



College of
Policing

Brief

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Updates in police law, operational policing practice and criminal justice, produced by the **Legal Services Department** at the College of Policing



[Updated advice on revenge porn](#)



[Extra investment for Probation Service](#)



[Knife Crime Prevention Orders](#)



[Crime against women and girls](#)



The College of Policing Brief is a scanning publication intended to capture and consolidate key criminal justice issues, both current and future, impacting on all areas of policing.

During the production of the Brief, information is included from governmental bodies, criminal justice organisations and research bodies. As such, the Brief should prove an invaluable guide to those responsible for strategic decision making, operational planning and police training.

The College of Policing is also responsible for Authorised Professional Practice (APP). APP is the official and most up-to-date source of policing practice and covers a range of policing activities such as: police use of firearms, treatment of people in custody, investigation of child abuse and management of intelligence. APP is available online at app.college.police.uk

Any enquiries regarding this publication or to request copies in accessible formats please contact us at brief@college.pnn.police.uk

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Editorial

Dear readers,

Welcome to the August edition of College Brief, your monthly update of what's new in the policing and criminal justice field, produced by the Legal Services team at the College of Policing.

In this month's edition:

- Offensive Weapons Act 2019 bans the possession of dangerous items in homes
- Alternatives to enforcement - rough sleeping
- Urgent action needed to tackle crime against women and girls

To find out more about the College and what we do, including information on the Policing Education Qualifications Framework (PEQF) training, please visit the [College of Policing website](#).

We hope that our publication supports police officers and staff in their work. We are always looking for ways to get better at what we do, so please [get in touch](#) if you have any feedback or ideas for future content.

Thank you for reading,

The Legal Services Team

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For subscription requests, further information or to send us ideas about what you would like to see in upcoming editions, please email us at:

brief@college.pnn.police.uk

College news

Upgrading College online learning

Our Managed Learning Environment (MLE) platform was replaced by our new College Learn platform on Monday 26 July. The new platform provides better security, an improved search function and quick access to mandatory and in-progress learning straight from the homepage.

The upgraded platform will better support all officers, staff and volunteers to complete learning. It has been designed to be used across a range of devices and browsers, including mobile for easy access.

Read more: [**Upgrading our online learning.**](#)

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Legal updates

Bills

Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill

A Bill to make provision about:

- the police and other emergency workers
- collaboration between authorities to prevent and reduce serious violence
- offensive weapons homicide reviews
- new offences and for the modification of existing offences
- the powers of the police and other authorities for the purposes of preventing, detecting, investigating or prosecuting crime or investigating other matters
- the maintenance of public order

The Bill has undergone its first reading and a date is yet to be announced for the second reading.

The government has produced an [updated factsheet](#) for the Bill.

Read more: [Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Bill](#).

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Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill

This Bill will raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 12.

The Bill has undergone its first reading and a date for second reading is yet to be announced.

Read more: [Age of Criminal Responsibility Bill](#).

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Modern Slavery (Amendment) Bill

This Private Members' Bill prohibits the falsification of slavery and human trafficking statements, establishes minimum standards of transparency in supply chains in relation to modern slavery and human trafficking, and prohibits companies from using supply chains that fail to demonstrate minimum standards of transparency.

This Bill has undergone its first reading and a date for second reading is yet to be announced.

Read more: [**Modern Slavery \(Amendment\) Bill**](#).

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Statutory instruments

The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps etc.) (England) (Revocation and Amendment) Regulations 2021

This instrument revokes several regulations created during the pandemic, so they are no longer in force from the end of 18 July 2021.

This regulation revokes:

- the requirement to wear a face covering on public transport and in a relevant place
- restrictions on social contact and gatherings
- requirements for businesses and venues to take bookings for certain group sizes only, ensure distance between tables in hospitality settings and display signage
- the requirement for designated venues to ask customers, visitors and staff to 'check in' when visiting their premises through scanning the NHS QR code or by providing their contact details

Read more: [**The Health Protection \(Coronavirus, Restrictions\) \(Steps etc.\) \(England\) \(Revocation and Amendment\) Regulations 2021**](#).

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Acts

Offensive Weapons Act 2019 bans the possession of dangerous items in homes

In an effort to tackle violent crime, a ban on a wide range of knives, weapons and firearms came into force from 14 July, with changes to legislation brought about by the Offensive Weapons Act 2019. This means that some legal articles that were previously legal to own in the home are now illegal. It's now an offence to keep items such as knuckledusters, flick knives, throwing stars, zombie knives, telescopic truncheons and push daggers in your home.

The law will also change on safe retailing for buying knives in store and online. This provision will commence later in the year.

Read more: **[Offensive Weapons Act 2019 bans the possession of dangerous items in private.](#)**

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Policing

News

Police and CPS need to fundamentally change their approach to working together on rape and sexual offence cases

A new report has found some evidence of ineffective joint working between police and prosecutors. The report raised concern that low conviction rates result in a more cautious approach to rape investigations and prosecutions than with other offences.

Phase one of a joint inspection focused on the period between the victim first reporting the rape and the police or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) deciding to take no further action. The second phase will be published later in the year and will look at the period between a reported rape resulting in a charge and the case going to court, including the outcome.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) have jointly made 13 recommendations, including that:

- police forces and the CPS should work together to build a seamless approach
- police forces should record information on the protected characteristics of victims
- police forces should work with local support services to provide bespoke, wraparound support for victims at every stage
- police forces should ensure investigators understand that victims are entitled to have police decisions not to charge reviewed under the Victims' Right to Review scheme and should periodically review levels of take-up
- immediately the College of Policing and the National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) lead for adult sexual offences should review the 2010 Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance on the investigation of rape in consultation with the CPS

- the College of Policing and NPCC lead for adult sexual offences should work together to review the current training on rape, including the Specialist Sexual Assault Investigation Development Programme (SSAIDP), to make sure there is appropriate training available to build capability and expertise
- the College of Policing, NPCC lead for adult sexual offences and the CPS should prioritise action to provide joint training for the police and the CPS on the impact of trauma on victims, to promote improved decision-making and victim care

Read more: [Phase one of the report for full 13 recommendations.](#)

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Police forces praised for how they support victims of domestic abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic

Domestic abuse cases are some of the most complex crimes that police deal with. In a report, HMICFRS credited the police's effective response to 'the most challenging of situations' and applauded forces for the 'rapid, innovative steps they took in difficult circumstances'.

The report also highlighted areas where police can still improve the service provided to victims. A full review of the recommendations set out by HMICFRS will take place.

As well as the action already underway to improve the police response to domestic abuse, and to build strong cases to maximise victims' opportunities to have their cases heard in court, HMICFRS is looking at what more police can do on top.

Too few victims are seeing their cases go to court and already a number of things are being done to rectify that.

- A domestic abuse best practice framework with the CPS and Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service that aims to drive up prosecutions is underway.
- The use of the domestic violence disclosure scheme, obtaining more domestic violence protection orders (DVPOs) and domestic violence protection notices (DVPNs) at court and

strengthening the vital multi-agency collaboration to tackle offenders' behaviour and improve the safety of victims is increasing.

Read more: [**Police responded proactively to domestic abuse during pandemic.**](#)

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Reports

Alternatives to enforcement – rough sleeping

The NPCC has collaborated with Crisis, the UK's national homelessness charity, to produce practical guidance on preventing rough sleeping without the use of enforcement.

The guide, which is available in full and short formats, includes a diverse range of actions, such as:

- Humberside Police's dedicated community officer working alongside local homelessness service providers.
- Welsh homelessness charity, The Wallich, training 40 South Wales Police officers and police community support officers (PCSOs) to increase awareness and understanding of people sleeping rough.
- In Derby, the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Public Health England, Derby Homes and East Midlands Ambulance Service all working in partnership with Derby City Mission to provide a 'safe space' that enables people to access support day or night.
- Essex Police and Greater Manchester Police both developing multi-agency street engagement hubs.

Read more: [**Alternatives to enforcement: police given practical guide on preventing rough sleeping.**](#)

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Criminal justice news

Updated advice on revenge porn published

[Advice from the College of Policing on revenge pornography](#) has been updated following changes made by the Domestic Abuse Act 2021. Revenge pornography is a colloquial term used to describe behaviour captured by section 33 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015. This behaviour involves the disclosure of private sexual photographs and films of another person, without their consent, and with the purpose of causing them distress. Section 69 of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, which came into force on 29 June 2021, amended the offence to include threatening to disclose private sexual photographs and films.

Read more: **[Domestic Abuse Act 2021 commencement schedule](#)**

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Home Secretary launches online toolkit to prevent children becoming involved in violence

The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) has launched a free online toolkit to help children, putting evidence of what works to prevent serious violence into action.

YEF, which was established in March 2019 by the children's charity Impetus, with a £200 million endowment and 10-year mandate from the Home Office, has a mission to prevent children and young people becoming involved in violence.

YEF does this by finding out what works and building a movement to put this knowledge into practice. The toolkit is one way it will do this.

The toolkit has been developed to help police forces, local authorities, youth charities, school leaders and others use evidence when making decisions about how best to keep children safe from violence. The toolkit is based on research in the Evidence and Gap Map, a database of over 2,000 studies from across the world on the effectiveness of different interventions in preventing serious violence.

Read more: **[Home Secretary launches YEF toolkit](#)**.

Mayor and Met Police set out comprehensive plan to tackle violence

The Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and the Metropolitan Police have set out plans for the police, city hall, local authorities and criminal justice partners to work more closely than ever before across London to drive down violence.

The Mayor announced £2.4 million of additional investment through London's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), the biggest multi-agency plan in London to work together to tackle violence. This investment is on top of the record £20 million he has already invested in the VRU.

The VRU will support diversionary work across all 32 boroughs, which includes positive activities for young people including sports, music, cooking and art, personal mentoring and support for families and parents.

The Met's violence reduction strategy sets out being tough on crime and focus on early intervention to provide positive opportunities and prevent violence from happening in the first place.

Read more: [Mayor and Met set out comprehensive plan to tackle violence.](#)

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Lord Chancellor vows to tackle reoffending with extra investment for the Probation Service

More than 7,000 staff from private sector community rehabilitation companies will come together with 3,500 probation officers already in the public sector as the new unified Probation Service is launched. Unifying the service will ensure there is better and more consistent supervision of offenders and closer working with the police, NHS and local authorities.

More than £300 million worth of extra funding has been pumped into the service since July 2019. The funding is helping to more than double the recruitment of probation officers, from the usual annual intake of 600 trainee probation officers to 1,000 last year, with plans to recruit a record 1,500 this financial year.

Charities and companies have been awarded nearly £200 million to provide vital support services that help reduce reoffending, such as employment, mental healthcare and housing advice. With reoffending accounting for 80% of all recorded crime, these services will help to prevent thousands of people becoming victims each year and save some of the £18 billion annual cost of repeat offending.

Read more: [**Bigger, better Probation Service to cut crime.**](#)

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Online is the new front line in fight against organised crime

The National Crime Agency has released the 2021 National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime, which sets out the online threat that organised crime poses to the UK and says the front line must now be online, as well as on our streets.

Over the past year, COVID-19 has changed the landscape, resulting in organised criminals adapting their methods to survive. Offenders have turned to online spaces, increasingly using emerging technologies to commit crimes and avoid detection.

Ransomware attacks have increased in frequency and impact. It is estimated 50% of all ransomware attacks included a threat to publish stolen data. Over the past year UK individuals and businesses have lost an estimated £3 billion through fraud.

Online is also where large numbers of offenders are trading illegal commodities such as firearms and drugs. Offenders have increasingly turned to both specialist and commercially available encryption tools to hide their communications.

Read more: [**Online is the new frontline in fight against organised crime- says NCA on publication of annual threat assessment.**](#)

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Revised guidelines for attempted murder come into force

On 27 May 2021, the Sentencing Council published a revised set of sentencing guidelines for attempted murder. These new guidelines came into effect on 1 July, replacing the existing 2011 guidelines. The Council also published a consultation response document setting out the Council's reasons for making the changes and key responses received to draft guidelines published in April 2020.

The new guidelines revise the models for both culpability and harm. They also increase the starting points for the most serious categories of the offence with a new sentence range of up to 40 years to ensure sentences for the most serious cases reflect the gravity of the offence.

Read more: [Revised guidelines for assault offences and attempted murder come into force.](#)

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Knife Crime Prevention Orders piloted in London

Court orders preventing young people from carrying knives and becoming involved in serious violence are being piloted in London. Knife Crime Prevention Orders will be trialled by the Metropolitan Police Service for 14 months before a decision is made on whether the orders should be rolled out across forces in England and Wales.

Police can apply to the courts for an order, which can be imposed on individuals from age 12. In addition to the orders, courts can also require positive intervention, such as educational courses, sports club referrals, relationship counselling, anger management courses and mentoring and drug rehabilitation.

The order can remain in place for a maximum of two years and must be reviewed by the court after 12 months.

Read more: [Knife Crime Prevention Orders begin in London.](#)

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Extra funding for free legal advice

Additional funding is being invested in the Community Justice Fund (CJF), which supports not-for-profit organisations who provide legal help to those who have lost their job, been caught up in rent arrears or built up debt as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions.

The funding will allow organisations to invest in technology, providing remote access to services through platforms such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams, hire more staff and ensure their vital services remain available, despite additional challenges incurred as a result of the government's COVID-19 restrictions.

The funding will be allocated over the next 12 months to the CJF, a joint initiative between leading social justice organisations including Advice UK, Law Centres Network and Citizens Advice.

Read more: [Legal lifeline for people in need.](#)

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Support for litigants in person

The Legal Support for Litigants in Person (LSLIP) grant is currently underway, funding 11 projects across more than 50 organisations to help people identify issues as early as possible and support those who need to attend court.

Eight new regional and local partnerships are working together to share knowledge and collate data on people who represent themselves at court, to inform future policy.

Read more: [Regional and local support for those representing themselves in court underway in England and Wales.](#)

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Reports

Urgent action needed to tackle crime against women and girls

Cross-sector reform to protect women and girls from violent offences is needed immediately, according to an interim report produced by HMICFRS. The report acknowledges that the police have made vast improvements over the last decade in responding to these crimes. However, system-wide change is needed, which cannot be achieved by the police alone.

HMICFRS stated there is an epidemic of offending against women and girls. In the 12 months up to March 2020, 1.6 million women in England and Wales experienced domestic abuse. A whole-system approach is needed to tackle this, involving policing, the CPS, health, social care and education.

Several recommendations have been made by HMICFRS, including:

- the government, police, criminal justice system and public sector should immediately and unequivocally commit to prioritising the response to violence against women and girls, supported by sufficient funding and mandated responsibilities
- the police should make the relentless pursuit and disruption of perpetrators a national priority, and their capability and capacity to do this should be enhanced
- funding and structures should be put in place to ensure victims receive tailored and consistent support

Read more: **[Radical action needed to tackle crime epidemic against women and girls.](#)**

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About the College

We're the professional body for the police service in England and Wales.

Working together with everyone in policing, we share the skills and knowledge officers and staff need to prevent crime and keep people safe.

We set the standards in policing to build and preserve public trust and we help those in policing develop the expertise needed to meet the demands of today and prepare for the challenges of the future.

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