DEMOS

MOVE ON UPSTREAM

CRIME, PREVENTION AND RELATIONSHIPS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RELATIONAL PUBLIC SERVICES AT DEMOS

In July 2021 Demos published *The Social State: From Transactional to Relational Public Services*, kicking-off a major new research programme to reimagine public services, supported by Capita. The programme is building a credible policy agenda for 21st century public services with citizen experiences at the centre.

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

If the public knew how the police really spent their time, they'd be horrified.

- Senior police official

This paper tells a story of disappointment and illusion. It's the story of an overstretched, often exhausted police force that's incapable of keeping up with modern patterns and volumes of crime, and struggles to build trusting relationships with huge numbers of the citizens it serves. It's the story of a political system that refuses to acknowledge the problem and pretends that a few extra officers will plug the gaps. And it's the story of victims let down, crimes ignored, and communities suffering.

This report is the fourth in a series from Demos on relational public services. The first report, *The Social State: From Transactional to Relational Public Services* argued that we need to reimagine our public services in the aftermath of the pandemic. It made the case that the only state we can sustainably afford is a preventative one, and argued that the standard model of transactional services, which set out simply to respond to demand when it arises, is incapable of being preventative. *The Social State* explained that most of our public services are stuck in a transactional trap: so overwhelmed by demand that they cannot find the time or resources to move upstream and prevent problems. This transactional trap undermines public trust and confidence in those services and can actually drive need up: people don't come forward to health services with long waits, until their condition has worsened, for example.

Demos argues that the best way forward for our public services is a shift away from the transactional model of public service delivery which treats people as atomised individuals and focuses on processes, toward a relational model that helps to reduce demand and build up the capacity of individuals and communities to resolve their problems outside of formal service provision. The relational model does this by fostering strong relationships between individual service users and professionals, between services and the communities they serve, and between citizens themselves. It's an asset-based approach that invests in the social infrastructure which helps reduce demand over time, and improve outcomes.

In this paper, we apply the relational lens to the UK's police forces, and make the case for a new approach to collaborative, community-based crime prevention.

Policing is firmly stuck in the transactional trap: the scale of crime is so high that with current capacity the police are unable to match demand with an appropriate service response. This is not to scaremonger about crime rates: the UK is not, globally, a particularly high crime country and many types of serious and violent crime are falling. However, as we set out in Chapter 1, Unpolicing, the basic reality remains that the majority of crimes are not reported to the police, and only 7% of those that are recorded by police result in a charge or a summons. Not every crime can be solved, of course, but our interviews with victims tell the story of disappointment with policing very clearly: many victims find the police unresponsive, defensive and even dismissive.

In Chapter 2, we analyse the state of the relationship between police and citizens and why it matters. The UK has historically had relatively low police numbers, and has pursued the doctrine of policing by consent: it has built on the principle set out by the founder of modern policing Robert Peel that the "police are the people and the people are the police." In other words, this low-intensity policing can only be successful if two conditions are met. First, the

police force must be drawn from the citizens they serve to foster trust and confidence. Second, crime prevention has to largely happen outside the formal police force: it is done by the people through mutual respect for and reinforcement of the rules, not a uniformed presence on every street corner. In other words, a healthy relationship between the police, the law and the community is the most fundamental foundation for policing by consent. That relationship is failing, in part because of the struggles set out in Chapter 1.

Chapter 3 explores the chronic and acute challenges the police face in building strong, healthy relationships with the communities they serve. The nature of the police, as the custodian of the state's coercive power, will always create some tension with citizens and communities. However, this has been worsened by funding pressure within the police, and cuts in a whole range of public services whose failure lead to downstream pressure on police officers to intervene as the last resort. When the police are forced to act in the place of social services, their use of coercive power can cause lasting harm to people's trust.

In Chapters 4 and 5 we turn to solutions. Chapter 4 looks at how police services themselves can reform. It examines the culture of policing and makes recommendations for improving recruitment and training practice. It argues for a new kind of visible, community policing that is not simply reliant on full time professionals but leverages community resources and volunteers to build collaborative processes for crime prevention and restorative justice. We make the case for the police to set a core target not just for improving trust with citizens, but for reducing the trust gap between those communities with the greatest and least confidence in policing's ability to serve them.

Chapter 5 looks at crime prevention, and argues that this cannot simply be the preserve of the police force. Our core belief is that strong communities with high levels of social capital are best placed to prevent crime. There are ways for the police to support this, but the nature of their coercive power means these will always be limited. We need a new crime prevention service at the local authority level, to bring together police and community services to reduce crime.

Methodologically, this report draws on the following sources:

- A poll of 10,000 people, weighted to be nationally representative of the UK, from July 2021.

- Semi-structured interviews in January 2022 with people who had been victims of crime in the last five years and had reported it to the police.

- A focus group in January 2022 with people who had not been victims of crime in the past five years.

- A roundtable discussion and one-to-one interviews with a range of stakeholders, including former and serving police officers, policy experts and academic experts.

- A literature review of UK and international evidence, focusing on prevention and relationships in policing theory.

We believe policing is an essential part of a healthy society; without a successful criminal justice system it is impossible to deter or punish crime, and police play an essential role in both. However, policing is simply losing touch with the changing nature of crime, and the changing nature of our society. The illusion that it can respond to what citizens want and expect from it is breaking down.

We need to reshape our thinking about the relationship between the police and the citizens and communities they serve. We need to stop using the police as a social service of last resort, and we need to stop undermining public confidence by setting unrealistic expectations for what the police can accomplish. If we do so, we can start to build a trustworthy and trusted police service, able to respond to crime, support victims, and contribute to a shared effort to reduce crime and protect citizens.

KEY RECOMMDATIONS

PROBLEM	RECOMMENDATION
Police accountability is separate from the local authorities who are responsible for so many of the upstream services that are essential for preventing crime: from children's social care to the planning system.	• **Establish a new statutory crime prevention role for Mayors of metropolitan areas, unitary or upper tier councils, where available.** Where these boundaries are coterminous with police force areas and a mayor is in place, the government should consider abolishing Police and Crime Commissioners and absorbing the accountability functions of the police into the officer of the Mayor.[1] In London, there is a strong case for consolidating the relationship between the Metropolitan Police and the Mayor by removing the force's national functions, so it can focus more effectively on its role in the city.
	• This should be supported by **a new local authority-based crime prevention service**. This would have a level of integration with other public services as workers would spend time in public places, such as schools, libraries, parks and hospitals, speaking to residents about their concerns relating to crime. Workers within the new service would strive to identify and build relationships with key stakeholders who have a particular level of authority and knowledge in the area. These people might be teachers, elders, religious leaders or window cleaners, who are said to be the eyes and ears of the neighbourhood.
	• **Establish a new What Works Centre for Crime Prevention** to produce evidence-based research on how to reduce crime.

1   The mayors of London, Manchester and West Yorkshire already hold Police and Crime Commissioner responsibilities.

PROBLEM	RECOMMENDATION
The police's relationship with the public has deteriorated, particularly among women and ethnic minorities.	To change the culture of the police we need to: • Continue to **diversify recruitment** - aim for the police service to be 50% women at all levels of seniority. • **Improve disciplinary procedures** to make it easier to suspend and remove officers. • Ensure both initial and ongoing **training** equips police officers to understand the experiences and needs of our country's diverse communities. • Improve **provision for mental health services** for officers.
Some communities have high levels of crime but low trust in the police. We need to narrow the gap between different communities' experiences of policing.	The Home Office and police forces should develop ways to measure: • Disparities in victim experience and satisfaction with the police. • Disparities in community trust of the police.
The police underutilise the power of communities to prevent and manage crime.	• **Expand the number of special constables** (volunteer police officers), and consider developing a paid police reserve to work alongside full time officers and special constables. • Identify ways to **enable and expand other forms of volunteering alongside the police** in areas such as community outreach, victim support, neighbourhood surveillance, crime prevention advice and mentoring of young people at risk. • **Expand community-based restorative justice**, supported by the police and wider criminal justice system, for low-level anti-social behaviour.
Cybercrime is underreported and underinvestigated.	• Establish and promote a **National Reporting Hotline for fraud and cybercrime**, with a simple three-digit number, e.g. '119 for Cybercrime.' • Establish a **National Fraud Taskforce**, staffed with specialist investigators, with responsibility for investigating cybercrime cases. • Roll out **Victim Care Squads** nationally, staffed with specialist advocates, to provide support and advice to victims of cybercrime.

CHAPTER 1
UNPOLICING

In this chapter we explore the transactional trap that the police are stuck in: the scale of crime is so high that with current capacity they are unable to match demand with an appropriate service response.

THE MAJORITY OF CRIMES ARE NOT REPORTED TO THE POLICE, AND FEWER STILL ARE RESOLVED

From the beginning, the police are on the backfoot: only around four in ten crimes are ever reported to them.[2]

The Crime Survey for England and Wales - the most accurate picture of crime trends and levels over time - found that in the year ending in September 2021, "adults aged 18 years and over experienced 12.9 million offences [...] including fraud and computer misuse." Yet the police recorded 5.8 million crimes in England and Wales over that same time frame.[3] It's clear that there is a significant gulf between crime that occurs and crime which is reported to the police.

What's more, of the four in ten crimes reported to the police, fewer still are resolved. The resolution rate for recorded crimes in England and Wales - "credible" reports that the police record as a crime - has declined almost every year since records began a few years ago, from 16% of total recorded crimes in the year ending September 2015 to 7% today.[4] Part of this is because more victims of crimes that

have historically been significantly underreported (sexual violence, domestic abuse and child abuse) are coming forward. However, the numbers speak for themselves: there are no criminal justice consequences for the overwhelming majority of crimes.

Given the enormity, perhaps impossibility, of the task handed to the police, it's unsurprising that in many cases the public have given up on reporting certain crimes. Matt Parr, Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, directly links low resolution rates to dampened rates of reporting saying, "particularly in the volume crime area the public has rumbled that the police capacity to deal with this is extremely limited" and that "the police do not have the capacity to deal with common crimes."[5] As well as traditional volume crimes, such as burglary and car theft, other crimes that are most underreported include domestic abuse and fraud.[6, 7, 8]

THE PUBLIC'S EXPERIENCE OF REPORTING CRIMES TO THE POLICE IS OFTEN POOR

When victims do report crimes to the police, many are left disappointed. Victims report often finding the police unresponsive and even dismissive. A particularly notable complaint made by the victims we spoke to was the infrequent and slow communication they received from the police after

2   Office for National Statistics. *Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2021*. January 2022. Available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingseptember2021 (accessed 17th May 2022)

3   Office for National Statistics. *Crime in England and Wales: year ending September 2021*. January 2022.

4   Office for National Statistics. *Crime outcomes in England and Wales 2020 to 2021*. July 2021. Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2020-to-2021?msclkid=11cfe9ddcd3c11ec9f0fd63ed7baeaba (accessed 10th May 2022)

5   BBC News. *Crimes unreported as public lose faith in police.* February 2020. Available at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-51408921(accessed 10th May 2022)

6   Grierson, J. *Domestic abuse still under-reported in England, says Women's Aid.* Guardian. March 2018. Available at www.theguardian.com/society/2018/mar/07/domestic-abuse-still-under-reported-in-england-says-womens-aid?msclkid=6d8e46e4cd4111eca276755712c9d128 (accessed 10th May 2022)

7   BBC News. *Crimes unreported as public lose faith in police.* February 2020.

8   Scroxton, A. *Fraud and cyber crime still vastly under-reported.* ComputerWeekly.com. February 2021. Available at www.computerweekly.com/news/252495844/Fraud-and-cyber-crime-still-vastly-under-reported?msclkid=389c57bcd04f11ec80842d98dc465d40 (accessed 10th May 2022)

they had reported the crime. In many cases the police failed to update them on the progress of the investigation, with some only receiving an update after they contacted the police themselves:

> I was told I was going to hear back, and literally to this day I've not heard anything. So, that was what – 6 or 7 months ago? So, I'm presuming nothing came of it… that's frustrating really… even just a simple message would have been a bit more reassuring, but got nothing at all, unfortunately.
>
> - 32 year old male interviewee

> I don't think I should have had to have chased them. And, I suspect that if I hadn't of phoned up I might never have got an answer.
>
> - 40 year old male interviewee

> The unfair is the not knowing. Not being informed… that's the main issue, the fact that… there's no conclusion.
>
> - 64 year old male interviewee

While there was an appreciation of the strain police are under and an acceptance that not all crimes can be solved, the people we spoke to suggested that they were still unsatisfied by the lack of updates they received. Two respondents in particular felt this treatment was a failure of the police to uphold their duty of care:

> I had to ring them. I don't think I would have got an update or even anything if I hadn't of called them, which I get that they're busy and everything's going on, but, at the same time you have a duty of care, you should really follow things up
>
> - 29 year old female interviewee

> I'm sure they're very, very busy. They can't ring you every day, or every week… but eventually they'll have to draw a line under it. If they rang

me to say: "Look, we've drawn a line under it" – after 3 months, or however long it takes for their process to say, "Right, we're not wasting any more resources on it" – then I'd be satisfied with that.

> - 32 year old male interviewee

Perhaps even more concerningly, some of the people we spoke to also described the police as being insensitive and dismissive of what had happened to them. One female respondent, who had been a victim of an attempted violent attack, claimed that "there was no care or compassion there" when they asked the police for an update on the investigation, while another attack victim simply received a "generic" email response after reporting the crime which they felt lacked sympathy. A focus group participant also said they were laughed at when they phoned the police to report that someone was following them.

It comes as no surprise then that many victims say they are unlikely to report a crime to the police again. The Victims' Commissioner's 2021 Victim Survey, which looks at crime victims' experiences of the criminal justice system, found that based on respondents' experiences of reporting their crime to the police, less than half (43%) would report the crime again while 34% said they would not.[9] This attitude was reflected among some of our interviewees and focus group participants, with one saying that they "just wouldn't bother now" after the police never showed up to deal with a crime they reported. It seems clear that the service police provide to victims needs to drastically improve if people who have experienced crime are able to feel confident in going to the police for help.

FRAUD IS UNDERPOLICED

We've seen that the majority of crimes are not reported to the police, and only a tiny fraction of those that are lead to a resolution. These wider trends are underpinned by a total underpolicing of fraud and cybercrime.

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9   Victims Commissioner. *Victims' Experience: Annual Survey.* Victims Commissioner. September 2021. Available at https://s3-eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/jotwpublic-prod-storage-1cxo1dnrmkg14/uploads/sites/6/2021/12/VC-2021-survey-of-victims-_amended-27_9_21-1.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

This is particularly concerning given that fraud and cybercrime are now the biggest drivers of crime. Yet these crimes are so underpoliced that our efforts are tantamount to surrender.[10] Fraud costs the UK economy a shocking £137 billion a year, and one estimate suggests that reducing 40% of fraud cases would save us £55 billion a year.[11] While fraud is now the most common crime in the UK, only 0.8% of the police workforce is focused on economic crimes.[12]

Our failure to take cybercrime seriously is reflected in how we collect and talk about crime numbers. Fraud rates are reported separately in the Crime Survey for England and Wales. Earlier this year Kwasi Kwarteng MP defended the Prime Minister's characterisation of crime rates as falling - a statistic only true if cybercrime is ignored - by arguing that what matters is the "crime that people experience in their day-to-day lives".[13]

A recent 2019 Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) inspection found that law enforcement was "disjointed and ineffective" when it came to fraud, that "there is no clear understanding of who is responsible for fraud-related activities or what the expected level of performance is" and that fraudsters can act with "impunity". It also found that one force took no further action on 96% of cases given to them by the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau.[14] Police forces in the UK are structured and trained to deal with place-based, local crimes, not cybercrimes that not only traverse regions but countries. Some local forces have been described as "muddling through" and sometimes "don't even realise that they are responsible for dealing with the fraud referrals".[15]

THE POLICE ARE FAILING TO TACKLE SEXUAL CRIMES

Rape is effectively becoming decriminalised in the UK with the vast majority of cases reported to the police failing to result in prosecution. In the year to September 2021, police in England and Wales recorded 63,136 rape offences of which only 1,557 led to prosecutions, a striking fall from the 5,190 prosecutions in the year 2016/17.[16, 17] Judging by these numbers, it seems clear that the police are facing serious difficulties in dealing with sexual violence and victims are not getting the justice they need.

Sexual offences are also putting more and more pressure on the police with rising numbers of offences being reported. According to Office for National Statistics (ONS) data, the number of rape offences recorded in 2021 increased by 13% from the previous year while historic sex offences recorded by the police, thought to be heavily influenced by the investigations into TV presenter Jimmy Saville, increased by 134% between 2017-21.[18, 19]

The police are also having to deal with 'new' crimes like so-called revenge porn and 'upskirting' propagated by online spaces. For example, upskirting prosecutions have more than doubled in the second year since it was criminalised with 46 men and one teenage boy being prosecuted for 128 offences under the Voyeurism (Offences) Act between April 2020 and June 2021.[20] Further, according to the BBC there had been 1,160 reported incidents of revenge porn in England and Wales from April 2015 to December 2015.[21]

10   Atay, A., Carr, H. and Sweetland, J. *The Great Cyber Surrender: How police and governments abandon cybercrime victims.* Demos. November 2020. Available at https://demos.co.uk/project/the-great-cyber-surrender-how-police-and-governments-abandon-cybercrime-victims. (accessed 10th May 2022)

11   Hyde, R., Corfe, S. and Anderson-Samways, B. *Fraud is now Britain's dominant crime, but policing has failed to keep up.* Social Market Foundation, March 2022. Available at www.smf.co.uk/commentary_podcasts/fraud-is-britains-dominant-crime/ (accessed 10th May 2022)

12   Hyde, R., Corfe, S. and Anderson-Samways, B. *Fraud is now Britain's dominant crime.* Social Market Foundation, March 2022.

13   Mason, R. *Kwasi Kwarteng branded 'disrespectful' to victims of scammers.* Guardian, February 2022. Available at www.theguardian.com/politics/2022/feb/06/kwasi-kwarteng-branded-disrespectful-to-victims-of-scammers (accessed 10th May 2022)

14   HMICFRS. F*raud: Time to Choose.* Justice Inspectorates, April 2019. Available at www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/fraud-time-to-choose-an-inspection-of-the-police-response-to-fraud.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

15   Hyde, R., Corfe, S. and Anderson-Samways, B. *Fraud is now Britain's dominant crime.* Social Market Foundation, March 2022.

16   Home Affairs Committee. *Investigation and prosecution of rape Eight Report of Session 2021-22.* House of Commons, April 2022. Available at https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9600/documents/162463/default/ (accessed 10th May 2022)

17   Reality Check Team. *Why do so few rape cases go to court?* BBC News, April 2022. Available at https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-48095118 (accessed 10th May 2022)

18   Home Affairs Committee. *Investigation and prosecution of rape Eight Report of Session 2021-22.* House of Commons, April 2022. Available at https://committees.parliament.uk/publications/9600/documents/162463/default/ (accessed 10th May 2022)

19   Mayor of London Office for Policing and Crime. *Beneath the Numbers An exploration of the increases of recorded Domestic Abuse and Sexual Offences.* MOPAC, 2019. Available at www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/201902_beneath_the_numbers_-_an_exploration_of_the_increases_of_recorded_domestic_abuse_and_sexual_offences_v1.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

20   Atkinson, E. *Upskirting prosecutions more than double in second year since act became criminal offence.* The Independent, December 2021. Available at www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/upskirting-prosecutions-double-criminal-offence-b1968895.html (accessed 10th May 2022)

21   BBC News. *Revenge porn: More than 200 prosecuted under new law.* BBC News, September 2016. Available at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37278264 (accessed 10th May 2022)

Sadly, prosecution rates for these 'new' crimes are also unacceptably low when considering the numbers that are reported with the 2015-16 Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) report from the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) showing that only just over 200 people were prosecuted under revenge porn laws in that year.[22] In light of these new crimes and the increasing number of victims coming forward, it's obvious that more and more victims of sexual crimes are being let down.

CONCLUSION

A majority of crimes are not reported to the police - and only a fraction of those that are get resolved. Because of the extent to which the police are overwhelmed, it's little surprise victims all too often speak of an experience characterised by unresponsiveness, defensiveness and dismissiveness. And to make matters worse, the most common crimes today - fraud and cybercrime - are totally underpoliced.

It's clear that the police are stuck in a 'transactional trap': the scale of crime is so high that they are unable to match demand with an appropriate service response. In the next chapter we explore the police's relationship with the public, and how this transactional trap makes building a strong relationship with the public even harder.

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22   BBC News. *Revenge porn: More than 200 prosecuted under new law.* BBC News, September 2016. Available at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-37278264 (accessed 10th May 2022)

CHAPTER 2
THE POLICE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC TODAY, AND WHY IT MATTERS

THE POLICE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC MATTERS

The stronger the relationship between the public and the police, the more effective the police can be. The police depend upon public cooperation to report crimes as victims or witnesses, to cooperate in investigations and to testify in court. They also depend upon communities to alert them to local safety concerns so they can adapt strategies to combat crime. Cooperation between the public and the police has been found to aid prevention. In the CPS's own words, "Reporting the crime to the police could prevent further crimes being committed and protect others from becoming victims [...] The criminal justice system can only work effectively with your help."[23]

REPORTING RATES ARE DRIVEN BY PUBLIC CONFIDENCE

That the public have faith in the fairness, accountability and effectiveness of the police is vital given that confidence can drive reporting rates. As mentioned earlier, the Inspector of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services describes a negative cycle of insufficient police capacity driving low resolution rates, which in turn leads to lower rates of reporting.[24]

Criminologists have suggested that "legal cynicism" - the belief that law enforcement agents are "illegitimate, unresponsive and ill equipped to ensure public safety" - impacts levels of victim reporting.[25] Research has found that at an individual level, an increase in this cynicism decreases the likelihood of reporting property crimes to the police.[26] Separate research from Ghana found that "victims' levels of confidence in the police and satisfaction with police work positively predict their decisions to report sexual assault and robbery

23   Crown Prosecution Service. *Reporting a crime*. Available at www.cps.gov.uk/reporting-crime (accessed 10th May 2022)
24   BBC News. *Crimes unreported*. February 2020.
25   Yoon, S. *Why Do Victims Not Report?: The Influence of Police and Criminal Justice Cynicism on the Dark Figure of Crime*. City University of New York (CUNY). May 2015, p. IV. Available at https://academicworks.cuny.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2209&context=gc_etds. (accessed 10th May 2022)
26   Yoon, S. *Why Do Victims Not Report?*. City University of New York (CUNY), May 2015, p. 60.

to the police."[27] If we are to turn the tide on underreporting, especially for crimes such as sexual violence and domestic abuse, we must recognise that the public's belief in the police system as a whole, as well as in individual officers, is key.

When the public has little confidence in the efficacy and honesty of the police, crimes are more likely to go unreported and criminal activity is more likely to continue. Police Foundation research on the impact of organised crime in local communities highlights victims' low levels of trust in the police as limiting cooperation with the police, which becomes a major obstacle to solving sexual trafficking and related serious organised crime.[28] The report argues that the "reticence" of sex workers to report criminal behaviour - arising from a combination of pressure from brothel owners, fear of incriminating themselves, and a wider distrust of authority - makes it harder for the police to identify victims and in turn to protect and support them.

We need crimes to be reported to solve them

But why do we care about reporting rates at all? First, because in order to solve crimes, the police depend on public cooperation to bring crimes to their attention in the first place. This is true of all crimes, but especially so for crimes that happen 'behind closed doors' including sexual violence, domestic abuse, stalking, elderly and child abuse. These crimes have historically been underpoliced, partly because they have not always been considered criminal, and also because the police are rarely present in private spaces and struggle to investigate without a victim or a witness coming forward.

The public-police relationship is not just essential for reporting the crime: the police also depend on the public, as victims or witnesses, throughout the criminal justice process. Victims may be more likely to report crime if they trust that the police will make them or society safer in some way, whether through reassurance, practical advice to try to prevent the crime happening again, or through further investigation and detainment. As the Ministry of Justice describes, for the process to work, the public must have a level of faith in the police: "trust

in the legitimacy and fairness of the system may be significant in securing cooperation from victims and witnesses, for example in terms of reporting crimes to the police and giving evidence in court."[29]

We need crimes to be reported to identify offenders before offending behaviour escalates

In many cases, the police depend on the public to report crime - and to report it as soon as it happens - so they may intervene before criminal behaviour escalates. When the public reports a crime, they can alert the police to a pattern of offending behaviour and sometimes to the perpetrator. Moreover, when victims report crime, they do not just reduce the likelihood of the same crime happening to someone else, but they reduce the likelihood of it happening to themselves again. Some studies have found that "reporting victimization to police is associated with fewer future victimizations, underscoring the importance of police reporting in crime prevention."[30] The link between reporting and prevention may be testament to effective action from the police and victim services. In this way, reporting crime is vital for preventing further crime.

We also need crimes to be reported to understand trends in crime, including geospatial crime patterns

The police depend upon accurate and up to date information to understand the landscape of crime in their local area. This is vital not just for identifying crime trends and novel crimes, but also for assessing the risk of harm to people and organisations and the effectiveness of the policing system.[31] Crime statistics inform decisions around where to use limited policing resources. Research has found that a visible police presence in targeted, small areas of concentrated crime (known as hotspot policing) can reduce crime.[32] For this to be implemented successfully, the police need accurate records of crime levels - some of which can be gathered by the police themselves, but a lot of which requires the public to report crimes to them.

27   Boatang, F. *Crime Reporting Behavior: Do Attitudes Toward the Police Matter?* Journal of Interpersonal Violence. February 2016. Available at https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/0886260516632356 (accessed 10th May 2022)

28   Crocker, R. and others. *The impact of organised crime in local communities.* The Police Foundation. June 2017, p. 43. Available at www.police-foundation.org.uk/2017/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/oc_in_local_communities_final.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

29   Jansson, K. *Public confidence in the Criminal Justice System – findings from the Crime Survey for England and Wales (2013/14).* Ministry of Justice. 2015, p. 2. Available at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/449444/public-confidence.pdf (accessed 10th May)

30   Ranapurwala, S., Berg, M. and Casteel, C. *Reporting Crime Victimizations to the Police and the Incidence of Future Victimizations: A Longitudinal Study.* PLOS ONE. February 2016, p. 2. Available at https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article/file?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0160072&type=printable (accessed 10th May 2022).

31   Office for Statistics Regulation. *Public value of crime and justice statistics in the UK.* April 2017, p. 3. Available at https://osr.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/04/Crime-Emerging-View.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

32   College of Policing. *The effectiveness of visible police patrol.* July 2021. Available at https://www.college.police.uk/research/what-works-policing-reduce-crime/visible-police-patrol (accessed 10th May 2022)

There is also a self-fulfilling, virtuous cycle that can arise from high levels of reporting: the more community intelligence is gathered, the more the police focus on those crimes, and so on.[33] This cycle is even more powerful when the data is openly available for journalists and academics to interpret for the public, which in turn puts pressure on government and the police to put resources towards tackling those crimes.

One of the areas where we have seen the virtue of this self-fulfilling cycle of increased reporting, increased public awareness and increased police focus in recent years is in sexual and domestic violence. Changes in societal thinking, bolstered by high-profile cases of victims coming forward in the media, have encouraged more victims to speak up. This, combined with better policing reporting, has meant that over recent years the police have seen a surge in reports of certain crimes: a 77% increase in reports of domestic abuse crime between 2016 and 2019, a 792% increase in police-recorded stalking and harassment between 2012 and 2019, and a 260% increase in the number of rapes reported to the police between 2013 and 2019.[34] Arguably, progress in reporting these domestic or sexual crimes has pushed the government to redouble efforts on a violence against women and girls strategy and has pushed the police to focus even more on these previously unreported - and unchallenged - crimes.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND THE POLICE ALSO MATTERS FOR EVIDENCE GATHERING

Community intelligence is vital for evidence gathering and identifying perpetrators

Community intelligence gathering is central to effective policing, and this of course depends on communication and cooperation between the police and local residents. When police focus was forced to turn away from this task, as it was under austerity from 2013 onwards, this soon exposed a gap in knowledge that undermined community safety.[35] It is revealing that only three years after the "erosion" of community policing, the 2016 Policing Vision itself called for a "sophisticated understanding of community needs", while the Police Foundation argued that it is only by "putting boots on the

ground" that the police gain essential local knowledge for identifying crime trends, criminals and vulnerabilities. This is knowledge that no algorithm or protocol can replicate.

For the police to gather, understand and analyse this neighbourhood knowledge, they need to have established a level of trust with the community. One study focused on a neighbourhood in Chicago with a strained relationship between the police and local residents, looking at perceived levels of cooperation and communication between the two. The feeling of mistrust went both ways: residents saw the police as acting unfairly and felt subject to unreasonable police stops, while the police said they did not have much trust in the community.

The research found that around three-quarters of police officers believed that only a small number of locals would offer information about a crime if asked by the police, or would work with the police to solve neighbourhood problems.[36] (This is despite the fact that local residents in the research said that they cooperate, and many even said they would consider volunteering for the police.) Either way, the disconnect between local residents' perception of cooperation and the police's is a hindrance to police-community relations and channels of communication. As such, the police and community need a level of mutual trust in order for the police to gather crucial local information for combating crime, especially ones that are most embedded in the community.

A strong relationship between victims and the police can give victims the confidence to proceed with a case

Over the last six years, there has been a sharp rise in the number of police cases that are ended due to "evidential difficulties", often involving the victim themselves withdrawing from the police process: between 2015 and 2021, the proportion of recorded crimes where the victim did not support further action rose from 9% to 26%.[37] Victim cooperation is vital for the police process: in many cases, the police cannot proceed without the support of the victim. It is ironic that the reason many victims feel unable to proceed is precisely because of their own lack of support, either from formal agencies, including the police, or from family, friends or work.

Research backs this up. In the case of domestic abuse, one of the central reasons victims give up

33   Crocker, R. and others. *The impact of organised crime in local communities.* The Police Foundation. June 2017, p. 20.
34   The Police Foundation. *Public Safety and Security in the 21st Century.* July 2020, p. 22. Available at www.policingreview.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/phase_1_report_final-1.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
35   Higgins, A. *Police in Place.* The Police Foundation. August 2021, p. 5. Available at https://www.police-foundation.org.uk/2017/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/perspectives_police_and_place.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022).
36   Fontaine, J. and others. *Mistrust and Ambivalence between Residents and the Police.* Urban Institute. August 2017, p. 14. Available at https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/92316/2017.07.31_legitimacy_brief_finalized_2.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022).
37   Bhattacharya, A. *To get to grips with crime, we need to understand why more and more victims are giving up on prosecution.* Social Market Foundation. December 2021. Available at http://www.smf.co.uk/commentary_podcasts/victim-attrition (accessed 10th May 2022)

on prosecution is the "lack of sufficient response or support from agencies."[38] Other research by the Victims' Commissioner on sexual violence found that a quarter of people who withdrew their complaints feared that the system would be too distressing, and one in five had concerns over the "strip-search" process of GP records and digital downloads.[39] A less common but still significant reason was feeling disbelieved and judged.

It is clear that many victims, especially those who are traumatised by the crime, rely on police and other agencies' support to get through the criminal justice process. As such, justice can only be found if there is a high level of mutual support between victims and the police. If the police and other victim support agencies offer emotional and practical support throughout the process, they can enable victims to proceed with their case.

A strong relationship between witnesses and the police can give witnesses the confidence to give evidence

As with victims, witnesses who fear for their safety when reporting crimes to the police need to have a high level of trust in the police: trust that they will protect them and also trust that they will be effective enough for it to be worth the risk of reporting it.

The police can struggle to encourage witnesses in high crime areas to come forward and report crime. Research has found that residents in areas where there is a strong presence of organised crime groups and drug gangs suffered from threats and intimidation that deterred them from reporting matters to the police.[40] Yet the research also found that in the cases when matters were reported to the police or their local partners, they "were found to be ill informed and unprepared" - and this in turn perpetuated the negative cycle of mistrust of the police, low reporting and high rates of crime.

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE POLICE AND THE PUBLIC ALSO MATTERS FOR THE SOCIAL PREVENTION OF CRIME

Trust in the law and its fairness increases compliance with the law

That the public trust the police, and see them as fair upholders of the law, is critical not just for investigating crime once it has happened, but helping people abide by the law. Trust in the police is founded upon a series of beliefs: that the police are effective, that their values align with those of the community, that they put the public's interests first, that they are a source of moral authority and that they are fair.[41]

The Police Foundation has argued that "there is now a substantial body of empirical and theoretical literature linking public trust in the police, and perceptions of police legitimacy, to a broad set of law-abiding and pro-social behaviours [...] The more someone agrees and identifies with the values represented and demonstrated by the police, the less likely they are to break the law."[42] Other research has also linked public trust to public order: "Ensuring that people trust that the CJS [Criminal Justice System] is fair and effective can also be essential to the functioning of the system [...] in securing compliance with the law."[43]

At the foundation of public trust in the police lies not just transparency and accountability, but the humane treatment by the police of the public. As criminologists Ben Bradford and Jonathan Jackson have argued: "One of the key messages emerging from current UK work on police-community relations is that, if officers improve the way they treat people as individuals and as citizens, this may enhance police legitimacy and facilitate the co-production of social order and law-abiding behaviour."[44]

WHAT IS THE STATE OF THE POLICE'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PUBLIC TODAY?

We have seen the police's relationship with the public is vitally important, for everything from reporting crimes to preventing crimes. Yet how is that relationship faring today?

38   Office for National Statistics. *Domestic abuse and the criminal justice system, England and Wales.* November 2019. Available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/articles/domesticabuseandthecriminaljusticesystemenglandandwales/november2019 (accessed 10th May 2022)

39   Victims Commissioner. *The reasons why victims of rape and sexual violence withdraw from the criminal process without seeking justice.* August 2019. Available at https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20211201104006/https:/victimscommissioner.org.uk/news/the-reasons-why-victims-of-rape-and-sexual-violence-withdraw-from-the-criminal-process-without-seeking-justice/ (accessed 11th May 2022)

40   Crocker, R. and others. *The impact of organised crime in local communities.* The Police Foundation. June 2017, p. 11-12.

41   Bradford, B. and Jackson, J. *Public trust and police legitimacy in Great Britain: Short term effects and long-term processes.* LSE. p. 3. Available at http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/33155/1/La_Vie_des_idees_-_final_english.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

42   Higgins, A. *Policing and the Public: Understanding public priorities, attitudes and expectations.* The Police Foundation. February 2020, p. 18. Available at www.police-foundation.org.uk/2017/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/insight_paper_1.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

43   Jansson, K. *Public confidence in the Criminal Justice System.* Ministry of Justice. 2015, p. 2.

44   Bradford, B. and Jackson, J. *Public trust and police legitimacy in Great Britain.* LSE. p. 9.

The police are facing declining satisfaction among the general public and victims

The police are facing declining satisfaction rates among victims of crime and the wider general public alike. According to data from the 2020 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW), around 55% of people think their local police force is doing a "good" or "excellent" job. The figure has fallen over the last two years from 62% in 2017/18 to 55% in 2019/20.[45] Among victims, these satisfaction rates are even worse: 46% of recent victims of crime (those who had been in a victim in the 12 months preceding the survey) said the police were doing a good or excellent job, while a study by the Institute for Government in 2019 found that the overall trend of increasing victim satisfaction has been reversing since 2014.[46, 47]

Trust is particularly low in higher crime areas

Among the wider general public, satisfaction rates were lower among some groups than others. For example, the 2015 CSEW shows that 57% of adults who perceived local crime to be higher than average had confidence in the local police compared to 82% of those who perceived it to be lower than average.[48] This suggests that relationships are particularly under strain between the police and people who have greater concerns about crime in their local area and in turn may be the most dependent on the police performing their duties to a satisfactory standard.

Trust is low among ethnic minority communities

In light of recent investigations into institutional racism in the Met police, it is also unsurprising that evidence suggests that the police's relationships with certain ethnic minorities is under strain. The 2020 CSEW found that Black people were less likely than other ethnicities to have confidence in the police, with 53% saying that they thought the police were doing a good or excellent job. Confidence among British-Caribbeans was particularly concerning, with

only 39% saying they thought the police were doing a good or excellent job.[49] Further, YouGov polling suggests that the trust people from ethnic minority backgrounds have in the police is only getting worse with 50% saying they do not trust the police in 2021 in comparison to 44% in 2020.[50]

Beyond lack of trust and confidence, ethnic minorities were also more likely to have particular concerns about racism and brutality in the police force. The same YouGov polling found that 59% of ethnic minorities in the UK believe that the police treat Black people less fairly than White people - this figure was even greater for Black respondents with 75% thinking they are treated less fairly by the police than White people. Regarding police brutality, in 2021 59% of ethnic minorities thought this was either a major or significant problem in comparison to just 36% of the general population. If the police are to regain the trust and confidence of ethnic minorities in the UK, it is clear that sufficiently addressing concerns surrounding racism and brutality needs to take priority.

Trust is low among women

Events like the recent report of misogynistic behaviour by police officers at Charing Cross and the murder of Sarah Everard by a Met police officer in 2021 have raised serious concerns about the state of the relationship between the police and women. In light of Sarah Everard's murder in particular, Martin Hewitt, the Chairman of the National Police Chiefs' Council, said this relationship was "acutely under strain", while a YouGov poll found that nearly half of women have lost trust in the police since Sarah Everard's murder, with only 29% saying they continue to trust the police.[51, 52]

In addition, perceptions of the police's ability to tackle serious crimes that mostly affect women and girls may also be putting a strain on this relationship with the Victims' Commissioner warning that women's faith in the police is "low" due in part to the police's inability to deal with violence against

45   Brown, J. *Policing in the UK.* House of Commons Library, September 2021. Available at https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8582/CBP-8582.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
46   Brown, J. *Policing in the UK.* House of Commons Library, September 2021. Available at https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8582/CBP-8582.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
47   Atkins, G. and others. Performance Tracker 2019: Police. Institute for Government, 11 November 2019. Available at www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/performance-tracker-2019/police (accessed 10th May 2022)
48   Office for National Statistics. *Chapter 1: Perceptions of the Police.* ONS, 2015. Available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/crimestatisticsfocusonpublicperceptionsofcrimeandthepoliceandthepersonalwellbeingofvictims/2015-03-26/chapter1perceptionsofthepolice#overall-confidence-in-the-local-police-by-background-characteristics (accessed 10th May 2022)
49   Brown, J. *Policing in the UK.* House of Commons Library, September 2021. Available at https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-8582/CBP-8582.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
50   Abraham, T. *Trust in the police has fallen amongst ethnic minority Britons.* YouGov, 2021. Available at https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2021/12/15/trust-police-has-fallen-amongst-ethnic-minority-br (accessed 10th May 2022)
51   Thompson, F. *Relationship between police and women 'acutely under strain', chief warns.* Evening Standard, November 2021. Available at https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/wayne-couzens-metropolitan-police-national-police-chiefs-council-westminster-priti-patel-b966922.html (accessed 10th May 2022)
52   Walker, A. Sarah Everard: *Nearly half of women have lost trust in the police since murder, survey suggests.* The i, November 2021. Available at https://inews.co.uk/news/sarah-everard-murder-wayne-couzens-police-trust-women-survey-1307881 (accessed 10th May 2022)

women and girls in their own ranks.[53] According to a 2020 YouGov poll, only 46% of people were confident that the police would catch a perpetrator of rape or sexual assault, while only 36% said this for perpetrators of sexual harrassment and 33% for stalkers.[54] For some of these crimes women notably had less confidence in the police than men. For sexual harassment in particular, 60% of women said they were not confident the police would catch the perpetrator in comparison to 50% of men, while for sexual assault 50% of women had no confidence in the police in comparison to 42% for men.[55] It seems clear that women's trust in the police to keep them safe is seriously under threat.

CONCLUSION

A strong relationship between the police and public is vital for a wide range of reasons. A strong relationship can underpin higher reporting rates - crucial if crimes are going to be solved at all and for the police to understand patterns of crime. It also matters for evidence gathering and can aid prevention; trust in the law and its fairness increases compliance with the law.

Yet we have seen that the police are facing declining satisfaction from the general public and victims more specifically. More concerningly, trust is particularly low in higher crime areas, among ethnic minority communities and women. This is likely to be weakening the relationship between the public and the police - a grave concern when we have seen a multitude of reasons why that relationship matters so much.

Underpinning this failing relationship are the struggles we saw in Chapter 1: the police are stuck in a never-ending transactional trap, seeking to tackle crime but only ever resolving a tiny fraction of the overall problem.

53   Oppenheim, M. *Women's faith in police 'low' due to officers failing to tackle domestic abuse in own ranks, Victims Commissioner says.* The Independent, July 2021. Available at https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/police-domestic-abuse-allegations-b1887475.html (accessed 10th May 2022)

54   Smith, M. *Britons lack confidence in police ability to solve crime.* YouGov, February 2020. Available at https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2020/02/17/britons-lack-confidence-police-ability-solve-crime (accessed 10th May 2022)

55   Smith, M. *Britons lack confidence in police ability to solve crime.* YouGov, February 2020. Available at https://d25d2506sfb94s.cloudfront.net/cumulus_uploads/document/i6gjk7g9h5/Internal_PoliceJustice_200204.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)

CHAPTER 3
WHY DO THE POLICE *STRUGGLE* TO BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

In this chapter, we explore the chronic and acute challenges that make it hard for the police to develop and sustain strong relationships with communities.

This starts with the basic observation that the police hold a unique role in a society, as the custodian of the state's coercive power. Their role is to enforce the law, and we know that societies do not operate along simplistic lines where there is one group of perfectly law-abiding citizens and another group of law-defying criminals. Many people will have difficult interactions with the police when they have done nothing wrong or when they are caught up in complex situations. Furthermore, any controversy or injustice in the law is enacted by the police, who become the face of that controversy or injustice. The innate power imbalance between a citizen and a warranted officer who can detain them is a poor foundation for trust, especially for those who are likely to be the victims of that injustice.

Layered on top of the fundamental power imbalance is the risk of differential enforcement. As we have seen, only a very small percentage of criminal activity is dealt with by the police. This means there is the potential for huge differences to emerge between enforcement activity. Some groups of victims may be much more likely to get a response from the police; some types of offenders may be much more likely to be arrested. If only 7% of crimes result in a formal disposal, you can see that a two percentage point variation in enforcement between demographic groups - between 5% and 9% - can create large disparities between them. It is corrosive to trust if some kinds of offenders are far more likely to get away with committing crime.

Differential enforcement may be one reason why people who are less wealthy or more marginalised have a more negative perception of the police. Adults in England and Wales who were living in the 20% most deprived areas were less likely to give the local police a positive rating than adults living in the 20% least deprived areas (56% compared with 69%).[56] Black or Black British adults are the least likely to have confidence in the local police.[57]

The relationship between the public and police has been worsened by the period of spending cuts over the last 12 years for two reasons. First, the police themselves have faced funding cuts, giving them less time and capacity for relational, community-based approaches to crime prevention and enforcement.

56   Office for National Statistics. *Crime Statistics, Focus on Public Perceptions of Crime and the Police, and the Personal Well-being of Victims.* March 2015. Available at https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/crimestatisticsfocusonpublicperceptionsofcrimeandthepoliceandthepersonalwellbeingofvictims/2015-03-26/chapter1perceptionsofthepolice (accessed 10th May 2022)
57   Office for National Statistics. *Crime Statistics, Focus on Public Perceptions of Crime and the Police, and the Personal Well-being of Victims.* March 2015.

Second, the police have increasingly had to act as a backstop for public service failures elsewhere in the system.

STATE OF POLICING

Looking at the police themselves, the Police Foundation has eloquently described the state of our current policing infrastructure:

> A decade after the national roll out – after austerity and political 'localism' and the discovery of 'hidden' vulnerability had done their work – local policing in most parts of England and Wales had fallen predictably back to a 'firefighting' footing.[58]

The proportion of adults who reported seeing police officers or police community support officers (PCSOs) on foot patrol in their local area about once a week or more (high police visibility) was 32% in 2013/14. This continued the downward trend seen since 2010/11 when reported levels of high police visibility were at their peak (39%). Before this, the proportion of adults reporting high visibility rose from 26% in 2006/07.[59]

High police visibility was associated with positive ratings of the police. For adults who reported high police visibility, 71% gave the local police a positive rating. This compares with 61% of adults who reported medium police visibility (seeing officers/PCSOs on foot patrol in their local area about/less than once a month) and 53% of adults who reported low police visibility (never seeing officers/PCSOs on foot patrol in their local area).[60]

The Police Foundation's Strategic Review argues that funding cuts undermined the police's ability to provide the public with what they wanted, and that citizens complained of feeling "less safe, even abandoned".[61]

SERVICE OF LAST RESORT

The police's ability to be visible and connected to their community is also being eaten away from the other end, as resources are consumed by dealing with problems left unresolved by other public services. This problem is at the core of the striking quote with which we started this report: "if the public knew what the police really spend their time on, they would be horrified."

Serving and retired police officers privately admitted to us that the police were undertaking work that other services should be doing, but didn't have the resources to do quickly. Partly due to reductions in public service spending, the scope of policing has increased and police officers have been dealing more and more with non-crime matters: a review of 51 studies found that two-thirds concluded that the proportion of police time devoted to crime was 33% or less.[62]

Police have, in particular, become the service of last resort for mental health: "while there were 385,206 incidents flagged as mental health-related in 2014, in 2018 that figure was 494,159, a rise of 28%."[63] One participant in our focus group told us about her experience:

> I guess I would call the police for immediacy of responsiveness, probably because I'm not aware or there isn't any other service where we live. I would expect them to turn up quickly because obviously when somebody is really in a bad way, the quicker the better. I mean we know not to rely on the NHS in West Wales, that's for sure.
>
> - **59 year old female interviewee**

The scale of the problem with respect to mental health services was set out in 2018 by HMICFRS. In their report, *Picking Up the Pieces*, they wrote:

> Too many aspects of the broader mental health system are broken; the police are left to pick up the pieces. The fact that almost every police force now has its own mental health triage team indicates that there isn't nearly enough emphasis on early intervention and primary care to prevent the need for a crisis response. This is letting down people with mental health problems, as well as placing an intolerable burden on police officers and staff [...] People with mental health problems need expert support. Those in crisis need to be cared for in a healthcare setting. They

58   Higgins, A. *Police in Place*. The Police Foundation. August 2021, p. 4.
59   Office for National Statistics. *Chapter 1: Perceptions of the Police*. ONS, 2015 Available at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/compendium/crimestatisticsfocusonpublicperceptionsofcrimeandthepoliceandthepersonalwellbeingofvictims/2015-03-26/chapter1p
60   Office for National Statistics. *Chapter 1: Perceptions of the Police*. ONS, 2015.
61   Police Foundation. *A new mode of protection: Redesigning Policing and Public Safety for the 21st Century*. March 2022, p. 5. Available at https://www.policingreview.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/srpew_final_report.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
62   Loader, I. *Revisiting the Policing Mission*. The Police Foundation. April 2020, p. 7. Available at https://www.policingreview.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/insight_paper_2.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
63   Jones, L. *Police 'dealing with more mental health incidents'*. BBC News. September 2019. Available at www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-49317060. (accessed 10th May 2022)

shouldn't be locked in a police cell or held for hours on end in the back of a police car for their own safety.

Calls from some campaigners to "defund the police" have spread to the UK from the US. The argument made at the policy level by these campaigners is that services other than the police should be funded instead of law enforcement, as they would be far better placed to deal with many of the problems the police currently handle. There is a striking overlap between that campaign and the advice of HMICFRS; while the inspectorate, unsurprisingly, does not argue for less funding for the police, it does make the observation that, "[Police officers] often don't have the skills they need to support people with mental health problems. And, too often, they find themselves responsible for the safety and welfare of people that other professionals would be better placed to deal with."[64]

WHERE ARE THE POLITICIANS?

Despite this extraordinary pressure on the police, the political agenda pursued in Westminster remains simplistic and reductive, focused primarily on police numbers and prison numbers. Prevention remains almost invisible in our political campaigns, unless it involves preventing crime by locking people up.

Crime statistics are used selectively: in a recent interview the Prime Minister boasted about reductions in "neighbourhood crime", disregarding the reality that crime had increased 18% in the latest period for which data are available.[65] It is convenient to disregard fraud, and its inexorable rise, so politicians continue to do so.

New offences have been created like upskirting and revenge porn with little consideration given to how enforcement might operate, or how the failure to enforce might eat away at the trust citizens have in their police force.

In the next two chapters of this report we set out some proposals for change in the way policing operates in the UK, to reduce crime and the harm it causes. That change needs to come from the top: politicians must stop posturing about how tough they are and start to put this simple goal of harm reduction at the top of their agenda.

64   HMICFRS. *Policing and Mental Health: Picking Up the Pieces.* November 2018, p.3. Available at www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmicfrs/wp-content/uploads/policing-and-mental-health-picking-up-the-pieces.pdf (accessed 10th May 2022)
65   ONS. *Crime in England and Wales: year ending December 2021.* April 2022. Available at www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2021 (accessed 17th May 2022)

CHAPTER 4
REBUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

In the final two chapters of this paper we set out proposals for a more relational approach to both policing and crime prevention. We believe the two go hand in hand: it is far easier for the police to develop strong relationships with communities where crime is kept low, and police are able to respond in a way that is proportionate and fair. That healthy relationship with policing helps sustain a low-crime equilibrium.

In this chapter, we look at reforms within the police service. In the following chapter, we will look at the role of relationship-building in broader crime prevention, which cannot be left to the police service alone.

Within the police service, we believe there four areas where reform is needed:

1. Culture and recruitment

2. Measurement and accountability

3. Community policing

4. The approach to online crime

1. CULTURE AND RECRUITMENT

As a society, we need to think carefully about who we want to hold the state's coercive power as a warranted police officer. We must be acutely aware that the nature of a police officer's powers mean the role is attractive to some whose ambition is toxic: to dominate and oppress. Too often when officers are identified for abusing police power or committing violent or sexual offences, the response from police leaders is to say they are simply "bad apples". This misses the point of the metaphor: bad apples rot the whole barrel. In organisational culture, what you permit, you promote. Officers learn from one another's behaviour.

Cultural change is a slow, patient process. To successfully change the culture of the police we need to:

- **Continue to diversify recruitment.** Huge progress has been made, but each police service should aim to reflect the populations they serve: becoming not just nationally representative but locally representative. Particular attention should be given to ensuring pathways for promotion are also followed by people from all parts of society. We should aim for the police service to be 50% women at all levels of seniority. Of course, trust and confidence in the police has a material impact on its ability to recruit good officers, especially from the communities who are most under-represented. Outreach efforts, including in schools, are vital to promote the value and importance of a career in policing.

- **Improve disciplinary procedures** to make it easier to suspend and remove officers whose behaviour is harming the reputation and performance of the police. We look forward to the recommendations of the Casey review into the culture of the Metropolitan Police Service, and expect there will be lessons for police services across the country from her work.

- Ensure both initial and ongoing **training** equips police officers to understand the experiences and needs of our country's diverse communities.

The mental health of officers should also be a priority for all forces. Confronting crime on a daily basis is mentally exhausting: dealing with people in the most catastrophic circumstances of vulnerability; feeling the possibility of violent threat to your own person; pivoting in a moment from compassion and care for a victim to restraining an offender who is resisting arrest. These are extraordinarily difficult roles which

require a rare combination of emotional intelligence and physical strength. Mental distress in officers can easily spill into unacceptable behaviour toward citizens, victims and offenders. Improvements in performance management need to come alongside improvements in compassion and care for our officers. As such, we need to:

- Improve provision for mental health services for officers.

2. MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In 2021 the government set out new "Crime and Policing Measures" with a reported ambition to create a league table of police performance. These measures are to "reduce murder and other homicide, reduce serious violence, disrupt drugs supply and county lines; reduce neighbourhood crime; tackle cyber-crime; and improve satisfaction among victims." Currently, individual police forces measure their own performance against priorities locally set by the Police and Crime Commissioners; most incorporate the national priorities within these measures.

Performance measurement is a vital part of any public service. However, we believe opportunities are being missed in the way the police measure their performance. First, we agree that crime prevention is centrally important, but as we set out in the next chapter, this cannot be considered the exclusive preserve of the police. To do so is to put impossible pressure onto police, and to harm crime prevention efforts. Second, the victim satisfaction measure is important, but limited only to those victims who report their crimes to the police - there is no incentive to reach those people and communities least confident to report.

We suggest the Home Office and police forces work to identify ways to:

- Measure and target improvements in the percentage of crime reported, with a particular focus on sexual crime and crime experienced by groups most likely to be victimised.

- Measure and target improvements in trust in the local police service.

Some communities, particularly in low-income and high-diversity areas, have high levels of crime but low trust in the police. This is self-reinforcing. Policing these areas is often difficult because of high volumes of crime; some policing tactics deployed in response - especially stop and search - can alienate communities further and make it harder to detect and deter crime. We need to narrow the gap between different communities' experiences of policing.

The Home Office and police forces should develop ways to measure:

- Disparities in victim experience and satisfaction with the police

- Disparities in community trust of the police

In health and education, government has developed specific targets to reduce inequality of outcomes: healthy life expectancy and exam results. This approach should be developed in policing with an explicit commitment to reduce disparities in:

- Likelihood of victimisation

- Satisfaction of victims with the police

- Trust in the police

3. COMMUNITY POLICING

One of the core elements to the Demos approach to relational public services is a belief that we need to blur the boundaries between professional service providers, service users, volunteers, and the community at large. As Polly Mackenzie wrote in *The Social State*:

> *When we see public services as individual transactions between one citizen and the state, we miss the opportunity to leverage the community more broadly. So in a relational model of public services, leaders should be looking for opportunities to build relationships with the diverse communities they serve, whether through formal volunteering, community engagement, delivery partnerships, collaboration in service design or simply friendly outreach.*

In policing there is an important boundary around formal powers of a warranted officer, that quite rightly should not be blurred. Nevertheless, this constitutional position should not prevent the police from becoming a more collaborative, community service. On victim support, crime prevention, restorative justice and more, innovative police officers are already working with communities and volunteers, recognising that the policing of a society is a collective endeavour, not the sole preserve of sworn officers.

We should work towards:

- Expanding the number of special constables (volunteer police officers), and consider developing a paid police reserve to work alongside full time officers and special constables.

- Identifying ways to enable and expand other forms of volunteering alongside the police in areas such as community outreach, victim support, neighbourhood surveillance, crime prevention advice and mentoring of young people at risk.

- Expanding community-based restorative justice, supported by the police and wider criminal justice system, for low-level anti-social behaviour.

4. ONLINE CRIME

As people live more of their lives online, it is simply untenable for us to continue with the sparse, ad-hoc approach taken by our police to crime that happens in this virtual environment. Fraud is hugely underpoliced because banks can be leant on to absorb the costs. The government has been open minded about creating new offences like upskirting or revenge porn, but done little to set out a realistic approach to bringing these offences to justice in any systematic way. Victims should expect the same kind of response to crime that happens online as they get to crime that happens in person. It is also important to note that a huge amount of non-financial crime also occurs online, most notably abuse and harassment.

Demos set out in *The Great Cyber Surrender* our proposals for a radically new approach to policing fraud. The police cannot expect to have a healthy relationship with citizens while they leave the volume crime of our age unpoliced. We reiterate the need to:

- Establish and promote a National Reporting Hotline for fraud and cybercrime, with a simple three-digit number, e.g. '119 for Cybercrime.'

- Establish a National Fraud Taskforce, staffed with specialist investigators, with responsibility for investigating cybercrime cases.

- Roll out Victim Care Squads nationally, staffed with specialist advocates, to provide support and advice to victims of cybercrime.

We should consider how to raise funds for this transformation in online policing. At the moment, one part of police revenue comes from a levy on business rates and council tax; the assumption behind these police precepts is that those with the most physical property have the most to benefit from policing, and should therefore contribute the most. In the modern world, it is digital places and digital assets that need protecting. We should therefore review the tax basis for funding the police and consider a digital services tax specifically to yield revenue for online policing. The greater the digital space you have created - such as online commerce or online media - the more you should contribute to the policing of that space.

CHAPTER 5
EFFECTIVE CRIME PREVENTION

Demos has been making the case for changes in our approach to crime prevention for nearly 25 years. In 1997, author Jon Bright argued in our paper, *Turning the Tide*, that:

> The criminal justice system is not very good at preventing crime, clearing up crime, enhancing community safety, deterring offenders or rehabilitating those who are convicted. Criminal justice policy needs to make a decisive shift towards prevention. There is growing evidence that it would be successful, better value for money and popular.[66]

Bright accepted that the police have an essential role to play in crime prevention:

> The police hold the information about crime and offenders and are the only agency trained, equipped and authorised to confront most crime problems.

However, he made the case that if the police are expected to act alone to prevent crime, they will fail:

> Most of the work of the police is still reactive rather than preventative. It is not their job to intervene in many of the circumstances which lead to crime being committed. They do not make decisions about the deployment and management of staff in housing estates, schools, youth clubs and shopping centres (although they may be invited to advise). They are not responsible for the enforcement of tenancy regulations, the maintenance of street lighting, the provision of public transport or the design of new commercial and residential developments (all of which impact on crime and disorder).

And he quoted criminologist David Smith who observed in 1983 that the police:

> …work at the margins where the usual processes of community and prevention control have broken down . . . they act as a continuation of . . . more general efforts by the mass of people and institutions to maintain order, control and coherence. In other words, they are a small but extremely important element within a much larger complex of interrelated systems of control.

This analysis is at the heart of the recommendations we make in this chapter. Crime prevention is essential to successful policing. Only by reducing crime to levels the police can reasonably deal with can we improve trust and confidence in the police, in particular in the many physical and online spaces which people currently experience as under- or un-policed. And yet crime prevention should not be left to the police: it needs to be coordinated and led outside of the police force. We believe institutional reform will be needed to make this possible.

Part of the problem is the separation of police accountability from the local authorities who are responsible for so many of the upstream services that are essential for preventing crime: from children's social care to the planning system.

We therefore recommend:

- A **new statutory crime prevention role for Mayors of metropolitan areas, unitary or upper tier councils**.

Where these boundaries are coterminous with police force areas and a mayor is in place, the government should consider abolishing Police and Crime

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66   Bright, J. *Turning the Tide: Crime, Community and Prevention*. Demos. May 1997.

Commissioners and absorbing the accountability functions of the police into the officer of the Mayor.[67] In London, there is a strong case for consolidating the relationship between the Metropolitan Police and the Mayor by removing the force's national functions, so it can focus more effectively on its role in the city.

Crime prevention work tends to fall into two categories: situational and social.

Situational crime prevention aims to make crime more difficult to commit, more risky and less rewarding. It includes security, surveillance, property marking, remote phone locking to make it harder to resell stolen items, and behavioural interventions like seating in bars.

Social crime prevention targets the potential offender: it seeks to reduce the risk factors known to be associated with offending, such as poor parenting, school exclusion, addiction, homelessness and unemployment.

We believe there is also a strong case that crime is also influenced by wider social capital within communities: the bonds between citizens can contribute to both social and situational prevention. Citizens with strong bonding capital between them may be less likely to offend against one another, more likely to intervene to help prevent or defuse low-level disorder, and more likely to share information and intelligence with the police when crime does occur. We therefore believe there is a case for:

- A **new local authority-based crime prevention service**, that would work alongside other services to help build community relationships and cohesion.

A new crime prevention service would have a level of integration with other public services as workers would spend time in public places, such as schools, libraries, parks and hospitals, speaking to residents about their concerns relating to crime. Workers within the new service would strive to identify and build relationships with key stakeholders who have a particular level of authority and knowledge in the area. These people might be teachers, elders, religious leaders or window cleaners, who are said to be the eyes and ears of the neighbourhood.

Without the coercive power of the police, this new service may stand a better chance at developing relationships with certain key groups, especially those in marginalised communities. Boston's Street

Workers were able to develop relationships with city gang members, diverting criminal behaviour and reducing overall violence, because they were removed from the police.[68] The program often selected people who had a criminal record themselves - something that this new service should also consider.

Part of the service's role would be to create the conditions that allow people to form relationships with other local residents and with public service workers. Another benefit of creating a new service is that it might be better placed than the police to build social cohesion. If this new service holds social gatherings, it might attract a wider range of people - including those who are suspicious of the police - and avoid policing overreach.

Finally, the government should consider creating a national centre to collate and share research on the best way to prevent crime from happening. While the College of Policing has done valuable work on crime prevention, we believe there is a case for:

- A new What Works Centre for Crime Prevention, which will have a mandate to engage with a far wider range of public services, and build evidence on what reduces crime.

PREVENTING CYBERCRIME

Cybercrime by its nature exists outside of the geographical community; when it comes to financial fraud, a huge proportion of offenders are not based in the UK. We therefore need to accept that preventing online fraud requires a profoundly different approach. Social crime prevention is almost impossible when we cannot target the childhood experiences of cyber criminals based in Belarus; neither can we build the global social capital needed to reduce the willingness of criminals to victimise people in our country.

Situational prevention is the key to reducing cyber fraud. In previous work on fraud against vulnerable people, *Protected by Design*, Demos recommended a change in the regulation of financial services to enable people to add more friction to transactions - with the right to set delays, transfer limits, or "white list" payees to reduce their vulnerability.[69] In *The Great Cyber Surrender* we also argued for cybersecurity education in schools and communities.[70]

67   The mayors of London, Manchester and West Yorkshire already hold Police and Crime Commissioner responsibilities.
68   Cramer, M. *Reaching out on the roiling streets. The Boston Globe*. December 2010. Available at http://archive.boston.com/news/local/massachusetts/articles/2010/12/03/street_workers_reach_out_to_most_dangerous_gang_members. (accessed 10th May 2022)
69   Gloag, A., Mackenzie, P. and Atay, A. *Protected by Design*. Demos. July 2019, p.49. Available at: https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Cifas-digital-final.pdf (accessed 12th May 2022)
70   Atay, A., Carr, H. and Sweetland, J. *The Great Cyber Surrender*. p.7. November 2020.

Non-financial crime - most notably abuse and harassment - also happens online. On this, a wider range of prevention efforts are viable. Social prevention is possible, through education, early response to low-level offences, and the building up of stronger social norms about acceptable forms of behaviour. Situational prevention is also essential: the details of how platforms and devices are built can have a profound impact on people's ability to protect themselves from victimisation. Demos has written extensively about the way online content moderation can reduce harmful behaviour online. As we argued in *Everything in Moderation*, platforms should:

> *"Provide the tools, structures and incentives for users to actively participate in shaping society, digital or otherwise. Platforms should embrace technologies and processes that enable and reward civic labour that shapes a community in line with that community's laws, rules and terms of service. Certain platforms lead the way here through implementing financial incentives, reputational incentives and user-led systems of content moderation. Finally, we require the development of cultures conducive to minimising online harm. […] The infrastructure on which online communities and cultures are built should help empower and inform that [culture]."[71]*

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71   Krasodomki-Jones, A. *Everything in Moderation.* Demos. October 2020, p.6. Available at https://demos.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/Everything-in-Moderation.pdf (accessed 12th May 2022).

CONCLUSION

We believe policing is an essential part of a healthy society; without a successful criminal justice system it is impossible to deter or punish crime, and police play an essential role in both. However, policing is simply losing touch with the changing nature of crime, and the changing nature of our society. The illusion that it can respond to what citizens want and expect from it is breaking down.

As has been said by those inside and outside of the force, the police face enormous challenges that will not be addressed by the uplift of 20,000 new police officers. If the trends we've outlined in this report continue, the police will be battling against declining resolution rates, lower levels of public trust, and higher rates of many crimes, especially those committed online. Without a massive improvement in NHS capacity to provide treatment, the police will likely be called out to even more mental health situations.

It is vital the police have the public onside. We need to believe that the police have our best interests at heart and to believe that they're fair and effective, in order to trust them and to cooperate with them. To repair damaged relationships, they need to prove that they have institutionally changed: that they have zero tolerance for people and practices that are racist, sexist or homophobic.

Without radical rethinking of public safety, the police will be further stuck in a "transactional trap" where the scale of their duties are so high that they cannot match demand with an appropriate service response. Politicians have typically responded to rises in crime by "getting tough on crime", punishing people with ever harsher sentences, further marginalising them from the rest of society.

Yet getting tough on criminals does not equate to prevention. So much of crime arises from social factors such as childhood trauma, poverty, untreated mental health conditions and homelessness. The police have a role to play in situational prevention - advising people who have been burgled on how to better protect their property, for example - but there is next to nothing they can do when it comes to the upstream social factors.

This is why there is a strong case for a new local crime prevention service: a service that would work in schools, hospitals and other public spaces, to understand residents' public safety concerns and to build relationships with key community stakeholders to come up with solutions. Ultimately, the service would aim to strengthen social cohesion and social capital to create conditions of safety, and to allow communities to regulate themselves with much less dependency on formalised mechanisms of law enforcement.

We need to reshape our thinking about the relationship between the police and the citizens and communities they serve. We need to stop using the police as a social service of last resort, and we need to stop undermining public confidence by setting unrealistic expectations for what the police can accomplish. If we do so, we can start to build a trustworthy and trusted police service, able to respond to crime, support victims, and contribute to a shared effort to reduce crime and protect citizens.

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