



College of  
Policing

# Brief

Britain's bravest cop →

Tackling illegal drugs →

Couzens sentencing response →

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ISSUE 10 | NOVEMBER 2021

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



**Terrorism offence**  
changes



**GPS tags for**  
prolific criminals



**Tackling**  
motorway  
protests



**Judicial Review**  
and Courts bill



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](http://app.college.police.uk)

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# Editorial

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Dear readers,

Welcome to the November 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:

- Police Bravery Award
- Black History Month celebrated
- Penalties for protest disruptions

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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# College news

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## **College CEO welcomes ‘just outcome’ following Couzens sentencing**

Former Metropolitan Police officer Wayne Couzens, who murdered Sarah Everard after kidnapping her under the guise of an arrest, has been sentenced to a whole-life prison term, which he has applied to appeal against.

Lord Justice Fulford said his crimes were as serious as a terrorist atrocity. In sentencing, he said Couzens deserved the rare whole-life term due to the nature of the crime but also for showing no evidence of genuine remorse. A whole-life sentence means there is no minimum term set by the judge and the person is never considered for release, a sentence reserved for particularly serious offences. Lord Justice Fulford set a legal precedent for a whole life prison term, as this is the first time the sentence had been imposed for a single murder of an adult not committed in a terror attack. Couzens joins a list of around 60 prisoners in England and Wales who are serving whole-life sentences.

In a statement, College of Policing CEO, Chief Constable Andy Marsh, said ‘Today’s whole-life sentence is a just outcome. However, the public are left asking questions and have concerns over the trust they can place in us as a police service.

‘We are horrified by what we have heard. We are angry that Couzens has created such a question mark over the trust that the public places in us, and we are determined to work hard to gain back that public trust.’

Read more: [\*\*Sarah Everard murder sentencing – statement from Chief Constable Andy Marsh\*\*](#)

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## **GMP duo discuss their inclusivity efforts**

In 2017, Donna Hope and Charles Crichlow, members of the Greater Manchester Police Workforce Development Unit sought to promote inclusion in police promotions by successfully removing the need for line managerial approval for promotion. The pair told the College of Policing how inclusivity is a priority for the force.

While they admit that the drive for a more inclusive and diverse workforce is still not understood by everyone, they nevertheless recognise that there are prominent ‘pockets within the force that really “get it”’. These include the chief constable, whose support the pair secured to implement these changes.

Changes to the promotion process have not, however, been isolated to just removing line manager approval. They have also included a renewed focus ‘to give everyone a fair shot’. This has meant greater diversification of the assessor pool, allowing all candidates to prepare their answers ahead of time and ensuring external assessors are present during assessments.

These changes are already having the desired effect as statistics now show that all ranks now include an increased number and proportion of individuals with protected characteristics. While these changes make the promotion process more expensive, Hope explained: ‘it’s worth it in terms of removing bias and creating a sense of procedural justice’.

Changing the promotion process and the culture embedded in the police force takes time. But Hope added it is encouraging to see ‘green shoots’ now emerging from these changes and the effective drive for greater inclusion in promotions across the force.

Read more: [\*\*Creating a more inclusive promotion process\*\*](#)

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# Legal updates

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## Bills

### **Nationality and Borders Bill**

A Bill to make provision about nationality, asylum and immigration; to make provision about victims of slavery or human trafficking; and to provide a power for Tribunals to charge participants where their behaviour has wasted the Tribunal's resources.

This Bill was debated at second reading on Monday 19 and Tuesday 20 July 2021. It has now been sent to a Public Bill Committee, which scrutinised the Bill line by line, and reported back to the House on Thursday 4 November 2021.

Read more: [Nationality and Borders Bill](#)

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### **Assisted Dying Bill to face second reading in Parliament**

On Friday 22 October the Assisted Dying Bill undertook its second reading. This reading facilitated a general debate by members of the Lords on all aspects of the Bill. The Bill seeks to create a legal framework to allow a terminally ill patient to end their life using prescribed self-administered medication. This is subject to consent from two medical practitioners, as well as the High Court. Under section 2 of the Suicide Act 1961, assisted dying is currently illegal in England and Wales. However, assisted dying is increasingly becoming legalised around the world.

Baroness Meacher, who chairs the campaign group Dignity in Dying and proposed the bill, has previously set out several arguments for its adoption. These include that 'dozens of our citizens travel every year to Switzerland to make use of its assisted dying laws, at great emotional and financial cost' and that 'many hundreds of terminally ill people take their own lives in this country in distressing circumstances'.

Concerns have, however, been raised about the potential to create a ‘slippery slope’ whereby vulnerable people are put at risk of exploitation. Likewise, the certainty of a doctor’s assessment of terminal illness has been raised as a concern and the fact that diagnosis may not be consistent across medical professionals, thus exposing an individual to potential exploitation by friends or family. Although the debate has a long history of being controversial and evoking strong reactions on both sides, Baroness Meacher reiterated that ‘this law would help a small but significant number of dying people avoid unwanted suffering at the end of life’.

Similar bills related to assisted dying, including Lord Falconer’s 2014 bill and a 2015 House of Commons private member’s bill sponsored by Labour MP Rob Marris, have been presented to Parliament previously. However, neither of these bills made it past the second reading. The Bill will now pass to a committee stage whereby further examination and discussion of amendments will take place. Should this bill be successful, it would apply to England and Wales only.

Read more: [Assisted Dying Bill](#)

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## **Judicial Review and Courts Bill**

Judicial review is a type of court proceeding in which a judge reviews the lawfulness of a decision or action made by a public body.

The Judicial Review and Courts Bill includes a range of measures. If enacted, the draft legislation will make changes to the remedies that courts may grant and changes to judicial reviews as appeal routes from tribunals. The provisions are as follows.

1. Part one makes reforms to the law of judicial review throughout the UK, but with a primary focus on England and Wales.
2. Part two of the bill covers a wide range of court and tribunal reforms.



Further changes are as follows.

- Chapter 1 introduces reforms to criminal procedure, including making provision about automatic online convictions for certain offences and new written procedures.
- Chapter 2 reintroduces proposals from the Court and Tribunals (Online Procedure) Bill 2017-19 to establish a new Online Procedure Rule Committee to regulate electronic court and tribunal proceedings.
- Chapter 3 reforms the governing structure of the employment tribunals system, integrating it more closely with the unified two-tier tribunals and relieving the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy of responsibility for overseeing relevant statutory arrangements.
- Chapter 4 introduces a range of reforms to the coroner system.
- Chapter 5 makes miscellaneous changes to the justice system, including abolishing local justice areas (a proposal originally trailed in the Prison and Courts Bill 2016-17) and some updates to legislation, enabling certain courts to be closed when replacement facilities are ready for use.

The Civil Procedures Rules Committee is expected to make other procedural changes without the need for primary legislation.

Read more: [Judicial Review and Courts Bill](#)

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## Before the court

### **Goodenough and Anor v The Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police [2021] EWCA Civ 1422**

This appeal stems from the death of Robin Goodenough and is brought by his mother and sister. Mr Goodenough died following an incident in Oxford in the early hours of the morning of 27 September 2003.

The claim is for trespass to the person by battery, negligence and for the vindication of Mr Goodenough's rights under Article 2 of the European Convention on Human Rights, relying on flaws in the investigation into

his death. Following on from a trial on liability only, Mr Justice Turner handed down a judgment on 26 March 2020 dismissing the claim for assault and negligence, but allowing the claim under Article 2. The claimants now appeal against the dismissal of the action for damages for battery and negligence.

In summary, the facts of the incident were that Mr Goodenough, while driving, was signalled to pull over by officers in a police van. Mr Goodenough stopped shortly after but did not turn off his engine or obey the officers' instructions to get out of the car. The officers then attempted to pull Mr Goodenough out of the vehicle. He was punched in the head and neck while being pulled out, before falling onto the pavement, striking it with his face and sustaining very unpleasant facial injuries. Mr Goodenough was a user of butane gas, which left him vulnerable to heart failure. The stress of the incident caused his death.

The Court of Appeal held that the level of force used would not have caused death, but for the butane use and the unintended striking of Mr Goodenough's face against the floor. It was also held that there was no evidence that the officers threw Mr Goodenough to the ground as a separate and deliberate movement after he was pulled from the car. The Court decided that the level of force used was reasonable for which it was applied, which was to remove Mr Goodenough from the car, but not to hurt him. There was, the Court stated, no intention on the part of the officers to use fatal force.

The Court of Appeal held that the level of force used by the officers was proportionate to the believed risks. As a result, the appeal was dismissed.

Read more: [\*\*Goodenough and Anor v The Chief Constable of Thames Valley Police \[2021\] EWCA Civ 1422\*\*](#)

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# Policing

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## News

### **Britain's bravest cop honoured with award**

A police constable was named winner of the annual Police Bravery Awards 2020 at an event in London on Tuesday 12 October 2021. PC Stuart Outten of the Metropolitan Police Service fought off a machete attacker in August 2019 after being repeatedly struck over the head by the assailant's blade.

The award was presented by John Apter, national chair of the Police Federation of England and Wales, who said: 'We have the finest police officers in the world – dedicated public servants who, without hesitation, put themselves in danger to protect others.'

Seven regional awards also recognised colleagues for going above and beyond the line of duty.

- Sgt Simon Hogg and Ret PC Paul Cowling (Durham Constabulary)
- Sgt Amos Durose and PC Kristian Avons (Staffordshire Police)
- PC Geoff Marshall (Derbyshire Constabulary)
- PC Roz Fricker (Dorset Police)
- PC Richard Shea and PC Matthew Reynolds (North Wales Police)
- An officer from the South East who cannot be named
- PC Joanna Wilber and PC Jack Wilber (Greater Manchester Police)

An event celebrating the 2021 nominees will be held in December.

Read more: [\*\*National Police Bravery Awards 2020\*\*](#)

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## **Pol Fed finds failings in tutor training for uplift recruits**

The Police Federation has raised concerns over the training of new police recruits. The Police Uplift Programme to recruit 20,000 police officers by March 2023 is well under way. However, research from the Police Federation found failings in the system to train new recruits. In its survey, 4 out of the 28 forces that responded said that no formal training is offered to tutors prior to training the new recruits.

Police Federation professional development lead Dave Bamber said: 'We are deeply concerned about the lack of support and training for tutor constables and the negative impact this can have on both student officers, tutors and ultimately members of the public.

'It is basically just one big mess and is an ineffective way for forces to get the best out of their workforce to protect the public. How are the new recruits going to learn and be ready to go out on the beat if the time invested in their development is divided between four in some cases? This is unsustainable and puts additional pressure on colleagues who are already under immense strain.

'We appreciate work is being conducted by key stakeholders involved in the uplift programme to try and fix these problems, but it simply doesn't go far enough, nor is it timely enough to make a real difference to the current intakes.'

Read more: [\*\*Failings found in system to train new police recruits\*\*](#)

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## **Met celebrates Black trailblazers**

Black History Month was celebrated across policing with a range of community-focused initiatives to mark the event in October. This included an event put on by the Metropolitan Police Service's Black Police Networking Strand on Thursday 7 October.

The event, Black History in Policing, celebrated the past contributions and achievements of Black employees throughout the history of the Met, with the aim of inspiring Black Londoners to consider pursuing a career in policing. It included a special exhibition and senior Black officers speaking about their careers at Scotland Yard.

Acting Police Sergeant Richard Gayle shared his story of being a young, Black police officer in the UK's busiest police service. Sgt Gayle, who works in Specialist Operations, said: 'I'm proud to be Black and following in the footsteps of my dad and my great-uncle. When I was a kid they inspired me to want to protect people and to take pride in my Caribbean heritage. I believe that you can't be what you can't see, so every day I go to work knowing I am potentially giving other young Black people the courage to pursue their dreams.'

'It is important for police forces to celebrate Black History Month because throughout history we haven't always got it right, but by gaining a better understanding of the past, cultural sensitivities and differences, we can ensure the same mistakes never happen again.'

'I have had a varied and exciting career, doing everything I have wanted since I was a child and I am so proud of it all. I hope that I can continue doing my best to inspire young Black people to join the police.'

PC Bilal Sani-Mohammed, also of the Met Police, said: 'I love being a police officer and serving London every day. Currently, I'm part of the Deputy Commissioner's Delivery Group, where I work to improve the Met's relationship with our many communities. It's a great role, where I've directly influenced change from within the organisation and for my community too.'

Read more: [Met marks Black History Month 2021](#)

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## Reports

### **Home Office consultation on the code of practice for Schedule 3 (to the Counter-Terrorism and Border Security Act 2019) and modifications to the existing code of practice for Schedule 7 (to the Terrorism Act 2000)**

In response to public consultation and feedback from the Independent Reviewer of Terrorism Legislation, Jonathan Hall QC, changes were made to the draft Schedule 3 and Schedule 7 codes of practice to strengthen the provisions and provide further clarity on how they will work in practice.

These changes:

- provided further clarity on the process and time frames relating to the new seizure and retention powers under Schedule 3
- strengthened protections for confidential material and provided additional safeguards for journalistic sources and information subject to legal privilege
- mandated the timely provision of, or access to, relevant information and material relating to Schedule 3 or Schedule 7 powers to assist an examinee or their representatives
- ensured appropriate complaints procedures are in place and accessible to any person who has been the subject of a Schedule 3 or Schedule 7 examination
- provided further clarity on training and accreditation standards for officers

Read more: [Codes of practice for officers using examination powers at ports](#)

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### **HMICFRS 2021/22 inspection programme receives support**

Earlier this month, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) published a summary of consultation responses to its 2021/22 policing inspection programme. The consultation was initiated to ensure HMICFRS inspection work focuses on what matters most to the public.

The consultation, which ran earlier this year, received responses from 22 police forces, 10 from police and crime commissioners, 11 from other organisations and 5 from members of the public. The consultation was made up of questions asking whether the right themes and areas for policing inspection were being covered by HMICFRS.

The key findings of these consultations were as follows.

- The vast majority of responses supported the proposed programme of inspections, with 43 out of 45 responses agreeing that the thematic areas covered by the inspections were those of the most concern to the public.
- Respondents suggested some additional themes for inspection by HMICFRS. These included inspecting the backlog of criminal cases awaiting trial, the effect of the global pandemic on the criminal justice system, reduced partner agency resources, an increase in online crime, knife crime and youth violence.
- To enhance how HMICFRS acquires information and to take account of current circumstances and risks to public safety, it was suggested that a hybrid approach to inspections, in other words the blending of remote and on-site fieldwork, was working well. In addition, it was suggested that HMICFRS should increase engagement further by interacting directly with civil society groups.

In response to these consultations, HMICFRS expressed thanks to participants, adding it would further consider its inspection design in relation to the concerns raised and reflect these inputs in its programme where possible.

Read more: [\*\*Summary of consultation responses: Policing inspection programme and framework 2021/22\*\*](#)

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# Criminal justice news

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## Homelessness after prison on the rise

Government statistics released in September showed an increase in the rate of homelessness for those leaving prison. 2.2% of households were homeless or threatened with homelessness on departure from custody, equating to 5,610 households in 2019/20.

When compared to the previous year, the number of people who are homeless or who are threatened by homelessness on departure from custody has increased by 62%.

Read more: [Over 60% increase in people homeless on leaving prison](#)

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## Home nations join forces to tackle illegal drugs

On 11 October, ministers and experts from across the UK met in Belfast to discuss tackling illegal drug use and the devastation it causes. The Home Nations Drugs Ministerial, chaired by the Crime and Policing Minister Kit Malthouse, focused on strong collaboration across the nations as crucial for finding solutions to all aspects of drug misuse.

Key issues discussed included cutting off supply routes for drugs, effective treatment and recovery systems, and how to end county lines networks where vulnerable children and adults are exploited by organised crime gangs to transport drugs and cash.

The UK government's strategy for addressing the problems associated with drug misuse includes:

- appointing Dame Carol Black as an independent adviser to drive forward progress in this area
- setting up Project ADDER, which combines targeted law enforcement with improved treatment and recovery services – the project is running in 13 areas across England and Wales
- supporting the police to expand capability to drug test suspects on arrest, to help develop an evidence base of the links between drugs and criminality and identify those who may need support or treatment



- commissioning the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs to review the drivers of young people's powder cocaine use to inform further action
- announcing £148 million of new investment to cut crime and protect people from the scourge of illegal drugs – the package includes drug treatment funding and additional money to help police forces shut down county lines gangs

Read more: [\*\*UK ministers meet to drive progress on tackling drug misuse\*\*](#)

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### **£15m boost for drug testing on arrest**

Over the next four years, the government will invest £15 million to enable police officers to drug test suspects arrested for a range of offences. This will help officers to build evidence between drugs and criminality, with the aim of reducing demand for illegal drugs and subsequently reduce future crime.

Drug testing is already undertaken by many forces for a variety of so-called trigger offences – robbery, burglary and certain drug-related crimes such as intent to supply. However, this long-term investment will enable forces to expand their use of drug testing on arrest.

Included in this investment is the offer of £5,000 to all 43 forces across England and Wales to increase testing equipment and staff training this year. Alongside this, five forces will receive a further £32,000 to increase testing for broader offences, including domestic abuse and public order offences.

Although the investment will aim to crack down on recreational drug use, those who test positive for opiate or cocaine use will be referred to follow-up measures such as treatment and drug awareness courses. These measures will be put in place to tackle the root problems of exploitative criminals and gangs, while also helping those with addiction into treatment and recovery.

Read more: [\*\*Drug testing on arrest expanded to help cut crime\*\*](#)

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## Sentencing Council proposes terrorism offence changes

Following legislative changes, the Sentencing Council has launched consultations to revise sentencing guidelines for terrorism offences.

The Council is seeking views on the draft guidelines from judges, magistrates and others with an interest in this area. The consultations began on 20 October and will end on 11 January 2022.

To bring them in line with new legislation, changes to the following are proposed.

- Preparation of terrorist acts (Terrorism Act 2006, section 5).
- Explosive substances (terrorism only) (Explosive Substances Act 1883, section 2 and section 3).
- Proscribed organisations – membership (Terrorism Act 2000, section 11).
- Proscribed organisations – support (Terrorism Act 2000, section 12).

The consultation applies to adult offenders.

Read more: [Terrorism offences sentencing guidelines to be revised following legislation](#)

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## NCA raids fake passport gang

The National Crime Agency (NCA) has made a string of arrests in connection with the supply of fraudulent passports to UK organised crime groups. The criminal enterprise is believed to have supplied hundreds of UK passports to fugitives from UK justice and international drug and firearm traffickers.

Christopher McCormack, aged 66, from Sydenham was arrested and charged on 12 October, suspected of acting as a broker between criminals looking to buy passports and the crime group that supplied them.

A further nine people across London and the South East, aged between 34 and 71, were also detained on suspicion of conspiracy to pervert the course of public justice and making false instruments. Three have since been released under investigation while the other six have been bailed.

Another 14 people who were arrested by the NCA in Kent, Essex and Merseyside, on suspicion of assisting the group have all been released under investigation.

Working closely with HM Passport Office and the Dutch National Police, a team of NCA officers have been monitoring the group's movements. They provided intelligence, which led to numerous arrests across Europe, Dubai, Australia, Thailand and Brazil.

Read more: [\*\*Criminal passport supply gang smashed in early morning NCA raids\*\*](#)

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### **Man pleads guilty after posting racist video on Facebook**

On 11 July 2021, after the Euro 2020 final between Italy and England, Bradford Pretty, 49, uploaded a video of himself to a social media discussing the final. In the video, Pretty made racist slurs about specific players who missed penalties during the match. A subsequent video was posted by Pretty, apologising for the first video but stating that he did not care if he offended anyone.

The video was reported to the police, who investigated and referred the evidence to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). Kent Police were then authorised to charge Pretty with sending an obscene message via a social network.

At a hearing at Folkestone Magistrates' Court, Pretty pleaded guilty to one count of sending an obscene message by social network. He was sentenced to 200 hours of unpaid work and 50 days in custody suspended for 12 months. He was also fined £85.

Read more: [\*\*Man who posted racist video after Euro Finals pleads guilty\*\*](#)

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## **NPCC Chair calls for ‘turning point’ in violence against women’**

An inquiry into the issues raised following the conviction of Sarah Everard’s murderer was welcomed by National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) Chair, Martin Hewitt. Home Secretary Priti Patel announced a non-statutory public inquiry would be launched following the sentencing of Wayne Couzens on 30 September.

Hewitt recognised that the issues raised around the murder of Sarah Everard shine light on much bigger problems than those just within policing. He emphasised, though, that ‘there are issues for the whole of policing that need to be examined and acted on, from vetting to professional standards, to how predatory or misogynistic behaviour is challenged. It is right for these issues to be fully and independently considered, and we will support the inquiry’s work in every way we can.’

In welcoming the inquiry, Hewitt also emphasised that the police would not wait for the findings of this inquiry to take action. He said the service would proactively begin to rebuild women’s trust in the police to protect and respect them, starting with listening to women’s voices on what needs to change. Hewitt said: ‘This must be a turning point in how society deals with violence against women and girls. In policing we will do better at targeting the violent men who harm women and building the strongest cases we can that have the best chance of getting to court.’

Along with a greater emphasis on the responsibility of all in policing to call out, challenge and report concerning behaviour, the police will also work with experts to develop their strategy to tackle violence against women and girls.

See more: [\*\*National Police Chiefs’ Council welcome announcement of inquiry\*\*](#)

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## **Government proposes tougher powers to tackle motorway protests**

The government has proposed tougher penalties and new police powers to act on disruption caused on motorways and other key transport infrastructure. Amendments will be introduced to the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Bill in the House of Lords.

The measures include a new offence of interfering with the operation of key infrastructure, including motorways, railways and airports, where the impact will affect the distribution of essential goods, such as fuel and medicine. This offence would carry a maximum sentence of an unlimited fine, a year imprisonment, or both.

Other measures are as follows.

1. Tougher sentences for obstructing highways – the government proposes to amend existing legislation so that those guilty of obstructing a highway face an unlimited fine, six months' imprisonment, or both. Currently, the offence of obstructing a highway carries a maximum fine of £1,000 and does not reflect the serious disruption caused by these dangerous actions. It also proposes to close a loophole, which allows protesters to cause further disruption on a road when it has been closed by the police for the purposes of clearing demonstrations and moving people on.
2. Criminal disruption prevention orders – this measure will enable courts to impose restrictions on the activities of individuals who repeatedly cause serious disruption or engage in criminal activity at a protest. These orders will give courts the power to prevent an individual with a history of disruption, or where there is intelligence suggesting they are likely to commit a criminal offence, from attending particular protests.
3. Penalties for blocking construction – a new offence of obstructing the construction of authorised infrastructure will be introduced, carrying a maximum penalty of an unlimited fine, six months' imprisonment, or both.

The government will also propose amendments to counter 'lock-on tactics'. Under these proposals, the act of 'locking-on' and going equipped to lock-on will be criminalised where it causes, or is likely to cause, serious disruption. The maximum penalties will be an unlimited fine, six months' imprisonment, or both.

In response to feedback from police, the government will introduce new stop and search powers to allow officers to search individuals and seize items that are likely to be used for 'lock-ons'.

Read more: [\*\*Tougher penalties for protests causing disruption on motorways\*\*](#)

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## **Raab admits 'it will take time' to address record courts backlog**

Justice Secretary Dominic Raab has warned that it could be another year before the court backlog returns to pre-pandemic levels. The pandemic resulted in the introduction of a range of new rules and limitations to the courts, such as the suspension of jury trials due to social distancing rules. This has led to an increased backlog in the criminal justice system, with statistics published in September showing a record 60,692 outstanding cases in Crown Courts and 364,122 cases outstanding in the magistrates' courts at the end of June.

Raab addressed the mounting backlog at a fringe event at the Conservative party conference in October, saying 'it will take some time. It will take a good six months to a year to get back to the pre-pandemic stage.' He also listed measures the government is considering to tackle the backlog, such as creating super courts in Manchester and Loughborough and using technology to 'drive cases forward'.

Delayed cases result in a range of costs and negative implications. This was highlighted by Stephanie Boyce, president of the Law Society of England and Wales, who said: 'Some trials are being delayed until 2023, leaving victims, witnesses and defendants disillusioned as they wait to access justice.' She added: 'We have been highlighting the problems plaguing the justice system since long before the pandemic and now is the time for action before it's too late.'

See more: [\*\*Court backlog 'may not return to pre-pandemic levels for another year' - Raab\*\*](#)

See further: [\*\*Justice undermined by lack of progress on backlog\*\*](#)

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## **HMCTS widens access to justice with support service**

HM Courts & Tribunal Services (HMCTS) is to offer dedicated help for people who find it difficult to access online services with a new national digital support service.

Following a tender process, We are Digital was selected to manage a national service which began in October.

Support is provided face to face, for example via Citizens' Advice, and is also available over the phone and through online communications platforms. Alongside this, court and court service staff will continue providing digital support over the phone.

Read more: [\*\*Access to justice improved with HMCTS national digital support service\*\*](#)

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## **Prolific criminals to be fitted with GPS tags**

Around 10,000 prolific robbers, thieves and burglars will be fitted with GPS tags as they leave prison. The project, which began in April and will be funded for a further three years, aims to curb crime and help police officers catch offenders.

High-risk domestic abusers will also have their location monitored through GPS tags to protect victims. The tags may also be used to notify the Probation Service of relationships that are kept secret, so new partners can be alerted.

The use of GPS tagging in this way is being evaluated and, if it proves effective at reducing reoffending and helping police identify perpetrators, it could be rolled out nationwide.

Read more: [\*\*Tens of thousands more criminals to be tagged to cut crime and protect victims\*\*](#)

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## Reports

### **Hate crime, England and Wales, 2020 to 2021**

The Home Office has published statistics on hate crimes recorded by the police between April 2020 and March 2021 in England and Wales.

The key recorded results included:

- in the year ending March 2021, there were 124,091 hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales
- excluding Greater Manchester Police, who did not supply data for the year ending March 2020, there was a 9% increase compared to the previous year
- increases in recorded hate crimes have been driven by improvements in crime recording and a better identification of what constitutes a hate crime
- as in previous years, the majority of hate crimes were racially motivated (74%; 85,268 offences)

At the time this data was extracted, only 89% of racially or religiously aggravated offences had been assigned an outcome compared with 94% of their non-aggravated counterparts. Data shows that racially or religiously aggravated offences were more likely to be dealt with by a charge of summons than their non-aggravated counterparts.

Read more: Statistics: [\*\*Hate crime, England and Wales, 2020 to 2021\*\*](#)

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### **Home Office releases its plan to beat crime**

The Home Office has published its 'Beating crime plan', a policy paper that aims to deliver 'fewer victims, peaceful neighbourhoods' and a 'safe country'.

The report outlines that almost 9,000 extra police officers have been recruited since 2019, as well as 440 new prosecutors and an investment in 1,000 additional probation officers and 18,000 new prison places.

The plan on beating crime aims to tackle the demand and supply of drugs and sets out to tackle fraud, which is currently the biggest crime in England and Wales, to ensure more victims get justice.



The new plan also sets out action to tackle violence against women and girls, with actions against domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation to be implemented. For offenders, the plan seeks to ensure prison provides leavers with foundations to turn their back on crime to deter reoffending.

The plan will also focus on cutting homicide; tackling serious violence and neighbourhood crime; exposing and enabling hidden harms; and building capability and capacity to deal with fraud and online crime.

Read more: [Policy paper: Beating crime plan](#)

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## **COVID lessons learned report published**

The House of Commons Science and Technology Committee and Health and Social Care Committee have published a report, following an inquiry into the initial UK response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The reports contains 38 recommendations to the Government and public bodies, drawing on evidence from over 50 witnesses and 400 written submissions. Some key findings are outlined below.

- The forward-planning, agility and decisive organisation of the vaccine development and deployment effort will save millions of lives globally and should be a guide to future Government practice.
- The delays in establishing an adequate test, trace and isolate system hampered efforts to understand and contain the outbreak and it failed in its stated purpose to avoid lockdowns.
- The initial decision to delay a comprehensive lockdown – despite practice elsewhere in the world—reflected a fatalism about the spread of COVID that should have been robustly challenged at the time.
- Social care was not given sufficient priority in the early stages of the pandemic.
- The experience of the COVID pandemic underlines the need for an urgent and long-term strategy to tackle health inequalities.

- The UK's preparedness for a pandemic had been widely acclaimed in advance, but performed less well than many other countries in practice.

The report concluded that, if the 38 recommendations are implemented by the Government and public bodies, the UK could perform better having learned lessons, both positive and negative, from the UK's initial response to COVID.

Read more: [\*\*Coronavirus: lessons learned to date report published\*\*](#)

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### **Ofcom issues video-sharing guidance on harmful content**

Ofcom has published new guidance for UK-established video-sharing platforms (VSPs). The statutory framework lists several measures that providers must consider, as appropriate, to protect users. This regulation intends to protect users of VSPs from specific types of harmful materials.

The VSP framework requires providers to take appropriate measures to protect the general public from 'relevant harmful material'. This includes material inciting violence or hatred and content constituting criminal offences relating to terrorism; child sexual abuse material; and racism and xenophobia.

Ofcom's guidelines explain the content that might constitute 'harmful material' in videos, the measures platforms can take to protect users, and provide guidance on how to implement those measures effectively.

Read more: [\*\*Statement: guidance for video-sharing platform providers on measures to protect users from harmful material\*\*](#)

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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.

[college.police.uk](https://college.police.uk)



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