27.3m over three years to provide the right police estate for its new operating model. In 2016–17, it invested £7m to purchase a leased HQ building, which will result in annual rental savings of up to £500,000. The force is investing in ICT infrastructure and plans to spend £19.2m over three years to improve systems and monitoring, including mobile applications, contact management and document management systems. This will achieve £3.2m of continuing annual savings and provide a better service to the public. The force estimates that it will make total savings of £37m over the next four years.

Digital

Working with the latest digital technology is necessary for efficient and effective policing. Increasingly, the public expects to be able to access services online, and digital skills are becoming an ever more important part of police work, not least in the investigation of crime. In general, policing remains less advanced than it needs to be in terms of adopting digital technology and working practices.

Last year, we reported that few forces were developing digital skills in their workforces, were taking full advantage of the skills that police staff, PCSOs, special constables and volunteers can bring to forces, or were ensuring that ICT was at the centre of their thinking. Too little has changed since then. ICT departments are still too disconnected from other parts of the organisation and digital solutions too often involve digitising existing processes rather than creating new, better processes. ICT is too often a procurement function, rather than an integral part of strategic planning.

In 2014, HMICFRS stated that "the current situation in relation to the development and use of ICT in the police service is unsatisfactory and its causes must be tackled".[7] As in 2015 and 2016, HMICFRS remains troubled by the significant problems caused by ageing and obsolete ICT systems. Last year, we drew attention to the lack of progress that any national body made on this. No real progress seems to have been made since. Several ICT leads within forces have expressed a growing sense of frustration that policing is not responding sufficiently quickly or coherently to changes in technology. It is essential that PCCs and chief constables remain committed to working collaboratively with the Police ICT Company to radically improve the procurement and use of ICT systems, especially in relation to their inter-operability.

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[7] *Core Business – an inspection into crime prevention, police attendance and the use of police time*, HMIC, September 2014, p150. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/publications/core-business/

Conclusion

As stated at the beginning of this report, this inspection found evidence that forces are working hard to improve their efficiency in increasingly difficult circumstances. We found some excellent examples of forces demonstrating innovative, long-term thinking. Over the course of our efficiency inspections we have seen an increased focus from police forces on improving the way in which they understand and meet the demand that they face on their services. In most forces, change programmes that five years ago would simply have focused on reducing costs are now more sophisticated. Most forces are thinking much more about realising the benefits of change and understanding the unintended consequences of change. However, the ambition and pace of force change programmes vary significantly.

HMICFRS considers that in the following two areas there is a need for urgent and sustained action.

Workforce skills

Forces do not yet recognise sufficiently the important connection between understanding demand and building the capability of a force. Most forces are taking steps to improve their understanding of the current demand they are managing and are starting to try to understand more about future demand and the skills and capabilities their workforces will require to meet that demand. However, more still needs to be done to improve the understanding of, and explicitly link, future demand and the skills and capability needed to manage it. While some work is underway within the College of Policing to support this, for example recognising expert skills by developing new 'advanced practitioner' roles, more could be done.

Chief constables will need to draw on the support of the College of Policing to produce an ongoing assessment of the likely skills and capabilities they will need to recruit, retain and/or develop over the next five years and show how they plan to do so. These plans should take into account the changing nature of demand and likely shifts in public expectations. This is not a formal recommendation, though the ability of forces to demonstrate their workforce plans will be a significant element of our 2018/19 and future PEEL inspections.

Digital transformation

HMICFRS has commented regularly over the last few years that police ICT is out-dated, of poor quality and often fails to connect across an individual police force, let alone across all forces in England and Wales or to other public sector organisations. Forces need to focus on developing digitally-enabled services. This means using technology to change the way forces operate as a whole rather than an approach which simply replicates paper-based systems online. Almost all forces are trying to

make improvements in this area but often their ability to do so is hampered by the workforce skills available to them. This is a problem which requires urgent attention from chief constables. We are aware there are a number of national programmes that have been set up to improve the capability and interoperability of police systems. However, the evidence from this inspection indicates a fragmented picture at a local level, where there is also an increased frustration at the lack of practical direction and support at a national level. In too many forces there are pockets of digitally-enabled services that appear to have developed in isolation rather than as part of a coherent plan for the whole organisation.

Recommendation

- By September 2018, chief constables should produce an ambitious plan to improve digitally-enabled services within their force. The Home Office, National Police Chiefs' Council and Association of Police and Crime Commissioners should support the development of these plans by establishing a national framework which allows for the provision of digitally-enabled services across force boundaries.

As mentioned above, HMICFRS is consulting currently with forces, PCCs, the Home Office and others on the template for force management statements. We believe this is a significant opportunity to improve the ability of forces to respond to and anticipate change. We want to make sure this is a practical document that supports both chief constables and PCCs in making the often difficult and complex strategic decisions that they are frequently required to make. We believe that once every force has a high-quality force management statement, it will improve significantly the ability of policing as a whole to demonstrate the pressures that forces are facing and the steps that they are taking to manage those pressures efficiently.

The speed with which the best forces are able to anticipate, understand and respond to change is a defining factor in their success. The evidence from these forces suggests that there are real opportunities for policing to improve the efficiency with which it operates in the future. Grasping those opportunities, both individually and collectively, will require hard work, persistence and a willingness to work across organisational boundaries. The dedication and commitment of so many of those working within policing are its strongest assets. Supporting, developing and nurturing those people across all forces will be vital in enabling policing as a whole to continue to meet the substantial challenges it faces.

Definitions and interpretation

In this report, the following words, phrases and expressions in the left-hand column have the meanings assigned to them in the right-hand column. Sometimes, the definition will be followed by a fuller explanation of the matter in question, with references to sources and other material which may be of assistance to the reader.

capability	ability to carry out a particular function
capacity	resources available to carry out a particular function
chief officer	police officer with one of the following ranks: assistant chief constable, deputy chief constable and chief constable in police forces outside London; commander, deputy assistant commissioner, assistant commissioner, deputy commissioner and commissioner in the Metropolitan Police Service; commander, assistant commissioner and commissioner in City of London Police
child sexual exploitation	sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18; involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) receives 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities; can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example being persuaded to post images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain; this is the established NPCC definition
collaboration	arrangement under which two or more parties work together in the interests of their greater efficiency or effectiveness in order to achieve common or complementary objectives; collaboration

	arrangements extend to co-operation between police forces and with other entities in the public, private and voluntary sectors
College of Policing	professional body for policing in England and Wales, established to set standards of professional practice, accredits training providers, promotes good practice based on evidence, provides support to police forces and others in connection with the protection of the public and the prevention of crime, and promote ethics, values and standards of integrity in policing; its powers to set standards were conferred by the Police Act 1996 as amended by the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014; under section 40C, Police Act 1996, the Home Secretary has power to direct the College, requiring it to exercise any statutory function vested in the College, and to carry out such other duties for the purpose of furthering the efficiency, effectiveness or integrity of the police as the Home Secretary specifies
control room	facility in each police force in which call operators answer telephone calls from the public, determine the circumstances of the call and decide the initial response
Crime Survey for England and Wales	quarterly independent survey of crime commissioned by the Office for National Statistics, involving the collection of information about people's experience of crime from several thousand households in England and Wales; formerly known as the British Crime Survey
cyber-crime	offences committed by means of a computer, computer networks or other forms of information communications technology; these fall into one of two categories: new offences such as

	offences against computer systems and data, dealt with in the Computer Misuse Act 1990 (for example breaking into computer systems to steal data); and old offences committed using new technology, where networked computers and other devices are used to facilitate the commission of an offence (for example, the transfer of illegal images)
demand	amount and type of service that the public and other organisations require of the police
domestic abuse	incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive, threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are, or have been, intimate partners, or family members regardless of gender or sexuality; the abuse can encompass, but is not limited to, psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional means
governance	method by which the structures and processes of a force relate to its efficiency and effectiveness, including how well the outcomes of the force's goals are met and overseen
human resources	department responsible for the people in an organisation; its principal functions include: recruitment and hiring of new workers; workforce training and continuous professional development; and workforce benefits and performance
ICT systems	information and communications technology set up and used to gather, store, retrieve, process, analyse and transmit information; includes hardware (such as tablets and mobile phones), software (computer programs), data and the people who use them

local policing	approach taken by a team of officers, PCSOs and staff working in neighbourhoods to keep local communities safe; the teams often comprise neighbourhood policing teams and response teams, and sometimes investigation teams
National Police Chiefs' Council	organisation that brings together 43 operationally independent and locally accountable chief constables and their chief officer teams to co-ordinate national operational policing; works closely with the College of Policing, which is responsible for developing professional standards, to develop national approaches on matters such as finance, technology and human resources; replaced the Association of Chief Police Officers on 1 April 2015
NPCC	National Police Chiefs' Council
operating model	way in which a police force is organised and the processes it has adopted in order to achieve its objectives
partnership	co-operative arrangement between two or more organisations, from any sector, who share responsibility and undertake to use their respective powers and resources to try to achieve a specified common objective
performance management	activities which are intended to ensure that goals are being met consistently in an effective and efficient manner; it can focus on the performance of an organisation, a department, an individual, or the processes to build a service
police officer	individual with warranted powers of arrest, search and detention who, under the direction of the chief constable, is deployed to uphold the law, protect life and property, maintain and restore the

	Queen's peace, and pursue and bring offenders to justice
Police ICT Company	public body established to create greater innovation in police information and communications technology, and to provide forces with the best new technologies at the best price
police staff	person employed by a police force and who is not a police officer
priority-based budgeting	technique that allocates an organisation's resources in line with its priorities and enables the organisation to identify opportunities to reduce costs
proactive demand	police work that must be identified by officers and/or staff; crime that would otherwise not come to their attention or is less likely to be reported to the police, such as domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation; crime in communities who are more reluctant to trust or work with the police; and work that is passed to the police by other agencies and services
procurement	acquisition of goods or services from an external supplier
reactive demand	police work that requires the police to react, rather than plan, such as 999 calls
reserves	money set aside for specific future costs (e.g. estates) or generally held to meet unforeseen or emergency expenditure
resourcing	arrangements to ensure correct level of officers and staff, funding and any other requirements to provide a particular service
safeguarding	process of protecting vulnerable people from abuse or neglect

special constable	part-time volunteer unpaid police officer appointed under section 27, Police Act 1996 who works with and supports their local police force and, when trained, has the same powers as a regular officer

Annex A – About the data

The source of the data is presented with each figure in the report, and is set out in more detail in this annex. The source of Force in numbers data is also set out below.

Methodology

Please note the following for the methodology applied to the data collected to support this efficiency inspection.

Data in the report

The information presented in this report comes from a range of sources, including data published by the Home Office and Office for National Statistics, inspection fieldwork and data collected directly from all 43 territorial police forces in England and Wales. Where HMICFRS has collected data directly from police forces, we have taken reasonable steps to agree with forces the design of the data collection, and to verify the data during fieldwork that we have conducted.

The PEEL Efficiency 2017 inspection did not include the British Transport Police so any aggregated totals for England and Wales exclude British Transport Police data and may therefore differ from Home Office publications.

Population

For all uses of population as a denominator, unless otherwise noted, we use the Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2015 population estimates. This was the most recent data available at the time of the inspection.

Efficiency in numbers

Forecast change in gross revenue expenditure

These data show estimated gross revenue expenditure (GRE) for the force in 2017/18 and 2020/21. This was gathered from forces by HMICFRS staff prior to fieldwork (April 2017). Some of the data provided will have been subject to revisions after this time but figures should represent the picture as at the time of inspection. Future forecasts of expenditure are estimates for which forces use different methodologies. As these are estimates care should be taken in interpreting changes.

Workforce figures (FTE) for 2016/17 and 2020/21

These data were obtained from the Home Office police workforce statistics and HMICFRS 2017 data collection.

Projections for 2017/18 and 2020/21 are budget-based and therefore likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy, but may not include a projection for absences. In some instances, therefore, an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate the force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Calls for assistance

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441. These data cover the period of the 12 months to 31 March 2017. The figure displayed is a rate per 1,000 population of England and Wales. This will differ from the England and Wales force average stated within the force reports, which is a simple average of all forces' rates to minimise the effect of larger forces.

Recorded crime

These data are obtained from Home Office police-recorded crime and outcomes data tables (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-recorded-crimeopen-data-tables). These data cover the 12 months to 31 March 2016 and 31 March 2017.

Financial position

This was gathered from forces by HMICFRS staff prior to fieldwork (April 2017). Some of the data provided will have been subject to revisions after this time but figures should represent the picture as at the time of inspection.

Future forecasts of expenditure are estimates for which forces use different methodologies. As these are estimates care should be taken in interpreting the figures presented.

It should also be noted that some data was not available for all forces so the estimates presented may not represent all savings and investment and care should be taken in interpreting the figures.

Figures throughout the report

Figure 1: Index of police funding, workforce and crime from 1996/97 to 2016/17 (1996/97=100)

Source: Home Office financial data, Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA), Home Office police workforce statistics and Crime Survey of England and Wales

Historical finance data from 1996/97 to 2009/10 were obtained from the Home Office (www.gov.uk/government/publications/central-government-police-funding), with estimates from 2010/11 to 2016/17 updated CIPFA Police Objective Analysis estimates within our Value for Money profiles of each force.

Funding equivalent to 2015/16 prices were calculated using the Treasury GDP deflator figures www.gov.uk/government/statistics/gdp-deflators-at-market-prices-and-money-gdp-march-2017-spring-budget-2017

Workforce data are obtained from the Home Office police workforce statistics and represent FTE in post as at the 31 March for each year (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables)

The workforce is a total of officers, staff and PCSOs. This does not include special constables.

Crime data were obtained from the Crime Survey of England and Wales (available from: www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/datasets/crimeinen glandandwalesappendixtables, Table A1: Trends in CSEW incidents of crime from year ending December 1981 to year ending March 2017)

Please note that the figures from the Crime Survey for England and Wales are different to recorded crimes figures which are reported at force level and those presented in the Efficiency in numbers section. The Crime Survey for England and Wales is presented here to provide a consistent longer time series.

All three indicators are indexed to 100 in the base year 1996/97 to show a comparison over time.

Figure 2: 999 calls recorded by forces in England and Wales, per 1,000 population for the 12 months to 31 March from 2014/15 to 2016/17

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441. City of London Police does not submit 999 calls data to the Home Office as these are included in figures provided by the Metropolitan Police Service. The data displayed are rates per 1,000 population of England and Wales. This will differ from the England and Wales force average stated within the force reports, which is a simple average of all forces' rates to minimise the effect of larger forces.

Figure 3: Change in 999 calls recorded by force from 2014/15 to 2016/17

These data are obtained from the Home Office annual data return 441 covering the years 2011/12 and 2016/17.

City of London Police does not submit 999 calls data to the Home Office as these are included in figures provided by the Metropolitan Police Service.

Figure 4: Actual and planned workforce change (%) from 2010/11 to 2020/21

Figures 5: Planned change in total police workforce from 2016/17 to 2020/21 by force

For figures 4 and 5, data as at 31 March 2011 to 31 March 2017 are obtained from Home Office police workforce statistics and represent FTE in post (available from www.gov.uk/government/statistics/police-workforce-open-data-tables) which is an 'actual' FTE. Data as at 31 March 2018 to 2021 are obtained from HMICFRS 2017 data collection.

 The data in figures 4 and 5 use full-time equivalents (FTEs). Figure 4 excludes those staff on career breaks and maternity or paternity leave to allow consistency with pre 2003 figures. Figure 5 includes Section 38 designated officers (investigation, detention and escort) but excludes Section 39 designated officers.

Projections for March 2018 to 2021 are budget-based and therefore are likely to take into account a vacancy rate depending on a force's planning strategy. In some instances, therefore, an increase in budgeted posts may not actually indicate that a force is planning to increase its workforce. In other cases, forces may be planning to reduce their workforce but have a current high vacancy rate which masks this change.

Due to the complex and evolving picture of workforce collaboration between forces, not all changes in workforce figures are real in terms of the workforce available. Therefore sharp increases or decreases over time need to be considered with caution as they may simply represent accounting changes related to how staff are allocated within forces, not real changes in staffing levels.

At the time of the inspection, the future financial climate was uncertain. Several forces did not have confirmed/signed-off plans for workforce projections. It is important to note that figures provided are in many instances unconfirmed estimates provided to assist HMIC in our inspection programme and should not be seen as a concrete plan for the future workforce landscape of policing.

Figure 6: England and Wales average spend on policing functions, 2011/12 to 2016/17

These data were obtained from data collected by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) for use in the HMICFRS Value for Money profiles www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/our-work/value-for-money-inspections/value-for-money-profiles/#2016. The data define policing functions using the Police Objective Analysis categories excluding National Policing and PCC (police and crime commissioner)

Some of the POA categories have been grouped to present the different areas of policing functions or renamed to be better understood by the public. There are as follows:

- Local policing and roads policing

- Investigations and investigative support

- Operational support and back office functions – includes central costs, operational support and support functions

- Custody and criminal justice – includes criminal justice arrangements

We have made some adjustments to the original POA data in order to provide valid historical comparisons. In 2011/12 the POA category "Local policing" included the sub-category "local investigation and prisoner processing", however, from 2012/13 onwards this moved to the "Investigations" category. We have therefore removed "local investigation and prisoner processing from the 2011/12 figure to provide a historical comparison and not create misleading percentage changes.

For the same reason above, for the 2011/12 "Investigations" figure we have included "local investigations and prisoner processing" for historical comparison.

Furthermore, in 2016/17 "Public Protection" became its own level two category, whereas in previous years it had been included as a sub-category under "Investigations". Therefore for historical comparisons, we have included public protection in "Investigations" for 2016/17.