



# CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the latest edition of the Police and Crime Commissioners' Treasurers Society newsletter, produced by the Technical Support Team.

The newsletter provides details of major announcements and consultations relevant to police finance, as well as a summary of recent news stories affecting police and local government.

Further news articles of relevance to members, Finance Update Reports presented at PACCTS meetings and member briefings detailing funding developments and announcements can be found on the [PACCTS website](#).

For further information please follow the links provided, or contact the Technical Support Team via the details at the bottom of each page.

Please click on the appropriate heading to be taken straight to the relevant part of the newsletter.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Settlement

The 2021-22 Provisional Settlement was announced on 17 December in a [written statement](#) by the Policing Minister, Kit Malthouse.

Full details of the Settlement can be found on the Home Office [gov.uk](#) pages. The Welsh Government also published information for the Welsh forces on their [website](#).

Unlike last year, the Home Office have opted to do a provisional settlement rather than proceeding straight to final settlement in order to obtain feedback from stakeholders. The deadline for submissions to the provisional is 15 January. This settlement follows the [one-year SR](#) and takes place with a backdrop of severe economic difficulties due to the ongoing Coronavirus Pandemic as well as uncertainty around Brexit. GDP for the year was down 11.3%, the largest recession recorded.

Prior to the publication of settlement, the sector was expecting an additional £400m for the recruitment of 6,000 officers (towards the 20,000 total). Kit Malthouse confirmed that there would be an increase of £415m for PCCs to continue to recruit officers. The document goes on to state that *"to ensure...progress in recruitment is maintained, and to track the use of this investment efficiently, the Government will continue to ringfence £100 million of the additional funding"*. This ring-fenced grant will be akin to the previous settlement grant of £168m and will be split according to funding formula allocation. Part of this funding allocation is to go to the recruitment of ROCU officers through the same mechanism.

Additionally, the sector was expecting last year's PUP funding (£700m) to be rolled into the baseline. The WMS stated that *in total* PCCs will get an increase of £703m *assuming that the full precept flexibility is taken*. As confirmed in SR2020, the council tax referendum principles will be £15 per PCC, which, assuming every force maximised the increase, means an extra £288m for policing in 2021-22. Furthermore, PCCs will receive a portion of the £670m additional grant funding announced for the local council tax support as part of SR2020.

### Headlines

Given the recent publication of the 2020 spending review (published much later in the year than previous SR's), some of the settlement was already known. The headlines below build upon with headlines from SR2020:

- Core Grant (including the PUP grant) increases from 7.8bn to 8.2bn, a difference of 413.6m an increase of 5.3%.
- £15 precept flexibility for all PCCs, or equivalent.
- 75% of council tax losses (due to Covid-19) to be compensated. More information to be released in the coming days.
- £87.4m (8%) decrease in reallocations from £1.1bn in 2020-21 to 1.03bn in 2021-22.
- Flat cash pension grant allocations compared to 2020-21.
- Capital grant remains cash flat for PCCs at £12.3m
- £52.3m capital funding for national priorities and infrastructure

The TST will be collecting feedback to the settlement and responding on behalf of PACCTS. Should you have any thoughts, please send the TST an email and we will endeavour to ensure your feedback is represented in the response. The deadline for responding is **15 January**, so please get any feedback to us as soon as is possible.

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 PACCTS Website: [Briefing](#)

## **CSR**

On 25 November 2020, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Rishi Sunak MP announced the outcome of the 2020 spending review (SR2020). Sometimes referred to as the 'Spending Round' or the 'SR', the SR2020 sets out public spending totals for the financial year 2021-22. This was the Chancellor's first SR following his succession from Sajid Javid MP earlier this year.

Alongside the SR2020, the Office for Budget Responsibility released its Economic and Fiscal Outlook at November 2020. The EFO highlights the significant effects that Covid-19 has had on the UK economy and the OBR's analysis suggests that spending on unprotected public services such as police, fire and local government is likely to be broadly flat in real per capita terms in 2022-23.

During his speech, the Chancellor said that the SR2020 "delivers a once in a generation investment in infrastructure creating jobs," following the greatest economic decline in over 300 years.

Originally, it was expected that the government would undertake a three-year spending review; with such announcements dating back to the tenure of Phillip Hammond as Chancellor. In fact, the SR2020 is just the third single-year SR in recent times.

### Headlines Included:

- GDP down 11.3%. Debt forecasted to rise to 97% of GDP by 2025-26.
- Council tax referendum limits of £15 for PCCs.
- 75% of council tax losses (due to Covid-19) to be compensated.
- Public sector pay is frozen (excluding NHS and those earning less than £24,000). NLW up 2.2%.
- Technical Support Team estimates Provisional Settlement date of 17 December.

The full briefing can be found on the [PACCTS website](#).

 PACCTS Website: [Briefing](#)

## **APCC/PACCTS Conference**

The APACE/PACCS Conference took place on 1 and 2 of October 2020. Due to the ongoing Pandemic, the conference took place online using Microsoft Teams.

The conference started with an [overview](#) of the current policing landscape and the change that has happened since the last conference. In the space of a year, there were some monumental events, including, but not limited to:

- A General Election.
- A Global Pandemic and National Lockdown.
- The ongoing Brexit negotiations.
- Various financial announcements.
- The Redmond Review as well as a myriad of others.

Additionally, there was no shortage of talking points for expected events. The CSR (now confirmed to be a single year review) is still expected, PCC elections are likely to be held early next year, the deadline for Brexit is fast approaching as well as a review into PCCs – commissioned by government.

This was followed by an informative slideshow given by a Home Office representative on the [Policing and Crime Landscape](#). The slideshow gave some statistics about the effect of lockdown on crime, much of which was shown in a recent crime survey, published on the [ONS website](#) and reported on in the PACCTS newsletter. There was also information given on Police Uplift, Police Diversity and Efficiency and Resources.

Other sessions on that day included a Panel Q&A Session, a presentation by Rachel Tuffin on the Future Operating Environment 2040, Achieving Financial Excellence in Policing given by CIPFA representatives, a presentation entitled "[Surviving to Thriving](#)" by BW Training, PCC review Feedback given Susannah Hancock and Jonathan Jardine and a presentation entitled "[Modernising the Approach to ICT Procurement in UK Policing](#)" by Rich Jones of Fortrus.

The second day saw a PCC Election refresh workshop, followed by a "[Devolution Showcase](#)", an interview with Sir Tony Redmond and a "[Final Review](#)" by Nifty Fox.

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## **PUBLICATIONS**




### **BlueLight Commercial – Customer Agreement**

Published: 9 December

On 9 December, Mathew Scott, the PCC for Kent and Dave Thompson, Chief Constable for the West Midlands, sent a letter asking PCCs and Chiefs to sign up to an overarching Customer agreement from BlueLight Commercial (BLC). According to the letter, the agreement will allow BLC to undertake its primary objectives of reducing the need for duplicate procurement processes and utilising coordinated purchasing efforts.

The letter makes it clear that the signing of the overarching agreement does not bind a force to into any future procurements and a force can decide on a case by case basis which procurements they would like to participate in.

The BLC board approved the Customer Agreement at its last meeting. The letter urges those who forces to return the Agreement form no later than 15<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

-  PACCTS Website: [Letter](#)
-  PACCTS Website: [Customer Agreement](#)
-  PACCTS Website: [Sub-Agreement](#)

### **Public Sector Pension age discrimination remedy**

Published: 4 December

On 4 December, the Home Office and LGA BlueLight team issued a joint statement regarding Public Sector Pension age discrimination remedy. The statement reads:

*"As you are aware the Treasury's public consultation on the Public Sector Pension remedy closed on the 11 October. This note is intended to outline next steps for delivery of the remedy.*

*The Treasury are currently considering consultation responses and expect to publish their response to the consultation in the new year. This will outline the policy intent of the remedy, including whether immediate or deferred choice will be adopted.*

*Changes to both primary and secondary legislation will be required to remove the discrimination. The Home Office will need to work with the Treasury to understand the policy and proposed legislation and to draft regulations to make the changes required for the Fire schemes.*

*In order to deliver the remedy to the timeline set out by the Treasury, the Home Office and the LGA Bluelight pensions team are committed to ensuring that you are fully up to speed with all policy and regulation developments so that work can progress at pace. It will be essential that Fire and Rescue Authorities start the process of considering what technology/administration processes will be required to implement the remedy, including what data should be retained, at the earliest opportunity and we will be engaging with you further to understand your dependencies and any challenges you will face."*

 FPSregs Website: [Announcement](#)

### **New leasing standard deferred to 1 April 2022**

Published: December

A statement released on the CIPFA website stated that the CIPFA/LASAAC Local Authority Accounting Code Board has agreed to defer the implementation of IFRS 16 Leases in the Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom (the Code) until the 2022/23 financial year. According to CIPFA, this aligns with the decision at the Government's Financial Reporting Advisory Board to establish a new effective date of 1 April 2022 for the implementation of IFRS 16.

CIPFA/LASAAC made it clear that they would not take this decision "lightly" and that it is not intended in any way to reflect its views on the usefulness of financial information generated by the standard. CIPFA/LASAAC would note that this further deferral is limited to one year only and it will not be granting any further extensions based on lack of preparedness.

 CIPFA Website: [Announcement](#)

### **Grant scheme launches to support victims of terrorism**

Published: 13 October 2020

On 13 October 2020, the Government published their new support for terrorism victims. £500,000 is to be split equally between the four successful bidders following a "[competitive fund](#)", announced by the Home Secretary in March.

These are as follows: Victim Support, South London and Maudsley NHS Trust, Cruse Bereavement Care and the Peace Foundation. Each will receive £125,00 to provide advice and support to those who have been affected by terrorist attacks.

 GOV Website: [News Story](#)

### **Three-year local tax collection fund deficit phasing**

Published: 4 September

Updated: 5 November


On 2 July 2020, Robert Jenrick, Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government gave a [statement](#) regarding local government funding. The statement also included an announcement that "*the repayment of collection fund deficits arising in 2020-21, will be*

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*spread over the next three years rather than the usual period of a year, giving councils breathing space in setting budgets for next year”.*

A [letter](#) was sent out to Finance Directors on 5 November confirming that the Regulations were laid before parliament and are due to come into force on 1 December. The regulations amend the rules governing the apportionment of collection fund surpluses and deficits for council tax and non-domestic rates set out in the [Local Authorities \(Funds\) \(England\) Regulations 1992](#) and the [Non-Domestic Rating \(Rates Retention\) Regulations 2013](#)

MHCLG have produced a [paper](#) outlining the new regulations and how to implement these changes.

 LGA Website: [MHCLG Paper](#)

### **Police Uplift Programme and Diversity**

Published: 29 October

On 29 October, Priti Patel sent a [communication](#) to Chief Constables and Police and Crime Commissioners with information pertaining to the uplift targets. At the time of the letter being sent, there were a total of 5,824 additional police officers across England and Wales as a result of the Uplift initiative. This means that forces are on track to meet the collective target of 6,000 additional officers being recruited by the end of March 2021.

This is the first time that the government has published data on the diversity of new recruits. According to the data, 10.7% of new recruits since April (that stated their ethnicity) identify as belonging to a Black, Asian and minority ethnic group. The previous year showed 10.3%, so there has been a slight improvement – although below the general population of 14%.

The representation of women for these posts is up 2% from 37% in the previous year to 39% this year.

The letter makes it clear that *"the Police Uplift provides a once in a generation opportunity to make forces more representative of the communities you serve"* and that there is still work to be done, however, the government are grateful for all of the commitment it took to achieve this milestone.

 APCC Website: [Communication](#)

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## **CONSULTATIONS**

### **OPEN**

#### **COVID-19 funding for local government in 2021-22: consultative policy paper**

Published: 17 December

Closing: 14 January

Alongside the Local Government provisional settlement, MHCLG published what is referred to as a "COVID-19 funding for local government in 2021-22: [consultative policy paper](#)" on some elements of the settlement, namely:

- The £1.55bn of un-ringfenced grant to manage the immediate and long-term impacts
- £670m to enable councils to continue reducing council tax bills for those least able to pay
- An extension of the Sales, Fees and Charges scheme to June 2021

- Guarantee scheme for 75% of 2020-21 irrecoverable local tax losses

Something that may be of interest for members is the “£670m Local Council Tax Support” and the “Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme for 2020-21.”

#### £670m Local Council Tax Support

According to the consultation, this funding has been badged as being compensation for a depleted tax base and also to keep council tax bills low for those who have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

The ministry proposes to distribute the funding on the basis of each billing authority’s share of the England level working-age local council tax support caseload, adjusted to reflect the average bill per dwelling in the area. Indicative allocations and methodology are expected shortly and will be published [here](#).

The caseload data will be taken from Q1 and Q2 of 2020-21 – waiting to use all quarters of data would delay allocations and payments.

Allocations between billing and precepting authorities will be apportioned based on their share of the council tax requirement in the area for 2020-21. If this method was used then the MHCLG could make lump sum, upfront payments, as early as April 2021.

#### Local Tax Income Guarantee Scheme for 2020-21

Often referred to as the “75p” scheme, the MHCLG propose measuring the eligible deficit by comparing council tax requirement and an adjusted Net Collectable Debit (or NNDR1 and NNDR3 for business rates).

Should you want to respond, the deadline for this consultation is **14 January**.

 GOV Website: [Consultation](#)

### **Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Call for Evidence**

Published: 10 December

Closing: 19 February

On 10 December, the government released a consultation, seeking views to help inform the development of the governments “Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy”. Primarily, the consultation is concerned with hearing views of those who feel that they have been underrepresented in previous strategies and feel that their circumstances are not currently supported by existing services.

The full consultation can be found on the government website. Consultation submissions should be sent to [VAWGStrategy2021@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:VAWGStrategy2021@homeoffice.gov.uk) by 11:45pm on 19 February. Responses can be also be submitted [online](#).

 GOV Website: [Consultation](#)

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## CLOSED

### **FM Management Code**

Published: 11 September

Closed: 23 October

On 11 of September CIPFA released a consultation entitled "*Code of Practice on Local Authority Accounting in the United Kingdom 2021/22*". The 2021/22 Code will apply to the account period starting after 1 April 2021. The proposed changes cover the implementation of IFRS 16 leases and changes in accounting standards. Additionally, CIPFA is also seeking views on the impact of the Redmond review on financial reporting for local authorities.

Further developments on the implementation of IFRS 16 included:

- *"The treatment of housing revenue account tenancy agreements under leasing standards. currently this is treated in Appendix F of the 2020/21 Code as being outside the scope of IFRS 16 and the treatment of housing tenancy agreements is not explicitly addressed in the 2020/21 Code. FRAB has queried this approach and further consideration is being given to accounting for housing tenancies under leasing standards. This will be the subject of a separate single-issue consultation which will be issued in November 2020.*
- *The measurement of the service concession arrangement liability.*
- *The accounting requirements for leases at peppercorn (or lease payments for nominal or nil consideration), by following the principles in the Code for the treatment of donated assets.*
- *Changes to IFRS 16 for COVID-19 related rent concessions issued by the IASB in May 2020."*

The consultation closed on 23 October. Any further updates will be made available to members through newsletters and reports. Updates will be published on the CIPFA [website](#), alongside the supporting documents.

 CIPFA Website: [Consultation](#)

### **Reforming local government exit pay**

Published: 7 September

Closed: 9 November

On 7 September, MHCLG released a consultation entitled "reforming local government exit pay". The consultation was part of a wider programme of cross-public sector action on exit payment terms and sets out the government's proposal for reforming local government exit payments.

In 2015, the government announced that it was to modernise the terms and conditions of public sector workers to bring them in line with those of the private sector. This led to a [consultation](#) in February 2016 to consider three key principles: fairness; modernity and flexibility; greater consistency.

Currently, the Local Government lump-sum redundancy arrangements vary considerably between employers. However, they must operate within a framework set by regulations that allow a total maximum pay-out of 24 months' worth of pay. Additionally, employees who are aged 55 or over and members of the Local Government Pension Scheme are currently entitled to immediate access to unreduced pension in the following scenarios.



1. *The member is dismissed from an employment on redundancy or business efficiency grounds, or*
2. *The employment is terminated by mutual consent on business efficiency grounds.*

This means that an employer who is participating in the Local Government Pension Scheme must make additional payments to the relevant pension fund to make up the resulting shortfall.

#### The Purpose of the Consultation

The document made it clear that the consultation was **not** seeking views or representations on the government's position regarding exit pay reform. The framework had already been produced following an exercise carried out by HM Treasury. Instead, the consultation sought views on the following.

1. *The effect/s that the proposals for reform outlined below will have on the regulations which currently govern exit payments (including both redundancy compensation pay and early access to pensions) in local government.*
2. *The impact that the proposals for reform outlined in paragraph 3.4 will have on the local government workforce. Consultation responses will inform a full impact assessment, including equalities considerations which will be issued alongside the regulations when these are laid before Parliament.*

The reforms in questions referred to in paragraph 3.4 were as follows:

1. *A maximum of three weeks' pay per year of service;*
2. *A maximum of 15 months on the amount of a redundancy payment;*
3. *A maximum salary of £80,000 on which an exit payment can be based;*
4. *Limiting publicly funded pension top-ups;*
5. *A £95k cap on the total of all forms of compensation, including redundancy payments, pension top-ups, compromise agreements and special severance payments.*

It is worth noting that in 2015, the government had legislated a cap of £95,000 for all exit payments in the public sector in the [Small Business Enterprise and Employment Act](#).

Jill Penn, on behalf of PACCTS, wrote a consultation that can be found on the [PACCTS Website](#).

-  APCC Website: [Consultation](#)
-  PACCTS Website: [Response](#)

## **NEWS ARTICLES**

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### **ECONOMY AND PUBLIC FINANCE**

#### **Pandemic complications hit audit performance**

More than half of local authority audit opinions for 2019-20 missed the extended 30 November deadline, according to oversight body Public Sector Audit Appointments.

Of the 486 local authorities in England, 265 opinions (55%) were not published by the deadline, a 12-percentage point rise on last year, where 43% of opinions were delayed beyond the 31 July deadline.

PSAA said that Covid-19 has posed practical challenges for bodies in producing accounts and working papers, and for auditors carrying out their testing.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **£2.9bn 'restart programme to help unemployed'**

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has announced a three-year £2.9bn 'restart programme' to help more than one million people unemployed for more than a year find work.

The Spending Review settlement also includes £1.6bn in 2021/22 for the Kickstart scheme, which will provide more than 250,000 fully-funded new six-month job placements for under 25s who are claiming out-of-work benefits.

The Spending Review, which Mr Sunak said represented a 'huge investment in jobs,' came as new figures revealed the number of employees on payroll fell by 782,000 (2.7%) between March and October.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **Sunak unveils a Spending Review for jobs, public services and infrastructure**

Chancellor Rishi Sunak has unveiled a £4bn levelling up fund as part of a Spending Review which he claimed offered 'huge investment' in jobs, public services and infrastructure.

The fund will see councils bid for up to £20m each to fund roads, railway stations, museums and art galleries. He said: 'Projects must have real impact. They must be delivered within this Parliament and they must command local support, including from their Member of Parliament. This is about funding the infrastructure of everyday life.'

It comes in addition to the £100bn green recovery fund and a refresh of the Green book to shift the bias away from investment in the South East.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **Pay freeze for public sector workers would be a 'kick in the teeth'**

Representatives of police officers across the country are urging the Government to step back from imposing a pay freeze on police officers and other key public sector workers.

Following speculation that Chancellor Rishi Sunak may freeze the pay of more than five million public sector workers in his Spending Review announcement next week, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) warned the Government against such a move.

PFNI chair Mark Lindsay said: "In the midst of a pandemic, a pay freeze or pay cap would be seen as penalising key workers who are doing their level best in these most trying of circumstances.

 Please access the news article [here](#)


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## RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

### **West Midlands Police named one of the UK's most inclusive employers**

The Top 50 UK Employers List said the force was ranked second in the list of the country's leading companies and public bodies. The table sees organisations ranked in terms of their performance in a range of areas concerning diversity and inclusion.

Paul Sesay, CEO and founder of Inclusive Companies, said: "This isn't simply about building a list, but recognising organisations who are brave, innovative, and see diversity and inclusion as a smart way to grow their business.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

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## POLICE FINANCES

### **Redmond proposal for oversight body rejected**

The Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government has rejected the proposal of a new audit oversight body as outlined in the Redmond Review.

The review, published in September, called for a new body – the Office of Local Audit and Regulation – oversee local authority audit. However, in its response, the department said it is not currently persuaded that a new arms-length body is required.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **APCC chair committed to 'getting a good deal for policing' from Spending Review**

Ahead of his statement, the Chancellor has insisted he is not planning a return to "austerity" and would continue to support the economy as it sought to recover from the fall-out from the pandemic.

Unusually, because of the economic uncertainty caused by the virus, most government departments will receive only a one-year spending allocation rather than the usual multi-year settlement.

APCC chair Paddy Tipping, the police and crime commissioner for Nottinghamshire, said: "We've got to make the case. We've got to make sure that there are sufficient police officers, that numbers continue to grow, because we want to bring crime down.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **Majority of fines handed out for coronavirus breaches are unpaid in some parts of England**

In some parts of England, more than three in five fines handed out to those who have breached coronavirus restrictions have gone unpaid, new data shows.

Nine forces saw that 60% or more of issued fines given to coronavirus rule-breakers went unpaid within 28 days between 27 March and 21 September, according to figures from the criminal records office ACRO obtained by the Press Association (PA).

It comes a day after it emerged that police forces were told last week to stop issuing "super-fines", over concerns the £10,000 fixed penalty can be challenged in court.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **Funding boost for rape and domestic abuse support**

Nearly £11 million will go towards a range of services offering practical and emotional help – allowing organisations to recruit more staff, adapt to remote counselling methods during the pandemic and keep helplines open for longer.

In addition, Ministers have announced a further £7 million will go towards a range of innovative programmes aimed at perpetrators – designed to prevent domestic abuse from happening in the first place.

It comes as charities have reported a sharp increase in demand during the pandemic, including a 46% rise in calls, with some victims feeling at greater risk of harm or deciding to report abuse for the first time.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **UK out of recession but growth slows in September**

The UK's economy rebounded from recession in July to September, but growth showed signs of slowing down at the end of the three months.

Growth of 15.5% in July to September was the biggest on record, said the Office for National Statistics (ONS). It came after a six-month slump induced by the first coronavirus lockdown.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

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## **POLICE DEMAND**

### **Fifth of crimes involved domestic abuse in first England and Wales lockdown**

One in five offences recorded by police during and immediately after the first national lockdown in England and Wales involved domestic abuse, figures have revealed.

Police recorded more than a quarter of a million offences flagged as domestic abuse-related from April to June, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) said.

The 259,324 offences represent a rise of 7% from the same period in 2019, and an 18% increase from two years ago.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Police rely on dashcam videos as 'cops in cars' are cut**

Police are increasingly turning to dashboard camera videos captured by motorists to prosecute dangerous drivers amid a drop in the number of dedicated "cops in cars", according to research.

A study shows that the number of videos submitted to police has risen more than tenfold in three years.

The research, based on data released under freedom of information laws, shows that police forces are on course to obtain more than 32,500 videos from drivers this year alone, up from 2,612 in 2017.

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🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Fewer than two per cent of disability hate crimes result in a criminal charge, as charities call for issue to be taken more seriously**

Fewer than two per cent of disability hate crimes reported to the police result in a criminal charge, new statistics show, as charities call for the problem to be taken more seriously.

Just 118 of the 7,333 complaints made between July 2019 and 2020 resulted in a charge or court summons, research by Leonard Cheshire and United Response, two disability charities, has found.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

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## **POLICE GENERAL**

### **Police could be made to pay compensation for letting victims down**

Police could be taken to court and have to pay compensation under plans to create a powerful new watchdog to hold the criminal justice system to account.

A report commissioned by Dame Vera Baird, the Victims' Commissioner, recommended that she should have powers to bring legal action for breaches of the Government's new Victims' Code.

In an exclusive article, Dame Vera said thousands of victims were being let down by the failure of police and courts to fulfil their obligations under the code, which spells out 12 key rights.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#)

### **Police to crack down on drink and drug driving this Christmas**

Police chiefs warn that anyone getting behind the wheel after a festive drink or two faces the prospect of ending up behind bars this Christmas.

Police are set to increase their activity targeting those who choose to drink or take drugs and drive as the annual Christmas roads policing operation which launched on Tuesday 1 December. Officers will be out in force across the UK to ensure road users and the wider community are kept safe from harm this festive season.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Officer suicides exceed deaths on duty according to latest ONS figures**

169 officers in England and Wales have committed suicide between 2011 and 2019, according to ONS figures. The Federation says mental wellbeing should now be taken as seriously as physical safety.

Data from the most recent Office for National Statistics bulletin on suicides by occupation show there have been a total of 169 serving officers who took their own life between 2011 and 2019 - an average of around 21 deaths a year.

The officer safety review by the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) and the College of Policing, published in September, highlighted the 92 deaths on duty between 2008 and 2019 - an average of around eight deaths a year.

🔗 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Criminals are allowed to serve sentences 'working from home'**

Thousands of criminals have been let off unpaid work sentences and others are being allowed to "work from home".

Burglars, thieves and other offenders who started unpaid work were unable to continue because of the lockdown in March. The remaining hours on their sentences have been written off.

Other criminals ordered by judges to do unpaid work, an alternative to prison, have been allowed to do it at home, making masks and greetings cards from materials sent to them in boxes.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

## **JUSTICE**

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### **Police custody deaths 'should be investigated like homicides'**

Investigations into deaths in police custody should be treated with the same urgency as homicide investigations, according to an independent review.

In her report, Dame Elish Angiolini said any delay in such cases can add to the distress of families and have a severe adverse impact on police officers involved.

The 538-page review also recommends a significant increase in powers for watchdog the Police Investigations and Review Commissioner (Pirc).

 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Some victims face wait until 2023 for justice amid court case backlogs, claim lawyers**

Some victims of crime face having to wait until 2023 for justice due to court backlogs, it has emerged.

Lawyers said trials were already being scheduled for 2022 and the start of 2023 amid a backlog of crown court cases that has grown from 33,000 last year to 46,000 since hearings were suspended during the coronavirus lockdown.

It came as Max Hill, head of the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), revealed that its load of "live" cases had risen from 100,000 in February to 179,000 since the pandemic began.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Tougher sentences for assaults on emergency workers as maximum jail term to double**

People who assault emergency workers will face tougher sentences of up to two years in jail under a new law, the government has announced.

Ministers plan to bring forward legislation to double the maximum sentence for those convicted of assaults on frontline staff including police officers, firefighters and paramedics.

It is the second change in two years after a 2018 law increased the maximum sentence from six months to a year.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

## TECHNOLOGY

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### **Police chiefs attack botched IT schemes**

Senior police officers have “lost confidence” in the ability of the Home Office to complete big IT projects that are severely delayed and have cost the taxpayer billions of pounds in overspending.

Dame Cressida Dick, commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, was among officers who said that the Home Office had failed to implement programmes concerning biometrics, communications and suspect databases.

They cite the failure to set up a new telecommunications network for the emergency services, a project that has gone about £3.4 billion over budget and is not likely to be operational until 2023, three years late.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

### **Covid-19 sparks upward trend in cybercrime**

So much has changed since Europol published last year’s Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA). The global COVID-19 pandemic that hit every corner of the world forced us to reimagine our societies and reinvent the way we work and live.

During the lockdown, we turned to the internet for a sense of normality: shopping, working and learning online at a scale never seen before. It is in this new normal that Europol publishes its 7th annual IOCTA.

 Please access the news article [here](#).

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## PRISONS

### **Investing in yet more prison places is not the way to cut crime**

With the dismaying announcement that the government plans to fund 18,000 more prison places by 2026, we are forced to ask, once again, why crime prevention fails to get the same emphasis as punishment.

The chancellor announced more than £4bn in capital funding – spread over four years – largely dedicated to funding these new prison places in England and Wales. This makes it clear that the government is clearly pressing ahead with a much more authoritarian stance on crime and punishment.

 Please access the news article [here](#)

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## FIRE

### **EWS1 cladding offer ‘fails to help nearly 2m people’**

A new deal to free almost 500,000 flats from Britain’s building safety crisis “doesn’t really solve anything”, lenders said.

The government said owners of 431,000 flats in buildings without cladding would no longer need an "external wall system" (EWS1) safety certificate to sell or obtain a new mortgage, under an agreement with the bodies representing surveyors, banks and building societies.

A fairer, faster process to replace the certificate has been the aim of a campaign by The Sunday Times. It would help end a scandal that has left thousands trapped in unmortgageable homes, threatening to paralyse the housing market.

 Please access the news article [here](#).