

Emergency Services News Briefing

August 2024



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Introduction

In this edition of our news briefing, we draw attention to some of the key developments and publications in the sector, with particular focus on the annual assessment of policing and the new internal governance and assurance fire standard.

Police

State of policing

His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary has published his annual assessment of the state of policing in England and Wales.

The assessment is based on the outcomes and evidence from inspection reports, and written submissions from key stakeholders. Some of the key findings from the assessment include:

- forces are making improvements to vetting, uprooting corruption and dealing with misconduct. Whilst there is much to do in this area, the police are 'trying to rebuild public trust and confidence';
- whilst crime levels continue to reduce, there are some particular crimes that are 'highly prevalent in society' for example violence against women and girls;
- too often, victims are let down or are disappointed with the response from the police or wider criminal justice system to their crime. The worst inspection grades were seen in how well forces responded to the public and investigated crime, leading the inspectorate to state 'too often, forces aren't doing as good a job as they should be';
- whilst there are more police officers following the previous government's Police Uplift Programme, many officers are inexperienced. With the supervision, and time needed to train these officers, together this is 'one of the greatest challenges' forces face;
- the inspectorate states that chief constables should have the freedom to recruit into roles that are required, noting the importance of police staff, and states that the focus on police officer recruitment has hindered this process; and
- better services could be provided within existing financial resources, as there are several examples where forces' 'performance management and governance arrangements aren't good enough.'



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your Force compare against the annual assessment?



The King's speech

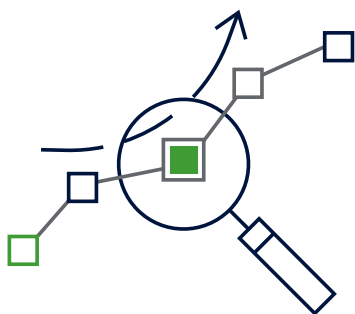
The King's speech at the State Opening of Parliament outlined the new government's commitments. The Crime and Policing Bill will be introduced to enhance community policing and combat anti-social behaviour, with the Labour Party pledging an additional 13,000 neighbourhood police and police community support officers (PCSOs). Martyn's Law, officially the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill, aims to increase public safety at venues and is named after Martyn Hett, a victim of the Manchester Arena bombing. The duty of candour will also be expanded to include all public servants.

Testing new process for promotion and progression for sergeants and inspectors

The College of Policing is working with several forces to test the new Sergeant and Inspector Promotion and Progression (SIPP) process. The SIPP programme is split into three phases, across development, selection and promotion. Candidates are expected to have completed leadership training, have practice-based evidence, successful professional development review and complete an examination. The new process is being tested by a selection of forces through to March 2026.

Launch of new cyber security strategy

The National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), in collaboration with the Police Digital Service (PDS), has published the National Policing Cyber Security Strategy. It is published in response to the evolving digital landscape and the complex challenges of cyber-crime. The plan includes five key objectives and strategic priorities linked to the government's cyber security strategy 2022-2030 and adapted for policing. This three-year programme aims to enhance cyber-security across both government and policing.



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is this Force equipped to train and develop the additional neighbourhood police and PCSOs?



Questions for committee's consideration

- How will you be assured that the SIPP process is followed, and sufficient evidence is maintained to support this?



Questions for committee's consideration

- Is your cyber security strategy up to date?
- Is your strategy consistent with the NPCC's strategy?

Police workforce

The Home Office has published data revealing that as of 31 March 2024 there were 147,746 full-time equivalent (FTE) police officers in post at forces in England and Wales. This is the highest number since comparable records commenced. Much of the increases over the last four years are as a result of the Police Officer Uplift programme. Yet, as the workforce is growing there is greater scope for turnover. The police officer leaver rate was 6.2%; the second highest rate seen for leavers since comparable records began.

The total workforce, inclusive of officers, staff and PCSOs stood at 236,588 FTE, and is a 1.2% increase on the previous year. At 52,331 FTE, female police officers made up 35.4% of all officers in post. At 12,133 FTE, ethnic minority police officers made up 8.4% of all officers in post.

New recruits survey 2023

The Home Office conducted the 2023 New Recruits Survey from March to May 2023 to gather insights aimed at assessing and improving the initial education for new police constables. With 8,086 officers participating, representing a 24% response rate, the survey highlighted high levels of satisfaction with the education and training provided by forces.

Respondents also reported high levels of mental wellbeing and satisfaction with the police officer role. Additionally, the survey revealed recruits' motivation to think critically and their confidence in challenging and reporting inappropriate behaviour.

Learnings from the survey are being taken forward in the national Optimisation Programme for entry routes. So far, the programme has released a revised curriculum, launched a single procurement framework, and introduced the new police constable entry programme (PCEP).



Questions for committee's consideration

- How does your leaver rate compare and what is being done to minimise it?



Questions for committee's consideration

- How did responses from your Force compare to other Forces?
- Are there any learnings that can be taken from other Forces?

Guidance on preventing deaths in custody

The Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) has released guidance to prevent deaths in police custody and suicides following release. It is aimed at police and crime commissioners (PCCs), including police, fire and crime commissioners and mayoral authorities with PCC functions. The guidance provides advice, recommendations, and case studies, backed by evidence. It is designed to help PCCs in their scrutiny role and in taking a preventative approach.

Emily Spurrell, APCC Joint Lead for Mental Health and Custody, emphasised the significance of evaluating and mitigating risks, and providing support to vulnerable individuals upon their release. She highlighted the role of PCCs in fostering cooperation between forces and support providers, to reduce risk and ensure access is available to appropriate care.



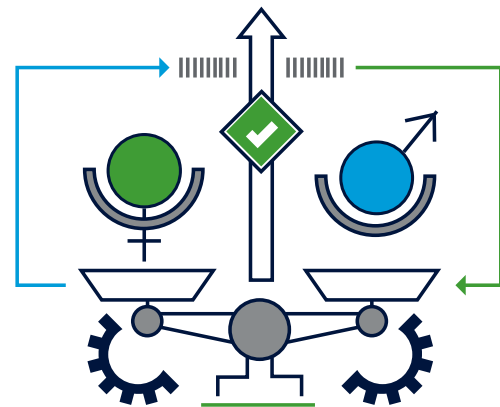
Questions for committee's consideration

- Are your policies and procedures on the prevention of deaths in custody up to date and reflective of the new guidance?

Training for neighbourhood policing

The College of Policing is trialling a new neighbourhood policing programme (NPP) to transform local policing and better meet community needs. The NPP is the first national training for neighbourhood policing. It aims to equip officers with the skills to enhance community safety, prevent crime, solve local problems, and build community relationships.

The training combines online and classroom learning, with successful participants becoming recognised specialists. The trial, involving 11 forces across England and Wales, runs until March 2025 and includes modules on community engagement, problem-solving, and tackling anti-social behaviour. If successful, the training will be rolled out to all forces from 2025.



Fire

Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standard

The Fire Standards Board (FSB) has launched the seventeenth professional Fire Standard on Internal Governance and Assurance. This standard aims to ensure that fire and rescue services have robust internal governance structures and business planning processes, allowing senior leaders to effectively oversee internal activities and having assurance that the service is operating effectively.

The standard is designed to manage internal change and improvement projects through strong development, approval, and initiation processes. This helps to ensure that projects are in line with the service's vision and strategic goals, as well as also ensuring that the plans for delivery and organisational development are clear and understood by everyone in the service.

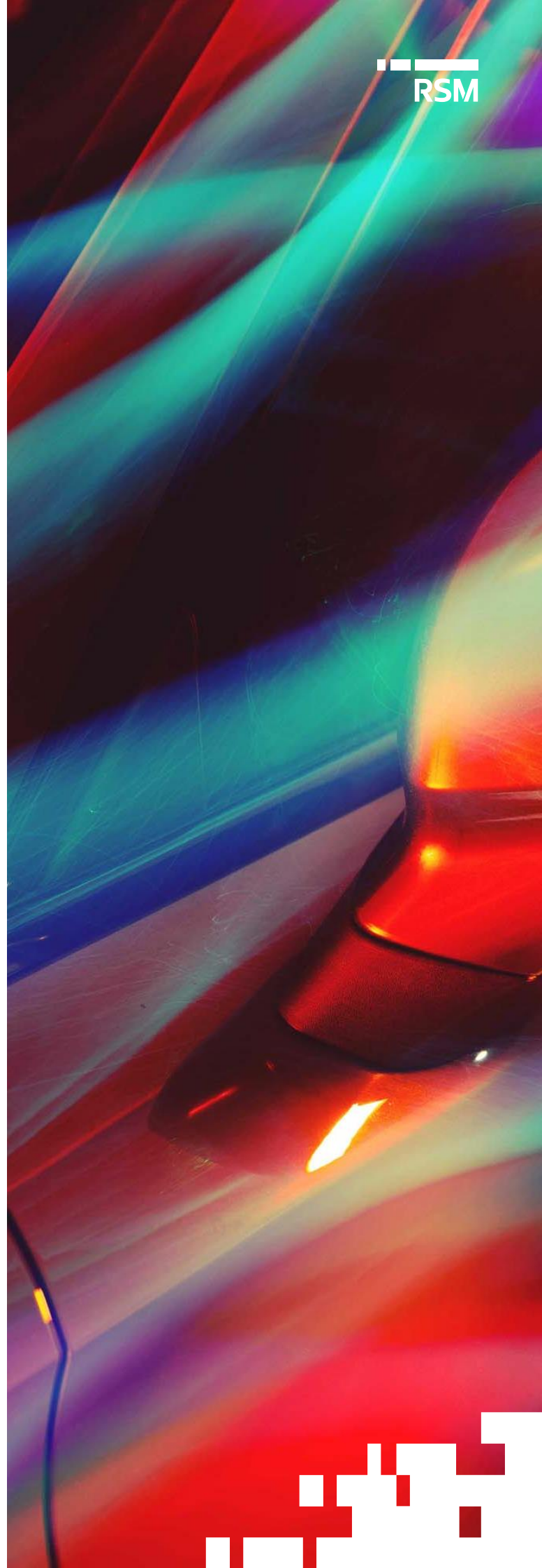
Sabrina Cohen-Hatton, CFO of West Sussex Fire and Rescue Service and Chair of National Fire Chiefs' Council's (NFCC) Improvement Committee welcomed the launch of the new standard noting it 'will support all fire and rescue services to follow a consistent and robust process when developing internal governance and assurance procedures.'

The Internal Governance and Assurance Fire Standards includes a set of desired outcomes, how services must meet the standard, anticipated benefits that achieving the fire standard will bring, and legal requirements and mandatory duties. It is also supported by an implementation tool.



Questions for committee's consideration

- How do your governance structures compare to the new standard?
- Are your business planning processes subject to regular review and in line with best practice?



Statement on the Home Affairs Select Committee’s conclusions following its inquiry into culture in fire and rescue services

Between March and May 2024, the Home Affairs Select Committee undertook an inquiry into the culture in fire and rescue services. It revealed that while services excel in public safety, protecting life and property, there persists a workplace culture of bullying and harassment. The short inquiry states there has been little movement in behavioural and cultural change over the past three decades and referred to the fire and rescue service in England as ‘institutionally misogynistic, racist and homophobic.’

The inquiry calls for:

- the Core Code of Ethics for Fire and Rescue Services in England to become statutory;
- fire and rescue leaders should be committed to changing behaviour and authorities should improve their scrutiny;
- so that cultural change can happen more quickly, His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) should be given enforcement powers; and
- the Local Government Association should update its accountability and oversight guidance for leaders, and the Fire and Rescue National Framework should be updated to include reference to cultural change.

Culture and inclusion conference

The second NFCC Culture Conference on 15 and 16 July 2024 discussed and addressed on discussing and addressing the cultural challenges within the fire and rescue service. The event was focused on creating a more inclusive, diverse, and equitable sector and sharing positive practices. Key speakers highlighted the importance of listening to those with lived experiences, of a negative fire service culture, and the need for transparency and accountability.

The conference also focused on the NFCC Culture Action Plan and the introduction of new resources such as the Culture Dashboard Methodology, Health and Wellbeing Strategic Framework, and the Challenging Inappropriate Behaviour Toolkit. These tools, along with the Direct Entry programme, aim to bring new ideas into the sector, challenge current practices and support the development of leaders who prioritise equality, diversity, and inclusion.



Questions for committee’s consideration

- How are you assured bullying and harassment is being taken seriously and steps are put in place to prevent it?





How the Procurement Act 2023 affects you – essential information

Public Procurement as we know it will fundamentally change from 28 October 2024, when the new Procurement Act comes into force. This will be the biggest change to Public Procurement Law in England, Wales and Northern Ireland in a generation.

Walter Akers, RSM Partner, sets out some key information to consider regarding Procurement under the new Act.

[Navigate to our webpage with more information here.](#)

Procurement webinar

Walter Akers delivered a webinar for social housing, charities and public sector organisations on 3 July 2024, discussing the impact of the Procurement Act 2023.

[Access a recording of the webinar here.](#)



References



[State of Policing 2023](#)



[The King's Speech](#)



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Further information

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