

CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN THE UK 2010



The Police Part 1

**An insight report into why Public Confidence in the
Police Service of England & Wales is at an all time low**

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WHY CONFIDENCE IN THE POLICE IS ALL BUT LOST

Never has the police service had so much money, so many officers or such access to technology. Yet never has public dissatisfaction with the police been so widespread. Complaints against the police have doubled in the past three years. This big increase, according to the Independent Police Complaints Commission, is due to allegations from law-abiding, middle-class, middle-aged and retired people. These traditional supporters of the police have never felt so let down.

A Home Office report, considered the most authoritative in the country, shows a huge gap between how we want to be policed, how the front line police want to police us and how we are actually policed. Why is there this gap and what can be done about it?

The UK public lacks the power to get the policing they want. Neither the public, their democratically elected local counselors nor their MP have any influence over the strategy of their local force, its funding or the appointment or removal of its Chief Constable. If the chief constable wants to close police stations against the wishes of the community, he can do so. If he wants his response teams to spend the day chasing detections, there is little to stop him.

Since the Police Act 1964 successive governments have accrued power to the centre. Law and order is a hot political issue. The government cannot be seen to fail. As in the NHS it exerts control through targets. Just as in the NHS these targets are often poorly thought out and measure the wrong things. The government tolerates dodgy data for political ends and coerces otherwise ethical public servants into unethical behaviour. Most of all, it stops the police giving the public the policing they want.

Our 43 police forces in England and Wales are wholly accountable to the Home Office and the secretary of state - "the chief constable of chief constables", as one police officer put it.

Frontline officers complain of central control and ill thought out government policies. A high level of bitterness and frustration exists at the sharp end of policing. Bonuses are paid to senior officers based on how they comply with targets. As in the NHS bad targets are coercing otherwise ethical public servants into unethical behaviour. Serious crime is ignored and minor crime elevated to the serious in order to satisfy the measurement regime. One officer said: 'We are bringing more and more people to justice - but they are the wrong people.' Targets and increased central control are turning what should be an independent police force into what another officer described as, 'an extension of the government.' At the same time too much paper work sees officers spend only 14% of their time on patrol. Police numbers may be

historically high but they are low compared to other countries while the ratio of crimes to officers is now overwhelming.

Targets miss the point of what the public wants. The Home Office judges each police force by how many crimes they detect and clear up. The public wants something different. They do not want the crimes happening in the first place. The absence of crime and disorder is not a target. As one constable wrote, 'I remember when it was a matter of pride to come back after a night shift to find no crimes had happened. Now all we are asked is why no one was locked up.'

The police are one part of the criminal justice system which includes the Crown Prosecution Service and the courts. All three work to different targets in conflict with each other and, too often, with the victim's quest for justice. The CPS is judged, amongst other things, by the number of successful prosecutions. This means it drops cases it is unsure of winning. As the first point of contact, the police get the blame. 'I get fed up', said one Chief Superintendent, 'with apologising to the public for the failures of the criminal justice system.'

Violent crime carried out by children and teenagers, for example, has increased by one-third over three years.

Frontline police are clear why this is happening. Rather than concentrating on persistent and violent youth offenders, they are busy creating crime to government orders. Minor crime, a retired inspector explained, is going on all the time. Police merely "pluck something out of the air", searching the pockets of a student for cannabis, for example, in order to detect a crime and so fulfill targets. Another officer said: "We are bringing more and more people to justice - but they are the wrong people."

Targets also miss the point of what the public want. The Home Office judges each police force by how many crimes it detects and clears up. The public want something different. They do not want crimes happening in the first place. They believe, like Sir Robert Peel, the founder of the Metropolitan police, that "the test of police efficiency" is "the absence of crime and disorder". It is not "the visible evidence of police action in dealing with them".

Currently local taxpayers lack the power to question ever-higher policing costs. They have no say on the number of police walking their neighbourhood. They are unable to insist on even the basics of a good service.

Police officers swear an oath of allegiance to the Queen not the Prime Minister. Unlike many other police forces, British police were not intended to be servants of the state but of the communities they serve. Their powers are personal, used at their own discretion and derived from the crown. This essential feature of British policing - policing by consent - is now in jeopardy.

Political Interference of the police is putting policing by consent at risk

The tradition of policing by consent, which used to make Britain the envy of the world, is in danger from political interference that is alienating the police from the public.

Government targets before serving the public

The British police force has been made to put government targets before serving the public. These targets, set by the Home Office, result in bonuses of between £5,000 and £15,000 to top officers whose forces meet them, with the predictable result that officers lower down the scale come under pressure to concentrate on whatever is targeted, to the neglect of other things.

Police performance is measured in 'sanction detections', a term for offences detected or cleared by charging someone, issuing a PND (penalty notice) or giving them a caution if they will admit the offence, have no previous record and have not recently received a PND. In order to meet targets, police are now classifying incidents as crimes that would previously have been dealt with informally, classified differently or ignored.

Section 5 of the Public Order Act allows police to arrest anyone for 'threatening, abusive or insulting words or behaviour within the sight of a person likely to be caused harassment, alarm or distress'. Before the arrival of sanction detections, the police only used Section 5 for a public order offence, but now that police can now claim a sanction detection for an arrest under Section 5, minor crime and even innocuous activities appear in a different light.

'A patrol officer described what happened to the drunks in his town when senior officers realized they could be arrested under Section 5 instead. Suddenly in a town with a large student population there were no drunks. The drunk and disorderly were still being arrested but not for inebriation.'

However, the consequences for those arrested under Section 5 rather than for being drunk and disorderly can be serious:

'A prospective employer looks at criminal records. He might accept a night in the cells for being intoxicated. "Well, we've all done that." He would view an arrest under Section 5 in a different light. "Mouthing off at the police, alarming the public - what does that say about your attitude towards authority?" The arrest could seriously affect a young person's career

Everyone arrested gives a sample of DNA which automatically guarantees a criminal record number on the Police National Computer. A criminal record number affects a young person taking up certain occupations (joining the police for one) and getting a USA visa. One senior police officer confirmed: "We are in discussions with the Americans to make them aware of our system." The Americans find it difficult to understand that a number of our criminals are not criminal at all - simply a result of Home Office targets.'

Rising numbers of sanction detections give the impression that the police are waging an effective war against crime, but, as one officer interviewed put it: 'We are bringing more and more people to justice but they are the wrong people.' Like other targets, they measure what was chosen to be measured, by Chief Officers in collaboration with the Home Office, not whether the public are getting a good service.

'Arresting someone for sending an offensive text on their mobile phone after a domestic dispute gets a sanction detection. The painstaking, time-consuming work of tracking down a missing child does not. A child stealing a Mars bar earns the same detection as a murder. Murders obviously require a lot more police time than a Mars bar. Officers are now forced by Senior Officer strategies to get involved in police work that does not earn a target. "We put less effort into areas we are not judged on."'

The volume of crime each officer has to deal with is overwhelming, with response teams (i.e. the officers who respond to calls for assistance) often depleted to extremely low levels. In response to ever-more government initiatives, officers are called off to specialist units - immigration, asset recovery, the Olympics - leaving fewer to deal with calls for help from the public:

'One response officer tried to explain to an irate old lady why he had taken so long to arrive. "How many police do you think are on duty in this area tonight?" he asked. "Seventy or eighty", she replied. "Try six!" he said.'

The deluge of paperwork imposed on the police by Whitehall means that just 14% of officer time is spent on patrol.

'In 2005/06 the Metropolitan Police, Britain's biggest force, spent £122.2 million on "non-incident linked paperwork" and £26.5 million on "checking paper work" out of a total budget of £3.2 billion. In contrast it spent just £76.6 million on robberies and £48.8 million on house burglaries. It is reassuring to learn that the Met also boasts "a unit seeking to eliminate unnecessary paperwork".'

The police also complain that, when they do catch offenders, many escape with an NFA - no further action - because the Crown Prosecution Service, with targets of its own to achieve in terms of successful prosecutions, is unwilling to proceed with cases that are not watertight.

'A woman working as a prostitute was raped by a client. It was premeditated. He had a rope ready to tie her up and the implements to torture her with. Her ordeal lasted four-and-a-half hours. Her injuries were so serious she had to have a total hysterectomy. Nine months later the same man raped another escort girl. The CPS refused to take the case to court because of "insufficient evidence". The woman brought a private prosecution, the first for rape in England. Her attacker was found guilty on the same evidence that the CPS had dismissed as insufficient and sentenced to 14 years.'

Those unwilling or unable to bring private prosecutions have to watch while criminals walk free and every time the criminals get away with it, they learn lessons to reduce their chances of getting caught again.

Who is to blame?

Sixty five over-40s are now 'made a criminal' each day, Government figures show.

The number of people who are over 50 and enter the criminal justice system for the first time increased by 46.3 percent between 2000/01 and 2007/08, from 16,400 to 24,000. Meanwhile in the 40-49 age group, there was a 57.4 per cent rise to 32,900.

Chris Huhne, the Liberal Democrats home affairs spokesman, said targets imposed by Labour had resulted in the mass criminalisation of a generation.

He warned that the figures reflect the fact that Labour has introduced a range of offences aimed at householders which can be dealt with through on-the-spot fines.

Mr Huhne said: "Labour have criminalised a generation and treated tens of thousands of law-abiding middle-aged and elderly citizens like villains."

The rise in the number of middle-aged people entering the criminal justice system for the first time far outstrips the figure for the population as a whole, which saw an increase of 18.6 per cent.

People who commit minor offences such as motoring misdemeanours are classified as first-time entrants to the criminal justice system alongside those convicted of more serious crimes such as rape and murder.

A first-time entrant is someone receiving their first court conviction or caution, as recorded on the police national computer.

Motoring offences, such as not wearing a seat belt, make up half the cases dealt with by the courts. Drivers who challenge a speed camera ticket must go to court and therefore account for many of the punishments.

Mr Huhne, who obtained the figures in a Parliamentary answer, added: "The soaring number of people being criminalised is a direct result of Labour's target-driven, box-ticking approach to policing.

"This Government has created a new crime for every day in office. "When motoring offences and rubbish-bin misdemeanours are worth the same as convictions for murder or rape, it is easy to see how we have slipped into mass criminalisation."

A recent report warned that the middle classes have lost confidence in the police.

It found that many felt that the police target ordinary people rather than serious criminals in order to meet targets imposed by the Government.

Incidents which would once have been ignored are now treated as crimes. Complaints against the police have risen, with much of the increase coming from law-abiding, middle class, middle-aged and retired people who no longer feel the police are on their side.

A Home Office spokesman said: "We have removed all but one centrally-set target for police, to increase public confidence that the police and local councils are tackling the anti-social behaviour and crime issues that matter most locally.

"Together with the introduction of the Policing Pledge, we have ensured that the police are no longer driven by meeting multiple national targets but by listening to the public, identifying and tackling local priorities".

Even this statement has proven to be an embarrassment to the Government.

The Policing Pledge – More False Expectations

The £3.5million wasted on advertising the policing pledge would have been better spend on employing 100+ front line police officers.

Only last week, the Advertising Standards Authority told the Home Office that its television adverts highlighting the government's "policing pledge" that

neighbourhood officers can now be expected to spend 80% of their time on the beat is to be banned with immediate effect.

The ASA says that the television ad breaches its "legal, decent, honest, truthful" code because it is misleading on at least three counts.

"The ad must not be broadcast again in its current form. We told the Home Office to ensure the basis of claims was made clear in future. We also told them to ensure they held adequate substantiation for future claims," says the final ASA adjudication, leaked to the Guardian newspaper.

The decision is embarrassing to Gordon Brown and the home secretary, Alan Johnson, who highlighted the neighbourhood policing pledge this month which was central to Labour's crime and justice policy in the coming election campaign. Labour has already issued a campaign video in effect accusing the Tories of being the "burglar's friend" for opposing the retention of DNA profiles of innocent people and the extension of CCTV coverage.

The ASA said the ad was misleading because while it said that 80% of officers' time would be spent "on the beat", it did not make it clear this included duties other than patrolling the streets.

It also said the ad did not make it sufficiently clear that the pledge doesn't apply to all 140,000 police officers in England and Wales, but only the 13,500 neighbourhood constables and 16,000 community support officers in neighbourhood policing teams.

The watchdog is also concerned that the advertised standard for time on the beat is not actually being met and "[the advert] does not make clear the commitment would not necessarily be delivered".

The banned film is part of a Home Office campaign of TV, radio, press and online adverts launched last November to highlight the policing pledge, which makes clear what the public can expect from the police. The offending promise was also included in a leaflet delivered to more than 6 million households in 60 areas across the country.

Chief constables across England and Wales signed up to the pledge in December 2008 which committed them to a national minimum standard of policing for the first time, including the promise that neighbourhood police officers would spend 80% of their time on the beat.

The watchdog launched its investigation after two viewers made official complaints, challenging whether the 80% claim could be substantiated and claiming it was misleading. The Home Office told them that the pledge actually committed neighbourhood policing teams, but not all frontline police officers, to spending 80% of their time "visibly working in neighbourhoods.

That included, for example, public meetings and school visits as well as patrolling the streets."

The policing pledge was billed as the most radical reform from the government's shake-up of policing, and is supposed to entitle the public to a consistent national minimum standard of service from the police – including response times to 999 calls. The ad campaign also focused on a promise that the public can make an appointment to see the local police at a time that suits them within 48 hours about a non-emergency problem.

The Home Office has stated that "as of January 2009 is being delivered by all 43 police forces".

Polling published at the same time that the advertising campaign was launched showed that only 3% of people think that their local police spend 75% of their time on the beat in their area.

Gordon Brown, in his crime speech earlier this month, set out what he described as "new neighbourhood policing strategy" which includes the pledge for neighbourhood police to spend 80% of their time on the beat, a response to non-emergency issues within 24 hours and a public right to monthly beat meetings to discuss priorities.

Although all 43 forces in England and Wales signed up more than 15 months ago to the pledge, Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary, published a report recently, showing that 35 were falling short of the required standard. Some forces are not even monitoring the amount of time officers spend "working visibly" in their neighbourhoods.

On page 12 of this report, we have taken the most recent information from forces dated March 2010, which confirms that only 8 of the 43 forces attained a "Good" overall standard regarding their performance on the pledge, with two of the forces graded as "Poor".

It can be seen that for the relevant pledge point, relating to the 80% visibility on the street, only 14 of the forces attained a "Good" grade, with two forces, Nottinghamshire and West Midlands being graded as "poor".

The Policing Pledge is a waste of time and tax payers money and should be scrapped. Thousands of police man hours are spent completing audit returns and compiling results, in a misguided effort to persuade the public that they should have confidence in the police. Bureaucratic projects like the pledge tie officers up in administrative duties. If they were put back on the street, public confidence will start to return.

POLICING PLEDGE



THE POLICE SERVICE IN ENGLAND AND WALES WILL SUPPORT LAW ABIDING CITIZENS AND PURSUE CRIMINALS RELENTLESSLY TO KEEP YOU AND YOUR NEIGHBOURHOODS SAFE FROM HARM. WE WILL:

1. Always treat you fairly with dignity and respect ensuring you have fair access to our services at a time that is reasonable and suitable for you.
2. Provide you with information so you know who your dedicated Neighbourhood Policing Team is, where they are based, how to contact them and how to work with them.
3. Ensure your Neighbourhood Policing Team and other police patrols are visible and on your patch at times when they will be most effective and when you tell us you most need them. We will ensure your team are not taken away from neighbourhood business more than is absolutely necessary. They will spend at least 80% of their time visibly working in your neighbourhood, tackling your priorities. Staff turnover will be minimised.
4. Respond to every message directed to your Neighbourhood Policing Team within 24 hours and, where necessary, provide a more detailed response as soon as we can.
5. Aim to answer 999 calls within 10 seconds, deploying to emergencies immediately giving an estimated time of arrival, getting to you safely, and as quickly as possible. In urban areas, we will aim to get to you within 15 minutes and in rural areas within 20 minutes.
6. Answer all non-emergency calls promptly. If attendance is needed, send a patrol giving you an estimated time of arrival, and:
 - If you are vulnerable or upset aim to be with you within 60 minutes.
 - If you are calling about an issue that we have agreed with your community will be a neighbourhood priority (listed opposite) and attendance is required, we will aim to be with you within 60 minutes.
 - Alternatively, if appropriate, we will make an appointment to see you at a time that fits in with your life and within 48 hours.
 - If agreed that attendance is not necessary we will give you advice, answer your questions and/or put you in touch with someone who can help.
7. Arrange regular public meetings to agree your priorities, at least once a month, giving you a chance to meet your local team with other members of your community. These will include opportunities such as surgeries, street briefings and mobile police station visits which will be arranged to meet local needs and requirements. Your local arrangements can be found opposite.
8. Provide monthly updates on progress, and on local crime and policing issues. This will include the provision of crime maps, information on specific crimes and what happened to those brought to justice, details of what action we and our partners are taking to make your neighbourhood safer and information on how your force is performing.
9. If you have been a victim of crime agree with you how often you would like to be kept informed of progress in your case and for how long. You have the right to be kept informed at least every month if you wish and for as long as is reasonable.
10. Acknowledge any dissatisfaction with the service you have received within 24 hours of reporting it to us. To help us fully resolve the matter, discuss with you how it will be handled, give you an opportunity to talk in person to someone about your concerns and agree with you what will be done about them and how quickly.

WE WANT TO DO OUR BEST FOR YOU BUT IF WE FAIL TO MEET OUR PLEDGE WE WILL ALWAYS EXPLAIN WHY IT HAS NOT BEEN POSSIBLE ON THAT OCCASION TO DELIVER THE HIGH STANDARDS TO WHICH WE ASPIRE AND YOU DESERVE.

POLICING PLEDGE



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Pledge Number >>>>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Avon and Somerset	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Bedfordshire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
Cambridgeshire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Cheshire	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
City of London	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	POOR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	POOR
Cleveland	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
Cumbria	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	POOR	FAIR	FAIR	POOR
Derbyshire	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Devon and Cornwall	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
Dorset	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
Durham	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Dyfed-Powys	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Essex	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Gloucestershire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
GMP (Gtr Manchester)	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
Gwent	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
Hampshire	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Hertfordshire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Humberside	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Kent	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
Lancashire	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD
Leicestershire	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD
Lincolnshire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Merseyside	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
Metropolitan	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
Norfolk	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
North Wales	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
North Yorkshire	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Northamptonshire	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Northumbria	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
Nottinghamshire	FAIR	GOOD	POOR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
South Wales	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
South Yorkshire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Staffordshire	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
Suffolk	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	POOR	FAIR	POOR
Surrey	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
Sussex	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	POOR
Thames Valley	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Warwickshire	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
West Mercia	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
West Midlands	FAIR	FAIR	POOR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD
West Yorkshire	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
Wiltshire	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR	GOOD

HMIC FORCE PERFORMANCE KEY

EXCELLENT	Exceptional performance which is consistently above and beyond the required standard
GOOD	Meeting the standard, although there may be minor dips in performance
FAIR	Performance is variable but meets most of the requirements of the standard. Remedial action may be needed.
POOR	Performance fails to meet an acceptable level. Immediate remedial action is needed.

It can be seen that for the relevant pledge point, relating to the 80% visibility on the street, only 14 of the forces attained a “Good” grade, with two forces, Nottinghamshire and West Midlands being graded as “poor”.

£400m fortune for cash-hungry councils by criminalising the middle classes

More than £400million a year is being raised by police and town halls targeting minor 'middle-class' crimes.

They are hitting millions of people with tickets for speeding, parking, litter and even putting out bins on the wrong day.

The 'offenders' are being caught using a range of increasingly advanced surveillance techniques, including spy cameras.

The amount raked in from 'soft crimes' includes £330million in parking fines, £100million from speeding tickets and £12million from spot fines for offences such as over-filling a dustbin so its lid will not close.



Vanessa Kelly was fined £75 for feeding ducks in a Black Country park with her son Harry

In November, 26-year-old Vanessa Kelly was handed a £75 fine after a warden saw her and her son Harry, 17 months, throwing bread to birds 'outside the designated feeding areas' in a park in Smethwick, West Midlands.

Critics blame the target culture - under which police are expected by the Government to catch as many 'criminals' as possible - regardless of the offence.

Matthew Elliott, chief executive of the TaxPayers' Alliance, said: 'Police priorities are increasingly being warped by revenue-raising and box-ticking, which is diverting their time from catching real criminals to targeting the hard-working middle classes.'

'Taxpayers want the police to change their approach, focusing on the worst criminals and stopping using small misdemeanours as an excuse to extract yet more cash from families.'

Police are using automatic number plate recognition cameras – originally designed to catch serious criminals and terrorists - for driving offences and other minor crimes.

The cameras can capture over 3,500 images an hour of licence plates and drivers.

The pictures are cross-referenced with police intelligence and data from the DVLA and insurance firms to generate 'hits' which are then sent to police.

It is claimed the database contains a large number of inaccuracies in some areas - up to 30 per cent of details are out of date or otherwise wrong - so that drivers are being wrongly accused of offences they did not commit.



Speed cameras alone snare more than 1.4million people a year.

Whistleblowers have also expressed concern that police managers are 'engineering' arrests to meet targets.

Officers have allegedly been sent to re-arrest drivers fined for driving without insurance.

Before impounded cars can be released, the owner has to apply for insurance. Officers are allegedly checking with insurers to see if they declare the most recent penalties.

If the answer is 'no' they arrest them for obtaining insurance fraudulently.

Meanwhile, Big Brother CCTV cameras are being used to dole out 'ghost parking' fines worth £3million a year rather than catch serious criminals.

The cameras record parking rule infringements and automated fine notices are sent to the vehicle's owner. No warden is required. Some 34 councils are already using the tactic - with others expected to follow.

FROM SPEEDING TO SMOKING

<p>■ Speeding: Speed cameras are trapping 1.4million motorists a year. Tens of thousands more are fined after being stopped by police.</p> <p>■ Parking: Wardens and CCTV cameras are being used to catch record numbers of motorists.</p> <p>■ Bin offences: Town halls are issuing spot fines if bins are put out on the wrong day,</p>	<p>or their lids will not shut properly.</p> <p>■ Smoking: Anybody caught smoking in pubs, cafés, offices - and any public place with a roof - faces a fine.</p> <p>■ Litter: Council officials can fine people dropping litter. Cases have included flicking cigarette ash from a car window and a schoolgirl who dropped an ice-lolly stick.</p>
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As if there weren't enough examples of Chief Police Officer attitude likely to erode public confidence, the story that follows is one of the most disgraceful yet.

A police force won an award for its handling of the case of a schoolgirl knocked down and killed by a speeding officer after nominating itself.

Hayley Adamson, 16, was killed when a speeding patrol car with no blue light or sirens on smashed into her in May 2008. The driver, PC John Dougal, was jailed for three years after being convicted of driving at 94 mph moments before he ploughed into her in the late-night tragedy.

The family of Hayley Adamson, 16, have reacted with anger that Northumbria Police put themselves forward for the prize after the horrifying smash.

Hayley's mother Yvonne Adamson, branded the move as 'sick'. Mrs Adamson said:

"It's a complete joke. I can't believe they have nominated themselves for the award. 'What about all the complaints that were put in against them when it happened? 'Life is truly hell. This is an insult to her memory. Tomorrow would have been Hayley's 18th birthday. 'It's just a massive shock. It couldn't have come at a worse time for the family."

Hayley's sister Sarah Ridley, 33, of Scotswood, said:

"It makes me sick. Hayley is killed and they get an award for it. 'The news comes at a time when it's her birthday. Part of me thinks they have done this on purpose."

In our view, the Deputy Chief should have been round to the house in sackcloth on bended knee, apologising in person for such a crass move. Instead, she said:

"Following the tragic death of Hayley, police officers and staff were involved in minimising inappropriate, speculative or inaccurate reporting, working with the family to try to limit the impact of constant harassment of the family by the media, and reassuring the local community"

How have we arrived at a place where a basic service recovery job with the media, after a fatal Police Accident, where a police officer has killed a young girl, becomes something they need to be rewarded for, while the family grieve alone? This story says **everything** about how today's senior police officers see themselves, what they regard as success (i.e. in how they dealt with the media story) and more importantly, what they **really think** about "Citizen Focus".

Her Majesties Inspector Of Constabulary – March 2010 Overview of Police Force Performance



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

National Grade Overview

	Local Crime and Policing	Protection from Serious Harm	Confidence and Satisfaction
A-C			
<u>Avon and Somerset</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Bedfordshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Cambridgeshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Cheshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>City of London</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Cleveland</u>	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
<u>Cumbria</u>	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD
D-G			
<u>Derbyshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Devon and Cornwall</u>	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
<u>Dorset</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Durham</u>	FAIR	GOOD	GOOD
<u>Dyfed-Powys</u>	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Essex</u>	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD
<u>Gloucestershire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Greater Manchester</u>	POOR	GOOD	POOR
<u>Gwent</u>	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
H-L			
<u>Hampshire</u>	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
<u>Hertfordshire</u>	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
<u>Humberside</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Kent</u>	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
<u>Lancashire</u>	EXCELLENT	FAIR	GOOD
<u>Leicestershire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR

	Local Crime and Policing	Protection from Serious Harm	Confidence and Satisfaction
M-S			
<u>Lincolnshire</u>	POOR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Merseyside</u>	GOOD	EXCELLENT	FAIR
<u>Metropolitan</u>	FAIR	EXCELLENT	FAIR
<u>Norfolk</u>	GOOD	GOOD	FAIR
<u>North Wales</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>North Yorkshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Northamptonshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Northumbria</u>	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
<u>Nottinghamshire</u>	POOR	POOR	POOR
<u>South Wales</u>	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
<u>South Yorkshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Staffordshire</u>	FAIR	GOOD	FAIR
<u>Suffolk</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Surrey</u>	GOOD	GOOD	GOOD
<u>Sussex</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
T-W			
<u>Thames Valley</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Warwickshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>West Mercia</u>	GOOD	FAIR	GOOD
<u>West Midlands</u>	FAIR	EXCELLENT	FAIR
<u>West Yorkshire</u>	FAIR	FAIR	FAIR
<u>Wiltshire</u>	GOOD	FAIR	FAIR

Information on this and the previous page, downloaded from the new HMIC website <http://www.hmic.gov.uk/mypolice/pages/home.aspx>

How good are my police?

As reported by the HMIC in March 2010. The best forces reach very high standards in some areas and, generally, do well in far more aspects of policing than they are weak in.

- Hertfordshire, Northumbria, Surrey and Cleveland currently perform well across the board although their costs vary.
- The Metropolitan Police Service, Merseyside and West Midlands achieved an excellent assessment for 'Protection from Serious Harm' – policing against

the 'big threats' such as murder and organised crime. Lancashire achieved an excellent assessment for Local Crime and Policing.

- The forces that have improved on the most fronts over the last year are South Yorkshire, South Wales, West Midlands and Kent. South Yorkshire show the greatest prospect for improvement over the year ahead.
- Nottinghamshire and Greater Manchester Police (GMP) are currently causing concern. GMP struggles in some key areas, but has a plan and clear commitment to improve. The performance of Nottinghamshire Police is below average in far too many aspects.

Less from Whitehall, more from local communities

This report deals with some of the more prominent reasons why the majority of the British public have lost faith and confidence in the modern police service.

Whilst frontline officers may be justly criticized on occasion for insensitivity, or worse, in the main, the cause of the problem lies elsewhere.

Many Senior Police Chiefs are totally out of touch with the public and the front line officers. They have become adept at paying lip-service to what the public really want from their police service, then blame the same front liners when their latest schemes and fad projects fail to deliver. More time is spent telephoning members of the public to complete so called satisfaction questionnaires and then auditing the responses, than is spent delivering the service that is really needed.

At the most senior level, as we have reported previously, the police service fiddles crime and detection figures in the attempt to con the public that their force is performing well. Worse, along with the latest fad projects, they get the front line officers to implement their strategies. Chief Officers have, despite protestations to the contrary, shown themselves incapable of distancing themselves from political influence. The picture becomes somewhat seedy when Chief Officers are paid lucrative incentive bonuses to reflect decreases in crime and increases in offences brought to justice.

The government cannot be seen to fail, yet with policing it clearly has. Working with Home Office sanction, Chief Officers are more concerned with performance targets than frontline requirements to deliver real policing. Like the health service, the Home Office, exerts control over the police through targets. These targets are often poorly thought out and measure the wrong things.

The government tolerates dodgy data for political ends and coerces otherwise ethical public servants into unethical behaviour. Most of all, it stops the police giving the public the policing they want. There has been a notable shift with this Government towards a more financially-oriented set of concerns about

policing. Increasingly, they use financial and performance management and audit techniques to steer police services.

Policing priorities are inherently “political”. Citizens have particular concerns about crime and they elect politicians who claim that they will address those concerns. However the lack of a clear sense of the division of responsibility between politicians and the police creates confusion and prevents genuine accountability. Police Chiefs’ day-to-day decisions are hampered by central targets determining whom to hire and fire, which crimes to prioritise, and how much time officers must spend on any particular task. Meanwhile politicians struggle to grip the strategic priorities which are heavily guarded by ACPO.

The proliferation of targeting and central control prevents Chief Constables from exerting influence where it really matters. Unable to direct policing strategy and improve the effectiveness of their officers, they focus on those relatively trivial issues and “pet projects” over which they do have discretion. There are numerous instances of Chief Constables’ micro-management. One example is uniform. Each force determines the uniform components its officers wear; one Chief will veto tunics on the grounds that they are impractical and not waterproof, whilst another will ban fleeces for not being smart or traditional.

Senior officers are heavily involved in politics

Whilst it is generally accepted that there is little outright corruption in the UK, there is evidence that senior police officers spend time trying to influence politics and politicians spend time trying to alter police priorities. Decisions on policing strategy go through ACPO committees. One high-profile example of political involvement was the former Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Sir Ian Blair, who campaigned publicly in favour of the Government’s plans to introduce identity cards and to allow detention without charge for 42 days. The result of this was an erosion of trust and the widespread questioning of Sir Ian’s independence.

A force of “robots”

The result of the centralisation of policing practice is police officers who do not use discretion. This has been amplified by the centralisation of operational decisions and technological changes – people now interact with the police by phone, not in person. Force Control Rooms determine the location and response of police on the beat, directing them to the crime scenes which are deemed the most important. But this strategy has transferred management of uniformed patrol officers from police Basic Command Units (BCUs) to civilian control room operators. The result is that BCU Commanders have no real control over the deployment of their patrol staff.

This has led to the creation of a dependency culture amongst patrol officers who now just go where they are told. The prestige and power of junior managers such as Sergeants has been reduced to that of a highly-paid Constable. The proliferation of “civilians” in these areas has further implications. After the Metropolitan Police centralised operations into three control rooms, staff have refused to stay once their hours are up, even if there is an large-scale emergency in progress.

Tripartite risk sharing

Accountability is diluted by the tripartite structure of police governance, which shares risk and blame across three parties: the Home Office, Police Authorities and Chief Constables. ACPO’s role in it is akin to the British Medical Association being part responsible for the running of the health service or the Association of Head Teachers approving education plans.

ACPO’s blurred purpose and responsibility does not help. ACPO advises government, it sets policing policy, it campaigns for increased police powers, and now we learn it is engaged in commercial activities – all with a rather shady lack of accountability. ACPO’s incorporation as a private company shields it from accountability, for example through the Freedom of Information Act.

The secret police

There is a distinct lack of transparency of information available about the police. Repeated attempts by organizations seeking to research specifics on police budgets, strategies and accountability structures have been futile. Although Police Authorities do publish high-level annual budgets, there are no detailed, publicly-accessible accounts. There is no clear document explaining who reports into whom, particularly in terms of national bodies. Enquiries directly to police forces have yielded some information, but in many cases they have refused to help or suggested a Freedom of Information request.

ACPO – the power behind the throne

The Association of Chief Police Officers is a powerful and independent body consisting of Chief Constables, Deputy Chief Constables and Assistant Chief Constables. It has a major role as the primary coordinator of policing policy, encouraging the 43 forces in England and Wales to adopt the policies it promotes.

ACPO has been described as a “self-perpetuating oligarchy” Chris Grayling, the Shadow Home Secretary, commented:

"It is strange that the Policing and Crime Bill gives ACPO a statutory position in advising on appointments when the status of ACPO itself remains undefined. Is it an external reference group for Home Office Ministers, or a professional association protecting senior officers' interests? Is it a national policing agency, or is it a pressure group arguing for greater police powers?"

ACPO has the ear of the Home Secretary and this, in combination with its influence over senior officers (and those wishing to become senior officers), means it is a prominent voice in determining policy.

There is a widespread belief that ACPO is the main party persuading forces to adopt particular policies. If the Home Secretary wants to ensure the adoption of a policy idea, he will "strike a bargain" with ACPO to ensure its implementation. ACPO is the driving force behind policy, and the Home Office succumbs, either because of its own autocratic instincts or because the police are exceptionally good at pushing through the things they want.

This focus of ACPO on national policy means that individual Chief Constables are left focusing on administrative matters and equipment choices. In fact this situation should be reversed: ACPO could take a useful national lead on administration and interoperability while Chief Constables focus on their forces' operations.

Accountability

Striking the correct balance between efficiency and accountability is central to public service reform. Unlike other services such as health and education, which are consumed by individual patients or pupils, policing is a public good and not subject to choice as a method of providing accountability. Consumer power can therefore only be exercised through a popular election.

Local accountability

Political debate about crime in England and Wales has been restricted to point-scoring and blame games.

The lack of accountability, and the need for politicians to be seen to be "doing something about crime" has created a culture of short-termism and knee-jerk reaction. It has resulted in the trading of meaningless statistics, accusations of interference and seemingly limitless centrally-directed initiatives.

One Chief Constable reported that he is accountable to "at least a dozen" authorities, with three – HMIC, the Police Authority and the Audit Commission – responsible for inspecting and auditing his force. But accountability to many bodies actually means no accountability at all.

Giving local officers real autonomy and the power to make their own professional decisions, rather than relying on Whitehall edicts, would start to rebuild the relationship between the police and local people.

The answer must involve getting the government out of the job of policing.

The politicisation of the force must be tackled, with the removal of targets, not merely the promise of it as it presently stands.

A local tax to pay for the basic command unit and a commander who is selected by and answerable to taxpayers, whether through local government or even direct elections, would give the public that power. It would certainly put an end to the dangerous politicisation of our police force and the continuing alienation of the public.