

---

Breakthrough Britain

# A Force to be Reckoned With

*A Policy Report from the Policing Reform Working Group*

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**This is the Executive Summary of the Centre for Social Justice report, *A Force to be Reckoned With*. For further information or to download the full report please visit [www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk)**

At its heart, policing is about the relationship between police officers and the public that they serve. Increasingly, however, the focus of policing in England and Wales has become the centrally set targets, indicators and priorities that have jeopardised the Police Service's unique history of localism and "policing by consent".

The Policing Reform Working Group was convened to address this challenge and point a direction forward for policing in England and Wales. The Working Group brought together independent experts from the world of policing, politics, research, criminology and the wider criminal justice system to do so.

The recommendations in this report have been designed to give officers the time, the skills and the discretion they need to get on with the job. The proposed "Interventionist Neighbourhood Policing" model insists on keeping police on the streets, with a commitment always to intervene against crime and antisocial behaviour. To allow this to happen, and to put local priorities back at the heart of local policing, a Crime and Justice Commissioner will be elected in every Force area.



### 1. The Police

The Police Service of England and Wales, made up of 43 "independent" local Forces, is one of the largest, most important and impactful public services in the country and is esteemed among police services internationally for its reputation, based on its history of local policing and policing by consent.

In 1990, the Association of Chief Police Officers defined the Police Service's mission as:

- To uphold the law fairly and firmly;
- To prevent crime;
- To pursue and bring to justice those who break the law;
- To keep the Queen's Peace;
- To protect, help and reassure the community; and
- To be seen to do all this with integrity, common sense and sound judgement.<sup>1</sup>

However, changes in society and in criminality have meant that the scope of this mission has expanded rapidly in order to keep pace. "Upholding the law" has come to incorporate such diverse functions as: e-crime, offender management, asset confiscation and the increasingly globalised challenges of terrorism and serious organised crime.



The question: "What do we want the police to do?" was raised repeatedly to the Working Group. Before any further reform of the Police Service is attempted, the police mission should be clearly defined and the breadth of services that it is required to provide should be clearly understood.

Towards the delivery of its mission, the Service now employs 140,000 full-time officers. This represents an increase of more than 16 per cent in the number of fully sworn police officers since 2000.<sup>2</sup>

With an annual budget of over £17.5 billion, the Police Service makes up more than half of the entire public order and safety budget (which includes the fire services, law courts and prisons).<sup>3</sup> Policing costs £283 per person annually in the United Kingdom. This amounts to over 3 per cent of the UK's total annual public sector expenditure.<sup>4</sup> Policing has not always commanded such a large proportion of national expenditure – over the past decade alone, spending on the police has increased by 40 per cent in real terms (or 75 per cent in cash terms).<sup>5</sup> Taken as a percentage of its GDP, the UK now spends more on law and order than any other OECD country.<sup>6</sup>

The Working Group observed a Police Service that is better resourced though often unnecessarily constrained in its ability to deploy its resources effectively, and has set about reform guided by the principle that the Police Service must recognise that its most precious commodity is the "resource hours" provided by its staff.

## 2. The Police Perspective

During the course of researching this report, the Working Group visited forces in London, Surrey, Cleveland, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire in an attempt to capture the voice of policing today, from the viewpoint of both police leaders and frontline officers. In addition, they took evidence from the leaders of the main staff

1 Association of Chief Police Officers, *Setting the standards for policing: Meeting community standards* (London: Association of Chief Police Officers 1990).

2 Garside, R., and Groombridge, N., *Criminal justice resources staffing and workloads: an initial assessment* (London: Centre for Crime and Justice Studies, 2008), 6, [http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus978/Criminal\\_justice\\_resources\\_staffing\\_and\\_workloads.pdf](http://www.crimeandjustice.org.uk/opus978/Criminal_justice_resources_staffing_and_workloads.pdf).

3 HM Treasury, *Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2008: National Statistics* (London: HM Treasury, 2008), [http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/A/pesa08-09\\_pu548\\_210408.pdf](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/9/A/pesa08-09_pu548_210408.pdf), Table 5.2.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Strategic Priorities for the UK: the Policy Review* (London: Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, 2006), 22.

associations and from members of other Forces and institutions. Their input played an important part in shaping the Working Group's recommendations.

Across the entire Police Service, officers universally emphasised the opportunity to “serve the public” and “make a difference” as the best parts of police work today. They frequently praised the Neighbourhood Policing model and an increasing focus on local priorities, as well as the camaraderie of police work and the diversity of the challenge faced.

“The soul of policing is still good. People join the police with the right motives. People who join want to help protect the public.”

*Temporary Chief Constable Rowley, Surrey*

“I think you actually make a massive difference just by putting your uniform on.”

*Response Team Officer, Cleveland*

The Working Group was also impressed by the honest and open critique given by officers, best summarised by one officer's concern that: “I don't think we provide the service that the public wants.” The chief problems identified by senior and frontline police officers as holding them back from providing “the service that the public wants” were: political interference (both local and national); performance targets and inspection frameworks; and the numerous issues affecting the time police have for patrol and public interaction. The Working Group put these issues at the heart of its recommendations for policing reform.

The commitment to public service demonstrated by police officers is a significant asset and the Service should be led, managed and governed in a manner which fosters and encourages this commitment.

### 3. The Public Perspective

Generally, public confidence is used as a proxy for an array of persistently troubling indicators of public attitudes towards the police, including: trust and confidence in the police (and, more generally, the criminal justice system); as well as fear and perceptions of crime. In an attempt to understand and capture public sentiment on policing today, the Centre for Social Justice commissioned a poll of over 2,000 adults, aged 18+, across Britain.

Nationally, the public has low (and, in some cases, declining) confidence in the Police Service. Satisfaction levels are markedly worse among those who have had contact with the police, not least as witnesses.<sup>7</sup> At present, only four out of ten believe the police can be relied upon to deal with minor crime.<sup>8</sup> Polling suggests that public trust in the police is significantly lower than comparable professions and declining (only 59 per cent of people report trusting the police, down from 64 per cent in 2003).<sup>9</sup>

7 Bradford, B., Jackson, J., and Stanko, E., *Contact and Confidence: On the Distribution and Significance of Public Encounters with the Police* (London: London School of Economics). [http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/methodologyInstitute/pdf/JonJackson/Contact\\_and\\_Confidence.pdf](http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/methodologyInstitute/pdf/JonJackson/Contact_and_Confidence.pdf).

8 Home Affairs Select Committee, *Policing in the 21st Century* (London: Home Affairs Select Committee, 2008), <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/364/36402.htm>, 3.

9 Ipsos MORI “Trust in Professions 2007” (London: Ipsos MORI, 2007). <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/polls-07/trust-in-professions-2007.ashx>.

This suggests that while driving police activity through quantitative assessment may have delivered substantial improvements in reducing crime (as discussed in Section 4), it is failing to convince the public that the Police Service is on its side.

Crime reduction is only one factor significantly influencing public confidence in the police. Other factors identified by the British Crime Survey (BCS) – such as perceived fairness, satisfaction after contact and relevance of police activity to community concerns<sup>10</sup> – are much less tangible, and sometimes have no obvious metric by which to assess performance.

Similarly, researchers and politicians are often troubled by a so-called “perception gap” between the (increasing) public fear of crime and the (declining) official crime rates. However, research underpinning the influential Signal Crimes Perspective supports the conclusion that reducing fear of crime is unlikely to be achieved simply by the pursuit of national targets and priorities, since:

*Levels of concern about safety are profoundly shaped by the presence of incivilities and disorder in an area. Indeed, the research suggests that in some areas, levels of disorder are more influential than crime in shaping perceived risk ... Perceptions of risk vary considerably by area, and different signal crimes and signal disorders function as causes of insecurity in different locations.<sup>11</sup>*

Ultimately, even if police activity is successfully reducing crime, if it does so without simultaneously reassuring the public, then the legitimacy of the Police Service will, ultimately, be undermined.

#### 4. The State of Crime and Disorder

In response to the question: “What is the most important issue facing Britain today?” a staggering 47 per cent of people polled by Ipsos MORI last year answered: “Crime.”<sup>12</sup> The predominance of crime as the national concern in England and Wales is out of step with international trends, as crime is “a bigger cause for concern for Britons than the citizens of any equivalent western European nation, and even the United States.”<sup>13</sup>

Crime statistics in Britain are collected in two very different ways, which paint rather different pictures of the state of crime. The police keep records of the crimes which are reported to them by the public or detected in the course of duty; whereas the British Crime Survey aims to give “a better reflection of the true extent of crime”, and polls a large cross-section of the population to ask about experiences as victims of crime.<sup>14</sup>

As Figure 1 shows, police recorded crime statistics showed just under five million offences in total for the financial year 2007/08. This represents a nine per cent drop from the previous year, and an 18 per cent drop from the recorded peak in 2003/04, returning crime levels to just under the levels recorded for 1998/99.

---

10 Kershaw, C., Nicholas, S., and Walker, A., *Crime in England and Wales 2007/08* (London: Home Office, 2008), <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0708.pdf>, 119.

11 Ibid.

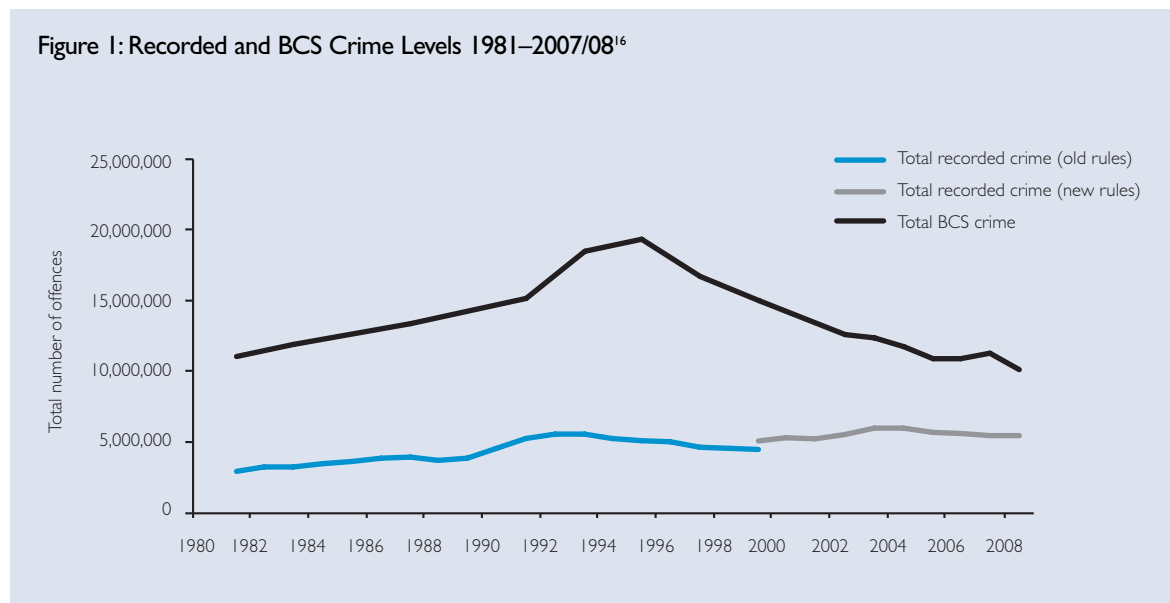
12 Ipsos MORI, *Political Trends: The most important issues facing Britain today* (London: Ipsos MORI, 2008), <http://www.ipsos-mori.com/content/the-most-important-issues-facing-britain-today.ashx>. Subsequent polling by Ipsos MORI has shown concern for “crime” at 35 per cent, with this decline having being offset by concern for “the economy”.

13 Morris, N., “The Big Question: Does fear of crime reflect the reality of life on Britain’s streets?”, *The Independent*, 22 January, 2008. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/the-big-question-does-fear-of-crime-reflect-the-reality-of-life-on-britains-streets-771727.html>; Kershaw, C., Nicholas, S., and Walker, A., *Crime in England and Wales 2007/08* (London: Home Office, 2008), 129. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0708.pdf>.

14 Jansson, K., *British Crime Survey: Measuring Crime for 25 Years* (London: Home Office, 2007), 3. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs07/bcs25.pdf>.

In contrast, the BCS estimated that there were 10.1 million crimes committed in the financial year 2007/08. This represents a 48 per cent drop in overall crime since the peak BCS year of 1995.<sup>15</sup> At this peak, the BCS measured 19.3 million crimes. This has meant a drop to overall crime levels below those of the baseline year of 1981.

Figure 1: Recorded and BCS Crime Levels 1981–2007/08<sup>16</sup>



But is this the whole picture? Despite the fact that 16 per cent of people experience high levels of worry over antisocial behaviour (ASB),<sup>17</sup> a large proportion of antisocial acts, such as begging, noise and rowdy behaviour, are not recordable crimes and as such escapes analysis of crime rates. Crime statistics should take a wide view of crime and disorder, in order to capture elements of social disorder which affect the public sense of safety and risk.

“The amount of resources available for the number of incidents has not kept pace. The huge amount of resources that has been put into policing has largely gone into counter-terrorism and Neighbourhood policing.”

Chief Constable Hughes, South Yorkshire

15 Kershaw, C., Nicholas, S., and Walker, A., *Crime in England and Wales 2007/08* (London: Home Office, 2008), 2. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0708.pdf>.

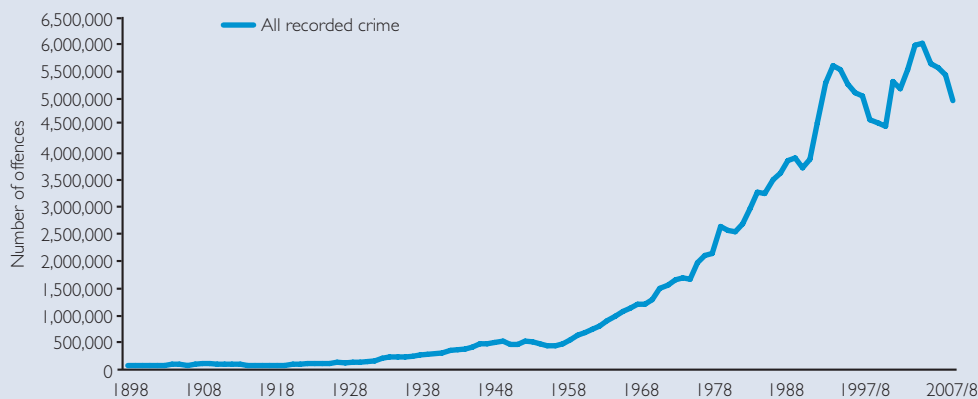
16 Home Office, *A Summary of Recorded Crime Data 1898 to 2001/2* (London: Home Office, 2008) <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/recordedcrime1.html>; Kershaw, C., Nicholas, S., and Walker, A., *Crime in England and Wales 2007/08* (London: Home Office, 2008), 2. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0708.pdf>.

17 Kershaw, C., Nicholas, S., and Walker, A., *Crime in England and Wales 2007/08* (London: Home Office, 2008), 11. <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs08/hosb0708.pdf>.

18 Simmons, J., and Dodd, T., *Crime in England and Wales 2002/03* (London: Home Office, 2003), . <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/statistics/statistics28.htm>.

Analysis of current crime rates also often fails to take into account anything before the BCS baseline year of 1981. Thus, when officials interpret recent decreases in crime to mean that “the risk of becoming a victim of crime is still historically low”,<sup>18</sup> they do so with reference to a history of less than thirty years.

Figure 2: All Recorded Offences in England & Wales 1898–2008<sup>19</sup>



As Figure 2 illustrates, between 1940 and 1960 recorded crime rates doubled. In the following two decades, leading up to the BCS baseline year, recorded crime increased again nearly threefold.<sup>20</sup> While the claim that Britain is a high crime society is often dismissed as nostalgia for a golden age that never existed, it is difficult to downplay the fact that the average citizen (who, in Britain, is aged 39) has lived through a fourfold increase in overall crime during the course of his or her lifetime. This added demand for police services only serves to further underline the importance of using police time effectively.

## 5. How Police Time is Spent

### Do you think that there are enough police on the streets?

Yes there are	9%
<b>No there are not</b>	<b>85%</b>
Don't know	6%

CSJ YouGov polling results, Jan 2009

18 Simmons, J., and Dodd, T., *Crime in England and Wales 2002/03* (London: Home Office, 2003), . <http://www.crimereduction.homeoffice.gov.uk/statistics/statistics28.htm>.

19 Home Office, *A Summary of Recorded Crime Data 1898 to 2001/2* (London: Home Office, 2008) <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/recordedcrime1.html>.

20 Ibid.

The vast majority (85 per cent) of the public thinks that there are not enough police on the street. Government estimates in 2008 put the average amount of officer time spent on street patrol as low as 14 per cent.<sup>21</sup> Much of that time is spent patrolling in pairs which halves the extent and visibility of patrol. Officers are spending less than a fifth of their time on patrol, which translates to every full-time officer patrolling for less than seven hours a week. At that rate, in order for a Force to add one full-time officer to street patrol, five new officers need to be employed.

The Working Group also noted the irony of PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers), who have less training and fewer formal powers than fully sworn officers, having 75 per cent of their time available for patrol functions.<sup>22</sup> While recognising that PCSOs bring benefits to communities, the Working Group's recommendations have sought not only to bridge the gap in patrol time between fully-sworn officers and PCSOs, but to give Chief Constables the discretion to get the right balance between the two on the streets.



Street patrol, and public contact, is one of the most important police functions and allocated police “resource hours” must take account of the importance which the public place upon it.

The main issues affecting police time for patrol and public interaction identified by the Working Group were: bureaucracy (especially around form-filling and the Crown Prosecution Service); insufficient or ineffective information technology; abstraction from frontline duties to specialist squads; inspections and assessments; and, of particular interest to the Working Group, the increasingly prescribed and inefficient way officers are forced to deal with incidents.

Police discretion over how to respond to an incident is discussed in detail in Section 6, but its impact on police time cannot be overstated. As Figure 3 details, the type of disposal available to an officer greatly impacts their available time. For example, an arrest leading to trial takes approximately fifteen times more police resource hours than issuing a Penalty Notice for Disorder.

Figure 3: Police Resources Required for Disposals

	<b>Penalty Notice for Disorder</b>	<b>Standard Caution</b>	<b>Conditional Caution</b>	<b>Guilty Plea (Court)</b>	<b>Trial (Court)</b>	<b>Restorative Justice</b>
Police Time (hours) <sup>23</sup>	0.53	1.73	2.09	7.59	7.81	0.3
Cost to Police (£) <sup>24</sup>	13.49	43.45	52.35	189.96	195.23	7.50

21 Home Affairs Select Committee, *Policing in the 21st Century* (London: Home Affairs Select Committee, 2008), 3. <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmhaff/364/36402.htm>.

22 Ibid, 3.

23 Home Office, “Efficiency Planning Toolkit – Ready Reckoner” (London: Home Office 2006). [http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/human-resources/efficiency-planning/EPI\\_Readyreckoner.xls?view=Standard&pubID=528315](http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/publications/human-resources/efficiency-planning/EPI_Readyreckoner.xls?view=Standard&pubID=528315).

24 Costings for police time provided to the Working Group by Norfolk Constabulary; based on the Office for Criminal Justice Reform’s “Waterfall” model.

Discretion is at the heart of and fundamental to effective policing and must be exercised at all times when dealing with the public. When determining an appropriate intervention against crime or antisocial behaviour, the consequences for resource hours committed to visible patrol should legitimately be considered. These principles are strongly supported by a public that feels more reassured by a Police Service whose visibility consists of police intervening on the street rather than just arrests on paper.

**Which of the following would make you feel safer?**

<b>Seeing more police on the street</b>	<b>62%</b>
Finding out that more criminals were being arrested	26%
Neither	9%
Don't know	3%

CSJ YouGov polling results, Jan 2009

## 6. A Force to be Measured?

The Police Service has been the subject of a number of reform initiatives during the past fifteen years. Taken individually, these have had some merit; however, when taken together, they have had a devastating effect on policing and its ability to serve the public. Specifically, the combination of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS), the targets regime, and the drive to “Narrowing the Justice Gap” has destroyed the discretion which had hitherto been central to the office of constable.

The NCRS was introduced in 2002 in an attempt to enforce common practices and standards nationally and reduce the scope for manipulation of the data by which police are measured. It requires that all reported incidents that technically amount to a crime be recorded by police as reported, unless there is evidence to the contrary – effectively removing all discretion over whether to formally treat a given incident as a crime.

**“Counting Offences Brought to Justice pressurises staff to focus on total numbers. It values arresting a twelve year old shoplifter the same as a murderer or drug dealer.”**

*Senior Officer, Surrey*

In 2002, the Government also introduced an initiative designed to bridge the so-called “Justice Gap” – the then increasing gap between the number of crimes recorded and the number which resulted in an offender being brought to justice. At the heart of this initiative was a hard-edged commitment to increase the number of “Offences Brought to Justice” (OBTJs), those incidents disposed of by formal sanctions such as arrest or caution.

Finally, the introduction of heavily pressurised targets (currently embodied in the national APACS framework), whereby goals for policing have been linked to financial and career incentives and sanctions, have created a system which perversely incentivised certain quantitative outcomes for police (including maximising OBTJs) regardless of the qualitative outcomes for victims and the community.

Taken together, these three initiatives have produced a highly toxic mixture which has had the effect of corroding the very fabric of British policing. Officers are faced with a rigid National Crime Recording Standard, a suite of nationally determined targets to which they must contribute (regardless of the needs of a victim or

any other member of the public) and the further requirement to increase the volume of Offences Brought to Justice. In this context, it is easy to see how a Police Service has been created in which discretion, which had hitherto been seen as central to the role of a constable, has been all but destroyed. In its place has been the thoughtless criminalisation of (usually young) people for the most petty of offences, in the name of achieving government targets.



Police have been held accountable, both individually and collectively as teams and a Force, for maximising the quantity and proportion of formal disposals – regardless of how that impacts the service received by the public in any given situation. The following situation, which was described to the Working Group, is a perfect example of how this has affected policing.

*A mum comes in and says: ‘My daughter’s thirteen and she’s stolen 35p from my purse.’ Guess what? The 13 year old gets locked up, a social worker comes in, the girl gets interviewed, admits to taking the 35p, she gets fingerprinted, has her DNA taken and she gets reprimanded. The girl has behavioural difficulties, she’s not being supported the way she should. She needed the 35p to get to school.*

Only 31 per cent of people polled thought that the standard response to such an incident should be for the police to treat it as a crime, while 48 per cent thought that they should not. The withdrawal of constabulary discretion has led to thoughtless, ineffective and inefficient police responses to social problems, and undermined the relationship between the public and the police.

**Do you think it is ever acceptable for an on-duty police officer not to intervene when they have observed a crime or a threat to public safety?**

Yes it is sometimes acceptable	24%
<b>No it is never acceptable</b>	<b>72%</b>
Don't know	4%

CSJ YouGov polling results, Jan 2009

## 7. A Force to be Reckoned With

The Working Group acknowledges Neighbourhood Policing as a starting point towards increasing street patrol, visibility, community interaction, partnership work and flexible disposals, but would describe the style which is now required as: “Interventionist Neighbourhood Policing”. Building on the strengths of Neighbourhood Policing, this style of policing would incorporate a “commitment to intervene”: a philosophy that every single observed or evidenced behaviour which is criminal or antisocial should be subject to an appropriate intervention. The Working Group believes that this is a challenging but achievable aspiration, which will require the following key ingredients:

- A commitment by the police to intervene in any observed act of crime or antisocial behaviour;
- The rebuilding of discretion for police officers;
- Closer affinity between Neighbourhood and Response officers;
- Better management of resources to ensure that the maximum quantity and range of interventions can be delivered; and
- An increased skilling of officers to ensure that they have the capability to deliver the widest possible range of interventions.

**Do you think the police are intervening enough, too much or too little against antisocial behaviour?**

Too much	3%
<b>Too little</b>	<b>76%</b>
About enough	15%
Don't know	7%

CSJ YouGov polling results, Jan 2009

The Service should begin by adopting Surrey’s “Harm’s Way” policy, which obliges officers to place themselves “between any vulnerable individual or group and a dangerous person intent on causing harm or injury”. The Working Group also recommends that, in order to facilitate appropriate and resource-efficient interventions, all officers should be trained to employ discretion to choose amongst a range of possible disposals.

Restorative Justice approaches offer a range of commonsense and effective disposals, which can be applied by officers before engaging the criminal justice system. Interventions based on Restorative Justice principles proceed by establishing a joint agreement between everyone involved on how the offender should “pay back” and repair the harm that they have caused. This is a powerful process which motivates everyone involved – the



victim has questions answered and can move on, while the offender is internally motivated to change their behaviour in the future. Rigorous research shows that this process, which requires the consent of all involved, provides high satisfaction for victims and often reduces re-offending significantly. It also strengthens community bonds.

The Police Service should develop a policing style which energetically tackles harm or the threat of harm in communities but does so in a way which builds confidence among the public that the police are on their side.

## 8. The Independence and Accountability of the Police

The Tripartite governance structure for policing, as originally conceived under the Police Act of 1964, was designed to give sufficient power to each party – the Home Secretary, Police Authorities and Chief Constables – to ensure that no one party could dominate the other two in setting the agenda for policing in any given locality. Based on the evidence it received, the Working Group took the view that its aspiration to see

Interventionist Neighbourhood Policing delivered in every neighbourhood could not be achieved within the current governance arrangements. The Tripartite structure in its current form is not fit for purpose and needs to be rebalanced.

In making its recommendations on how to rebalance the Tripartite structure, the Working Group has strived to secure a robust sphere of operational independence for Chief Constables to pursue democratically established policing priorities. These priorities should be set – by directly elected representatives – at a local level for local policing (informed by “Citizens Juries” appointed in every BCU) and at a national level for the so-called Protective Services.

Thus, the Working Group has sought to balance this independence with a level of local, democratic priority-setting and accountability, through the election of a Crime and Justice Commissioner for each of the 43 local Force areas. This is important not only to provide local police oversight, but to balance against the encroaching priority-setting power of the Home Secretary, who is currently alone in the Tripartite structure in having a direct electoral mandate. The only possibility of wresting control of local policing back into local hands is through the route of a directly elected office.

The effective aim of a local democratic mandate is to strengthen the Police Authority in the Tripartite system, while also giving it the leadership and direct democratic feedback needed to be effective in its role. To protect against abuse and ensure a qualified individual is selected for this position, candidates should be required to have at least five years experience in a senior role related to one of the criminal justice professions, and to stand as independents – without party support and with no previous history of having stood for election representing any political party.

Putting control of local policing back in local hands means scrapping the current target regime, to be replaced by a maximum of five national targets around the delivery of Protective Services. At a local level, performance should be measured by a flexible and weighted “Harm Index”.

## 9. Embedding Evidence-Based Policing

Grounding police work in practical research about “what works” will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of police action. Not only will this improve the service that the public receives, but it will provide police with a defence against what officers described as “kneejerk political directives”. By increasing police professionalism and acting as a bulwark against political interference, embedding a culture of evidence-based policing will help to restore and defend constabulary discretion.

Evidence-based policing uses the best evidence to shape the best practice about what works in reducing crime. It promotes the use of experimentation to test practical theories about crime reduction, in the long-run building up a body of practical knowledge, grounded in rigorous research.

In just the same way that medical research is developed by medical research schools, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence, and the Royal Colleges, embedding evidence-based policing requires the foundation of police research institutes in our universities, a research council and professional bodies.

## 10. The Crown Prosecution Service

The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is responsible for charging suspects and prosecuting criminal cases investigated by the police. The former purpose impacts greatly on how the police operate. Frontline officers told the Working Group about the speed of CPS responses and their availability outside 9–5 working hours. It

is also felt that, in its role of gatekeeper to the courts, the CPS stops many good cases from making it to trial. CPS targets are based on the proportion of successful convictions, giving CPS lawyers an interest in only pursuing the most clear-cut convictions. One officer told us:

*We had a PPO [prolific and other priority offender] smash up a booking shop. The CPS wouldn't charge because there was no CCTV. There were witness statements. He was seen by us. That afternoon he was released and raped a 16 year old girl behind the same shop. That's the kind of thing that gets to you.*

The decisions taken by the CPS affect both the morale of the police and public confidence in policing and the criminal justice system, in some cases directly lowering public confidence in the police:

<b>Does it lower your confidence in the police when a criminal is released without charge?</b>	
<b>Yes it does</b>	<b>69%</b>
No it doesn't	23%
Don't know	8%

CSJ YouGov polling results, Jan 2009

While the Working Group recognises the benefit in an independent decision on the likely strength of a charge, and robust advice to police about evidence requirements, for many types of “volume crime” this procedure is unnecessary and counter-productive.

## Summary of Recommendations

As a result of the problems and policy failures identified in the preceding sections, the Working Group makes the following proposals to reinvigorate traditions of localism and policing by consent.

### CRIME STATISTICS:

1. Alternative sources of data should be utilised to enrich the picture given by crime statistics and inform crime reduction initiatives.
2. The responsibility for the collection and public presentation of crime or crime related data should rest with an independent body, which is free from control by the Police Service and local or national government.

### THE RESPECTIVE ROLES OF FULLY-SWORN POLICE OFFICERS AND PCSOS:

3. The effectiveness of PCSOs should be enhanced by their being trained to make full use of their citizen's powers of arrest.
4. The Chief Constable should determine the mix of PCs and PCSOs locally.

### A COMMITMENT TO INTERVENE:

5. The Working Group recommends “Interventionist Neighbourhood Policing” as the natural progression from the current Neighbourhood Policing model.

6. The Working Group recommends the Surrey “Harm’s Way” Policy for adoption by the whole Service.
7. All officers must be trained to deliver the widest possible range of interventions in response to crime or antisocial behaviour.
8. Specifically, officers should be trained to deliver Restorative Justice disposals in situations where they deem a conventional criminal justice disposal to be inappropriate.
9. Officers need to be properly trained and supported in the use of constabulary discretion to determine what type of disposal is appropriate in any given circumstance.

#### A REBALANCED TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF GOVERNANCE:

10. The role of the Home Secretary in the Tripartite structure should focus on setting standards and objectives for Protective Services and cede greater control of local policing to local governance arrangements.
11. The Home Secretary should:
  - Retain an involvement in the appointment and dismissal of Chief Constables; but only sufficient to act as a safeguard against the inappropriate use of these powers by Police Authorities.
  - Retain an overview of the delivery of local policing and a means of exercising accountability in cases of significant and persistent under-performance.
  - Control and hold to account Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary.
12. A Crime and Justice Commissioner should be elected for every Police Force area in the country.
13. The Commissioner should:
  - Act as a figurehead for community safety.
  - Chair the Police Authority and hold to account the Local Criminal Justice Board and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.
  - Set local priorities for all of these agencies and influence the spending of budgets across partnerships.
  - Be accountable to the Home Secretary where there is evidence of significant and persistent under-performance.
  - Have a duty to consult the public and coordinate consultation by all of the partner agencies, including by convening Citizens Juries in every BCU.
14. Police Authorities should:
  - Consist of ten ordinary members with the Crime and Justice Commissioner making the eleventh.
  - Be appointed in the manner of the current independent members, being selected for the relevant skills they hold to assist in the discharging of the functions of the Authority.
  - Have the duty to maintain an efficient and effective Police Force.
  - Have the power to appoint, appraise and dismiss the Chief Constable.
  - Hold the Chief Constable to account for his/her performance against the Crime and Justice Commissioner’s priorities.
  - Set the police budget and set the precept for any contribution from local taxation.
15. Chief Constables should:
  - No longer be subject to Fixed Term Appointments.
  - No longer receive Performance-Related Bonuses.
  - Have the power to appoint their own top team.
  - Have the power to appoint top team members, from the lower ranks, on a fixed term basis.

STREAMLINED INSPECTION AND LOCAL ASSESSMENT:

16. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary should:
  - Be the single gateway for all inspection/assessment activity within every Police Force.
  - Agree an allocation of hours with the Police Service for each force and then determine the priorities for utilising those hours for inspection activity.
  - Reduce the burden placed on Forces by this type of activity.
17. Scrap APACS as the national performance assessment system.
18. Replace APACS with a small number of national indicators (not more than 5).
19. Introduce the Harm Index to manage performance at local level.

POLICE INTERVENTIONS BASED ON WELL-GROUNDED RESEARCH:

20. Evidence-based policing should be the foundation doctrine for all police interventions.
21. Establish university police schools in Russell Group universities.
22. Establish a new research council to support police research.
23. Establish an Excellence Institute for the Criminal Justice System.
24. Re-establish an independent Bramshill Police Staff College.

THE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE CROWN PROSECUTION SERVICE:

25. Restore police discretion over charging of volume crime.
26. Commission a full review of the CPS to be conducted by the Centre for Social Justice.

---

# Members of the Policing Reform Working Group

**Ray Mallon** (Chairman), Mayor of Middlesbrough

**Adam Schoenborn** (Author), Researcher, Centre for Social Justice

**Norman Dennis**, Former Reader in Sociology, University of Newcastle upon Tyne

**Dr David Green**, Director, CIVITAS

**Steve Green QPM**, Retired Chief Constable of Nottinghamshire

**Professor Ken Pease OBE**, Visiting Professor of Psychology, UCL, Loughborough and Chester Universities

**Sir Charles Pollard QPM**, Chairman, Restorative Solutions Community Interest Company

**Professor Jonathan Shepherd CBE**, Director, Cardiff University Violence Research Group

**Jan Berry QPM**, (Advisor) Former Chairman, Police Federation of England and Wales

**Professor Lawrence Sherman**, (Advisor) Wolfson Professor of Criminology, Cambridge University

---

# About the Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice aims to put social justice at the heart of British politics.

Our policy development is rooted in the wisdom of those working to tackle Britain's deepest social problems and the experience of those whose lives are affected. Our working groups are non-partisan, comprising prominent academics, practitioners and policy makers who have expertise in the relevant fields. We consult nationally and internationally, especially with charities and social enterprises who are the champions of the welfare society.

We are not a typical Westminster 'think-tank'. In addition to policy development, we foster an alliance of poverty fighting organisations that reverse social breakdown and transform communities.

We believe that the surest way the Government can reverse social breakdown and poverty is to enable individuals, communities and voluntary groups to help themselves.

The CSJ was founded by Iain Duncan Smith in 2004, as the fulfilment of a pledge he made to Janice Dobbie, a mother whose son had recently died from a drug overdose after he was released from prison.

Chairman: Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP

Executive Director: Philippa Stroud



The Centre for Social Justice

9 Westminster Palace Gardens, Artillery Row, London SW1P 1RL

t. 020 7340 9650 ● e: [admin@centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](mailto:admin@centreforsocialjustice.org.uk)

[www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk)