



Police & Crime  
Commissioner  
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE



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**Annual Report**  
**2024/25**

# Foreword from the Commissioner



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*This annual report covers my first year as Hertfordshire's Police & Crime Commissioner. Over the past twelve months, I've worked tirelessly to be the public's link to policing, to hold the Constabulary to account, and to ensure progress is being made to address the findings of the 2024 PEEL Inspection.*

*I've appointed a new Chief Constable, developed a new Police and Crime Plan setting out our priorities for the years ahead, and brought new transparency and depth to the process of holding the Constabulary to account.*

*To be the public's voice in policing, I've broadened engagement and outreach with communities and businesses and launched the first ever Hertfordshire Youth Commission on Policing and Crime.*

*There's lots still to do, but we've made real progress with increasing the visibility of local policing with initiatives like Operation Hotspot, as well as practical work to tackle retail crime, rural crime, and violence against women and girls.*

*I look forward to delivering on my Police and Crime Plan over the coming years.*

**Jonathan Ash-Edwards**

**Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner**



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# The year in brief



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**It's been a busy year – here are some of the key events and milestones from the past twelve months**



**May 2024** I launched a new £1m county-wide Operation Hotspot project to tackle anti-social behaviour and serious violence. Extra patrols and increased police visibility were focused on 26 specific areas with a history of higher crime and ASB across each of the 10 districts in Hertfordshire.



**June 2024** Violence against women and girls, drug dealing, and shoplifting were all raised when I visited Stevenage. I heard local perspectives on various crime issues in the town and how Operation Vigilant was focused on improving safety for women and girls by using plainclothes officers to patrol the pubs and bars in the evenings.



**July 2024** I held the first of my series of monthly 'Accountability and Performance Meetings' (APMs) online. During the webinar, which was broadcast live to the public, I asked the Chief Constable about how the Constabulary was tackling violence against women and girls, burglary, firearms licensing, and response times on 999 and 101 calls.



**August 2024** I 'busted' the myth that Hertfordshire police won't prosecute shoplifting of goods under £200 - when the then-Chief Constable categorically stated that there was no lower limit for the police to investigate shoplifting during the August APM.



**August 2024**



# Autumn/Winter 2024



**September 2024**



**September 2024** I joined an undercover night-time operation in Hertford as part of Operation Vigilant, an initiative designed to protect both men and women from predatory behaviour. Specially trained officers in uniform and plainclothes were deployed to bars and pubs to identify people engaging in predatory behaviour.



**October 2024** The HMICFRS inspection of Hertfordshire Constabulary was published. While it identified good practice in some areas, it also identified some in which improvement was needed. Therefore, overseeing performance improvements has been a key part of my focus this year.



**November 2024** I welcomed the deployment of dedicated neighbourhood policing training in Hertfordshire. Our county was one of eleven forces across the country to start piloting the Neighbourhood Policing Pathway scheme developed to instil best practices by the College of Policing.



**December 2024** I appointed my preferred candidate as the new Chief Constable of Hertfordshire Constabulary - Andy Prophet. Mr Prophet was given the strategic objective of strengthening police visibility and local policing.



**December 2024**



**January 2025** I awarded £722,000 to run Beacon victim care centre for a year. The funding – which came from the Ministry of Justice’s Victim Commissioning Fund – was allocated to the operator, Catch22, to run and manage the centre.



**February 2025** My plans to increase funding for policing in the county were unanimously approved. The budget for 2025/26 will result in a new record high number of police officers being achieved: over 2,400 for the first time.



**March 2025** Residents of Chiswell Green, St Albans, were pleased to hear that action will be taken against antisocial driving, illegal car meets, and excessive exhaust noise along the A405, thanks to a new pilot project I have committed to fund from my Road Safety budget. Over the course of the project, acoustic monitoring technology and cameras will be installed to deter illegal and excessively loud vehicles.



**April 2025** I was pleased to be informed by the Chief Constable that the number of homes broken into was down four percent across the county compared with the previous year’s data, and that the police attended over 99% of residential burglaries.



**January 2025**



**April 2025**

# Section 1 - Improving the Service

As PCC, it's my responsibility to secure an effective and efficient police service for the county.

Hertfordshire Constabulary is full of great people proactively fighting crime and keeping the county safe. But there are areas of improvement for the Constabulary, as identified in the 2024 PEEL Inspection.







# 1.1 The PEEL Report

In October, the Constabulary received the publication of the PEEL (Police Effectiveness, Efficiency and Legitimacy) report following the 2023-2025 inspection. There were many areas for improvement and one area identified as ‘inadequate’: recording data about crime.

There were clearly sections of the report which were a concern and where improvements were needed at pace. I was pleased that the Constabulary took responsibility and acted accordingly in its improvement plans.

I held an extended Accountability and Performance Meeting in November

## Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Hertfordshire Constabulary is in ten areas of policing. We make graded judgments in nine of these ten as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Police powers and public treatment	Responding to the public	Recording data about crime
		Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
		Developing a positive workplace	Protecting vulnerable people	
			Leadership and force management	

with the then-Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable to go through the Inspection Report in detail and scrutinise the Constabulary's improvement plans. I have returned to a number of these areas in subsequent APMs to check progress.





## 1.2 Improvements made since the initial report

**Crime recording and investigation** – the Constabulary was subject to a re-inspection of crime recording in Spring 2025. The final outcome of this is awaited from HMICFRS but is expected to show an improvement in crime recording accuracy of around 10 percentage points, which is significant. This has been achieved by the introduction of a new Crime Hub in the control room which triages all incidents to ensure crime is being correctly reported as well as to undertake some desk-based investigations, reducing pressure on frontline officers.

**Protecting vulnerable people** – I have made improving the use of protective orders and powers a performance objective in the Police and Crime Plan. Good progress has been made to increase the use of Clare's Law (the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme) which the Inspection Report had amongst the lowest utilisation in the country. Since then, the number of Right to Know disclosures has more than quadrupled and the number of Right to Ask disclosures has more than doubled.

**Leadership** – visible leadership has been a priority for the new Chief Constable since taking office and he has undertaken wide ranging 'Chief's Conversation' engagement events with officers and police staff. The Constabulary is introducing new leadership development programmes – Herts Leads (to develop frontline supervisors) and Herts Futures (to develop the leaders of the future) – which have the active support of my office.

# Section 2 - Public Engagement



If I'm to deliver on the priorities I set out in my Police and Crime Plan, and represent the public, having a strategy for pro-actively engaging with the public is of vital importance.

Whether it's by holding open forums to facilitate discussions on certain topics, briefings for elected representatives, or outreach meetings with local councils and schools, I'm constantly working to get out and about and learn what people in Hertfordshire think about policing, crime and community safety.

## 2.1 The Hertfordshire Youth Commission on Policing and Crime



To ensure I and the Constabulary are receiving sufficient input from young people, I commissioned Hertfordshire's first Youth Commission on Policing and Crime. Not-for-profit organisation Leaders Unlocked was granted funding from my commissioning budget to deliver the project, which is due to run from May 2025-January 2026.

Around 25 young people aged between 14-25 have been recruited to the Youth Commission's core group, who will be given the skills, training and guidance needed to engage a wider audience of young people across the county. Leaders Unlocked's stated aim is for the group to reach around 1,000 young people in Hertfordshire over the course of the scheme. The core Youth Commission members will collate this wider audience's views on issues related to policing and crime, while being given the opportunity to take part in a number of visits and activities with the Constabulary.

They will present their findings at a final conference, at which myself and other senior policing figures will be present. I am keen to ensure this project is not merely a 'talking shop' – I want it to lead to constructive and tangible outcomes, and ensure the way our county is policed reflects the views of young people.



**The Hertfordshire Youth Commission on Policing and Crime – delivered by not-for-profit organisation Leaders Unlocked – had its first meeting in May 2025**



## 2.2 Keeping in touch with schools, staff and pupils



It's not just through the Youth Commission that I have been learning about how young people feel about policing and crime – I've worked hard to get out and visit staff and pupils at schools across the length and breadth of Hertfordshire.

Not only am I keen to ensure young people's voices are fed back into policing locally, but Prevention and Children & Young People is my national portfolio as a PCC - so working with young people is an even more pivotal priority.

Recently I've met with the school council at Kings Langley Secondary School in Dacorum, enjoyed a brilliant and very lively Q&A at Pinewood School in Ware, and joined Radlett's Newberries School for the end of their Mini-Police programme.





## 2.3 Getting to know Parish and Town Councils

Parish and Town councils – the most grassroots level of local government representation – are typically pillars of their respective communities, and conduits for the local community to debate issues big and small.

There are more than 120 Town and Parish Councils/Meetings (Parish Meetings are smaller Parish Councils, for areas which cover only a small number of residents) across Hertfordshire, and getting to know them is a key priority for me. I've met with clerks, councillors and residents across a wide range of councils and communities in recent months, including Berkhamsted Town Council in Dacorum, Brent Pelham & Meesden Parish Council in East Herts, North Mymms Parish Council in Welwyn Hatfield, and many others.

My objective each time I sit down with a Parish or Town Council is to learn about the key issues in their area, feed their views and perspectives back to the Chief Constable directly, and see what I can do to help with the local issues they face.



**I've learned of the perspectives of Parish and Town councils across all corners of the county, like here in Little Gaddesden in May 2025**



## 2.4 Engaging with retailers and tackling retail crime



**The Retail Crime Forum aims to bring business and the police together to clamp down on crimes that affect retailers**

Retail crime is an issue of high public concern in Hertfordshire. That's why my Police and Crime Plan prioritises working collaboratively with retailers to address retail crime, improving crime prevention, reporting and business confidence.

To help deliver on this priority, I have established a Retail Crime Forum that brings together retailers and partners from across the county to work at pace to tackle shoplifting and wider retail crime.

The Forum, which meets for the first time on 13 June 2025, is the first step in a new collaborative approach bringing together businesses and the Police to agree what more we can do in partnership to tackle retail crime across the entire county.

My focus in the year ahead will be on delivering a partnership plan to improve crime prevention, intervene with prolific shoplifters and strengthen reporting, so that businesses have the confidence to report crime and people feel safe in their place of work.

# Section 3 - Strategic Priorities



As the PCC, I have a number of key statutory responsibilities which are set out in law. These include setting the Police's budget, appointing (and, if necessary, removing) the Chief Constable, and determining how much council tax residents pay towards policing.



## 3.1 Recruiting and appointing a new Chief Constable

In September 2024, Chief Constable Charlie Hall advised me he intended to resign with effect from 31 December 2024. A recruitment exercise was then carried out in accordance with the Home Office and College of Policing guidance. Advice was also requested from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

My aim was to ensure the vacancy was advertised and known as widely as possible to encourage as wide a selection of candidates as possible and to ensure the process was transparent, fair and merit-based. The process went live at the same time as the force's HMICFRS inspection report for 2022/24 was published so candidates could be assessed based on their views and experience of what actions needed to be taken in the light of the findings of the inspection.

As a result of the robust process, five candidates were considered, and two were shortlisted for further assessment. I decided to recommend Andy Prophet, the Deputy Chief Constable of Essex, to the Police and Crime Panel in December as my preferred candidate. The proposal was unanimously approved and Mr Prophet started in role on 1 January 2025.



To support the process, I produced a recruitment pack for prospective candidates



## 3.2 Other strategic priorities

### **Recruitment of a new chief executive**

A new interim Chief Executive of my office was appointed in late 2024 following an open and competitive recruitment process. Rafal Hejne's appointment was unanimously supported by the Police and Crime Panel. I have commissioned Mr Hejne to undertake a review of the office's structure and work, which is underway.

### **Setting the budget and precept for 2025/2026**

The policing budget for 2025/26 faced significant challenges, with an unfunded pay award, the increase in National Insurance contributions not being fully refunded and wider inflationary and demand pressures. Senior officers and I identified £7 million in savings which could be made and I consulted widely on proposals to increase the precept by £14 (Band D) which were supported by 63% of respondents. Hertfordshire continues to have the fifth lowest policing precept in the country. Despite the challenges, the budget supported an increase in police officer numbers to a new record high of 2,405 this year.

## Section 4 - Developing a new Police and Crime Plan



Another of my statutory responsibilities as a PCC is to produce a document setting out my priorities and objectives. This document is called a 'Police and Crime Plan'. The Plan, *Fighting Crime, Making Hertfordshire Safer*, has been formally published following wide ranging public and stakeholder consultation as well as scrutiny by the Police & Crime Panel.

## 4.1 The five priority areas

**The Police and Crime Plan is made up of 5 strategic priority areas:**



**1. Make Hertfordshire safer**



**2. Strengthen Local Policing and Build Public Confidence**



**3. Tackle Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour**



**4. Protect People from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation**



**5. Bring Offenders to Justice and Support Victims**



# Priority Area 1 – Make Hertfordshire Safer



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1. Prevent crime and harm through effective crime prevention initiatives, early intervention and partnership working.
2. Create safer neighbourhoods by taking a hyper-localised crime prevention and reduction approach in areas of Hertfordshire where crime is higher.
3. Relentlessly pursue and make Hertfordshire unwelcoming for the small number of prolific offenders who are responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime.







## Priority Area 2 - Strengthen Local Policing and Build Public Confidence



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1. Increase police visibility and connection with communities to improve public trust and confidence, reduce crime and make communities feel safer.
2. Grow neighbourhood policing and ensure communities have a named police officer or PCSO who they know how to contact.
3. Hotspots of crime and antisocial behaviour are tackled through local patrols and problem solving.



## Priority Area 3 - Tackle Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour



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1. Reduce neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour, making communities feel safer and ensuring an effective police response.
2. Tackle hotspots of burglary and vehicle crime to ensure Hertfordshire's residents feel safe in their own home.
3. Work collaboratively with retailers to address retail crime, improving crime prevention, reporting and business confidence.







## Priority Area 4 - Protect People from Violence, Abuse and Exploitation



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1. Focused work on preventing and disrupting violence against women and girls and domestic abuse will deliver measurable improvements in Hertfordshire.
2. Children and young people are kept safe from sexual and criminal exploitation, abuse and violence.
3. The identification and protection of vulnerable adults from high harm crimes such as fraud, cuckooing and drug-related harm is improved.



## Priority Area 5 - Bring Offenders to Justice and Support Victims



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1. A more efficient criminal justice system, with improved use of Out of Court Resolutions and effective community remedies to crime where appropriate.
2. Break the cycle of re-offending and prevent re-victimisation, including through the use of perpetrator intervention programmes.
3. Support victims of crime to get justice with timely investigations and updates, and effective support throughout the investigation and court processes.



## 4.2 Strategic Performance Objectives

I am pleased the Constabulary is working to address the findings and recommendations of the HMICFRS PEEL Inspection. The Police and Crime Plan also responds to that report, as well as the 2024/25 performance data.

It is important that the Chief Constable has transparency about how I will assess the Constabulary's performance over the life of the Plan and where I will prioritise holding to account.

The strategic performance objectives are cross-cutting and apply to many of the priority areas in the Plan. My goal is that, over the life of this Plan, Hertfordshire Constabulary is able to achieve the following objectives:

- **Improve Crime Recording**
- **Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour**
  - **Solve more crime**
- **Keep people safe by increasing the use of protective powers**





# 4.3 Final Police and Crime Plan Document

## HERTFORDSHIRE'S COMMUNITY

Hertfordshire is a fast growing and diverse county. Since 2005, the population has grown from 1.05m to 1.21m, a significantly faster rate of growth than England's average. This trend is set to continue with around 100,000 new houses allocated in local plans.

Our largest population is **working age** (16-64), making up 60.1% of the population (2023), or 750,000 individuals. My focus on business and rural crime ensures that those working and contributing to our economy and enterprise are kept safe and protected.

The proportion of **young people** (under 16) has grown to 22.5% of the population (compared to 20.3%). That is why I have established a Youth Commission, to ensure the large community of young people across Hertfordshire have a voice and can help me represent their views. The growing young population shows that youth intervention and support programmes are vital, and I have ensured activity that protects and supports children and young people is central to the Plan.

The proportion of **elderly people** (65+) has expanded rapidly reflecting national trends, particularly in East Hertfordshire and Watford. Hertfordshire's

65+ population has grown from 13.8% of the population in 2003 to 17.4% in 2023. One of my public surveys had a focus on the voice of the 65+ community and road safety came out strongly as a priority, which is reflected in my Plan. Furthermore, an older population calls for enhanced protections against elder targeted crimes such as scams, fraud and abuse.

The latest census tells us that Hertfordshire has become increasingly **ethnically diverse**. Ethnic minority populations have grown from 6% in 2003 to 18% in 2021. This is driven by a mixture of migration and growing second-generation communities, with Asian (9.2%) and Black (4.5%) populations having grown the most.

Hertfordshire is also home to one of the largest and fastest growing Jewish communities in the country. Increasing diversity requires culturally sensitive policing and engagement with diverse communities to preserve

"policing by consent". I want to work with the Chief Constable to recruit a service which reflects the communities we serve, while recognising how crimes affect communities, to ensure we grow trust and confidence in police.

**Urbanisation:** Hertfordshire is England's most densely populated non-urban county. There is a strong variation between towns like Watford and Hemel Hempstead (very urbanised) and East and North Hertfordshire (predominantly rural, 29% and 19% classified rural, respectively). My plan ensures that town centre crime and rural policing are strong strategic priorities to ensure that wherever you live in Hertfordshire, your area is policed effectively.

Throughout my term of office, I will hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's approach to serving all of Hertfordshire's communities and meeting statutory duties in relation to equality and diversity.

## POLICING HERTFORDSHIRE

Police forces around the country face increasing pressure to address the growing complexities of modern society, balancing resources to respond to emergencies, prevent crime and keep people safe. Residents and businesses are confident that they would receive a good service from police if they needed their help.

Every day, Hertfordshire Police:

- Receive **1469** 999 & 101 calls
- Attend average of **310** incidents
- Attend **56** ASB cases
- Attend **85** Violence Against the Person crimes

In 2025/26 my budget for Hertfordshire Constabulary will support:

- 2,400+** police officers
- 1,600+** police staff
- Almost **150** Special Constables
- 42** police buildings
- 551** fleet vehicles

## PRIORITY 3 TACKLE CRIME & ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

Making Hertfordshire's communities safer and protecting the quality of life in the county requires effective action against people behaving criminally or anti-socially in their neighbourhood. The public have told me that anti-social behaviour is the top cause for concern in their neighbourhood, with two thirds of respondents to my survey saying ASB is the main reason for feeling unsafe. Burglary, retail crime and vehicle crime are also concerns of high public concern in Hertfordshire.

### My strategic goals

1. Reduce neighbourhood crime and anti-social behaviour, making communities feel safer and ensuring an effective police response.
2. Tackle hotspots of burglary and vehicle crime to ensure Hertfordshire's residents feel safe in their own home.
3. Work collaboratively with retailers to address retail crime, improving crime prevention, reporting and business confidence.

**Why is this a priority in Hertfordshire?**

Hertfordshire is a safe county, but anti-social behaviour and many neighbourhood crime types can

cause public concern, especially when hotspots of criminal activity develop.

The safety of local neighbourhoods, people's homes and businesses is of paramount importance to ensure that Hertfordshire continues to thrive. To the communities impacted, there is no such thing as a 'minor' or 'low level' crime and it is important to recognise that such behaviour, repeated over time, can become 'high harm'. This is particularly stark when confronting the myth that officers only investigate sleeping over a value of £200 - something which I have ensured is not the case here in Hertfordshire. No matter the value, I want those businesses to be supported and those criminals to be targeted.

When unchallenged, anti-social behaviour and neighbourhood crime can lead to more serious offending and intervening is crucial to making our streets safer and policing effective.

Crimes like burglary are particularly personal and distressing, impacting people's absolute right to be safe in their own home and an effective response is essential. Hertfordshire Constabulary has a policy to attend every residential burglary unless declined by the victim, with over 99% compliance and I am keen to see this continue. While burglary is relatively low in Hertfordshire, there is more that can be done to reduce hotspots and catch more burglars.

I want to ensure robust action against those who are committing shop theft at all levels so that businesses have the confidence to report incidents. I will use my convening power as PCC to foster a collaborative approach between businesses, police and the broader criminal justice system to tackle retail crime.

Since my election, I have worked closely with Hertfordshire's farmers and rural communities to understand the issues they face. Having heard concerns about the theft of high value farm equipment and machinery, I am funding the introduction of a trial of DNA forensic marking to reduce farm theft and make it easier for police to return stolen items to their owners.

Hertfordshire is a great place to live and work with real diversity: beautiful countryside and villages, thriving towns, lively night-time economies, close links to London and dynamic business sectors. But this diversity also presents a complex crime picture with different communities affected by different crime types.

Regardless of where you live, work or study in Hertfordshire, I want you to feel safe. Working with Hertfordshire Constabulary and local partners, we will tackle anti-social behaviour and the crime types you have told me are your most important concerns locally.

The full Police and Crime Plan document is available for download here:

[www.herts-pcc.gov.uk/plan](http://www.herts-pcc.gov.uk/plan)

# Section 5 - Holding to account



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Holding the Chief Constable and the Constabulary more widely to account is one of the most important functions of a Police and Crime Commissioner. I have a number of statutory and discretionary levers for doing so, which all focus on ensuring the Hertfordshire public is getting a quality service from the Police.





# 5.1 Accountability and Performance Meetings

PCCs are duty bound to hold Chief Constables to account for how they run their force, as set out in the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011. In July 2024, I introduced a new monthly webcast to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Hertfordshire Police, called **Accountability and Performance Meetings**, or APMs. Once a month, I ask the Chief Constable questions relating to performance and topics of high public interest.

The meetings provide the Chief Constable with the opportunity to publicly demonstrate accountability, transparency and value for money over a broad range of police functions and decisions. The meetings will also be used for the Chief Constable to demonstrate progress made against objectives set out in the PCC's Police and Crime Plan. APMs are broadcast live but also recorded and made available for viewing afterwards via YouTube.

Scrutiny topics covered to date have included the Constabulary's response to the PEEL inspection and the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) that explored multi-agency response to children at risk of domestic abuse. In addition, concerns raised by members of the public are often explored, including:

- Firearms licensing •Rural crime •Burglary •Police response to Anti-Social Behaviour
- Responding to people in mental health crisis
- Police powers and use of force •Responding to calls for service
- Investigation, in particular improving outcomes for victims of crime and assessing need
- Police response to stalking and their use of protective orders
- Operation Soteria and the national operating model for rape and serious sexual offences





## 5.2 Scrutiny Panels



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The independent Stop and Search, Use of Force and Body-Worn Video (BWV) Scrutiny Panels have continued to play a crucial role in reviewing the use of important but intrusive police powers, supporting me in my statutory duty to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of the Constabulary.

The Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel's Annual Report for 2024/25 is published here:

<https://www.herts-pcc.gov.uk/getting-involved/how-to-get-involved/stop-and-search-scrutiny-panel/>



## 5.3 Use of Force Scrutiny Panel



### Green-graded incidents possessed these attributes:

- Use of force was clearly lawful, justified, and proportionate; evidenced through Body Worn Video (BWV) and corresponding statements.
- Officers remained calm and controlled the situation well.
- Clear written statements were produced with a convincing rationale for using force that matched the corresponding BWV.
- Officers acted with the appropriate level of care and consideration for the individual and kept the safety of officers and members of the public in mind.

### Incidents not graded as green possessed these attributes:

- The use of force was not considered proportionate in the circumstances, or the method of force was inappropriate which escalated the situation.
- Poor written statements in which the rationale and justification for using force is missing or unclear, or that did not align with the BWV.
- Unnecessary use of bad language by officers which escalates rather than defuses tensions.
- BWV turned on too late which made it harder to understand the justification for force used.

14,242 use of force records completed in 2024/25, covering 8,974 incidents

12% increase on force records completed from the previous year

14% increase in total incidents from the previous year

82 incidents reviewed and graded by the panel (plus one which was deemed ungradable on grounds of insufficient information)

93% graded as green

6% graded as amber

0% graded as red

1 ungradable

## 5.4 Body-Worn Video Scrutiny Panel

47 body-worn video incidents scrutinised in  
2024/25

52% increase in the volume of incidents  
reviewed compared with the previous year

Using similar criteria to that of the Use of Force  
panel, 81% of incidents were graded as green

6% graded as amber

0% graded as red

**The Panel identified a set of common themes during its scrutiny work this year:**

- Most BWV incidents viewed by the Panel were handled calmly and effectively by officers who used good communication and clear decision-making to de-escalate a situation.
- Officers tended not to inform members of the public they were being recorded on BWV, which is a requirement of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP).
- Officers were praised for their sensitive handling of situations involving vulnerable members of the public.
- Sometimes officers did not separate involved parties to question them separately, which would have aided information gathering.
- Occasionally, unnecessary bad language used by officers was seen to have encouraged escalation of a situation.



## 5.5 Complaints Resolution Team (CRT)

In Hertfordshire, the complaint resolution process follows the model established by the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The Complaint Resolution Team (CRT) which operates in my office analyses complaint themes and trends, and shares this data with the Constabulary. This information strengthens my ability to hold the Chief Constable to account.



The CRT uses a specialised database which allows for detailed data collection, enabling a deeper understanding of the reasons behind dissatisfaction, identification of shortcomings, and opportunities for individual and organisational improvement.



CRT utilises data to help improve upon HMICFRS recommendations, and has already identified a reduction in victim complaints and improved support and signposting to victims.

- Statistics from the last financial year showed that CRT successfully resolved 74% of all complaints received (1,158 out of 1,562) outside of the formal legislation, with an average time to close of six days.
- CRT has increased levels of public satisfaction by offering quick and effective resolutions alongside meaningful and timely communication.
- Hertfordshire has the best performance times and service delivery statistics nationally compared to other OPCC's carrying out the same model.

# Section 6 - Making Hertfordshire Safer



Making Hertfordshire safer is the first key priority I set out in my Police and Crime Plan – it's one of the most important aspects of my role, and I am using all available avenues to achieve it.

# 6.1 Operation Hotspot



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In 2024, I was successful in bidding for £1m from the Home Office Hotspot Activity Fund for 2024/25.

Hotspots were identified from recorded serious violence and anti-social behaviour, targeting areas with the largest need across the county. This funded a total of 2,903 patrols of hotspots, equating to over 26,000 hours of police time.

During these patrols, officers made 223 arrests, completed 680 stop searches, and utilised ASB powers 1,600 times. In addition, 52 knives were taken off our streets, along with several other weapons seized by officers, making Hertfordshire's streets safer.

I'm pleased to say I've been successful in bidding for a further £1m this year for 2025/26. This hotspot policing initiative aims to increase police visibility in high-footfall areas, and hotspots cover many town centres across the county, delivering public confidence in policing and reassuring business communities.





## 6.2 Strengthening local policing



The Police and Crime Plan sets out our intent to strengthen local policing. In my public consultation last year, more visible patrols were the biggest priority of the public, with 70% saying a visible presence in crime and anti-social behaviour hotspots is what would make them feel safer.

Hertfordshire has a strong local policing model but there are opportunities to strengthen neighbourhood policing and the connection between the police and the public even further. The new Police and Crime Plan will deliver these improvements by working with the Chief Constable to grow the number of police officers in neighbourhood roles and boost the status of neighbourhood policing, while asking the Chief Constable to ensure Neighbourhood Policing Team officers, staff and supervisors have a programme of learning that ensures they are experts in problem solving, community engagement and partnership working.

Freeing up police officer time is also an essential component for ensuring officers have the time and tools needed to be visible in communities.

Over the course of 2025/26, an additional 35 police officers will move into neighbourhood policing teams and an additional 20 PCSOs will be recruited.



## 6.3 Rural Crime - SelectaDNA Project Pilot



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Commissioner  
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

During my first year in office, I have worked closely with Hertfordshire's farmers and rural communities to understand the issues they face. The theft of high value farm equipment and machinery is a key concern in rural parts of the county, and in response I have funded the introduction of a trial of DNA forensic marking to reduce farm theft and make it easier for police to return stolen items to their owners.

This is the first time this technology has been used in Hertfordshire. It is a prime example of how prevention can be used to reduce crime in the first place as forensic marking and signage on farms has a proven deterrent effect.

200 specialist forensic marking kits are being distributed free of charge to businesses in targeted rural locations across the county, helping them safeguard their equipment from burglary and acquisitive crime.

I will monitor the impact of this project over the coming months and continue to work with our local farmers and the police to keep rural areas of Hertfordshire safe.



# Section 7 - Protecting Vulnerable People



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Commissioner  
FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

Working to protect vulnerable people or those at risk of exploitation is a key priority for me as PCC.





# 7.1 Clare's Law



Clare's Law, also known as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme, provides a right to ask the Police about any previous history of violence or abuse that a partner might have. It also offers the "right to know," giving police and other agencies a duty to inform someone whose partner has previously committed violence which could pose a risk.

In the 2023/25 PEEL inspection, HMICFRS identified that Hertfordshire Constabulary received the lowest rate of Domestic Violence Right to Know / Ask applications in England and Wales. Furthermore, the speed at which applications were processed needed attention and increased resource.

In the November 2024 Accountability and Performance Meeting, I asked the then-Chief Constable Charlie Hall to explain to the public what he was doing to address the concerns raised by HMICFRS.

Over the past year, practice change in the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit means there is now the expertise and resource to manage applications under Clare's Law. This has led to substantial improvements as described in the table on the right. These figures suggest that the changes implemented in the Domestic Abuse Investigation Unit have had a substantial impact on applications and in terms of the percentage that now lead to disclosure.

Category	2023/24	2024/25	% Increase
Right to Know	89	474	+432%
Right to Know Disclosure	19	217	
Right to Ask	445	903	+103%
Right to Ask Disclosure	104	415	

## 7.2 Clear, Hold, Build (County Lines)



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The Clear, Hold, Build (CHB) initiative has now been running in Hertfordshire since 2022 and is helping to transform the lives of people whose communities have been affected by serious and organised crime. CHB aims to help communities blighted by drugs, gangs and violence by making them less attractive to criminals, whilst at the same time building up the local community by providing enhanced support from local agencies.

The first initiative of this kind was piloted in Stevenage, under the name 'Build a Better Bedwell', a name chosen by local schoolchildren. In the Bedwell area of Stevenage, I allocated £854,000 of Home Office funding to support the 'build' phase, which focuses on long-term community regeneration and crime prevention. This funding enabled the installation of safety measures like CCTV and secure entry systems and supported community-led projects aimed at improving local residents' quality of life.

Prior to this work, the Constabulary's 'Clear' phase led to fifty-three arrests and the dismantlement of seventeen county lines.



# Section 8 - Criminal Justice Board



Local Criminal Justice Boards (LCJBs) were introduced by the government in 2003 to drive collaborative improvements across the criminal justice system and improve public confidence. As PCC, I chair Hertfordshire's Criminal Justice Board.

CJBs aim to work with PCCs and the police to provide the public with an efficient and effective criminal justice system.



## 8.1 Publication of the new Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board Strategy 2025-27

Members of the Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board (HCJB) met in September 2024 to discuss priorities for the next two years. The Board brings together senior leaders from across the criminal justice system to support local co-ordination. The new strategy was agreed in December 2024 and focuses on four priorities:

- Targeting inefficiencies at organisational touchpoints.
- Ensuring victims of high harm crimes are supported through the criminal justice system according to their needs and wishes.
- Promoting and developing interventions and preventative justice outcomes.
- Ensuring those involved in the criminal justice system can access quality rehabilitation services.

The strategy is strongly aligned with partner priorities and the new Police and Crime Plan 2025-29. The structure of the Board was also reviewed and streamlined to support the delivery of the strategy.

### **Fairness in the Criminal Justice System (CJS) Project**

Commissioned by the HCJB under my predecessor, this research project investigates issues of fairness and disproportionality across Police Custody, Probation, and Youth Justice within Hertfordshire.

The research has included surveys, focus groups, and interviews to understand the experiences of those involved in the criminal justice system. The final report is due to be published in November 2025 and will include recommendations to promote fairness across the CJS.

# Section 9 - Finance and grant delivery



Policing in Hertfordshire will spend over £310 million in 2025/26. I am committed to ensuring that public money is used effectively and provides value for money.



## 9.1 A Challenging Financial Year

The 2024/25 financial year proved to be a challenging one, concluding with an overspend of £3.0 million, representing 1.12% of the net budget. This was primarily driven by the financial year beginning with a higher police officer headcount than had been budgeted. Police officer pay therefore incurred an overspend of £2.7 million, and overtime levels significantly exceeded the budget by £1.6 million.

These pressures were partially mitigated by non-pay underspends of £1.4 million, notably in capital financing, and a £0.7 million underspend in my budget. Nevertheless, this has led to a reduction in usable reserves to £13.4 million, now standing at 4.3% of the budget. Looking ahead, the 2025/26 budget incorporates an ambitious £7.2 million savings target. I am closely monitoring the situation with increased reporting to ensure the Constabulary's senior officer team takes swift remedial action to operate within the allocated budget.



## 9.2 Community Safety Fund (small grants scheme)

I was pleased to award almost £50,000 towards local community groups, charities, and community safety partnerships to tackle crime and support victims at a local level. I awarded funding to sports intervention/prevention projects that seek to protect vulnerable young people and reduce antisocial behaviour including boxing in Watford, basketball in Broxbourne, and a multisport project in Welwyn Hatfield.

An award was also made to pilot a project supporting the South Asian Community impacted by targeted theft of jewellery across Hertfordshire. I also sought to tackle Violence Against Women & Girls and Domestic Abuse (DA) by awarding funding towards an early intervention project targeting vulnerable young girls in Broxbourne and trauma-informed courses for women impacted by DA in Dacorum.



Another key function of a PCC is to commission services which support victims of a variety of crime types.





## 10.1 The Chrysalis Centre

Following a successful bid into the Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Fund 2023-25, the Chrysalis Centre was established in the summer of 2023 as an innovative approach to domestic abuse perpetrator interventions.

The programme aims to tackle the root causes of domestic abuse, breaking the cycle of abuse and making victims, families, and communities safer.

In 2024/25, the Chrysalis Centre received over 700 referrals from over 40 referral sources, including self-referrals. It also hosted the inaugural Chrysalis Centre conference on 'Leading Transformational and Cultural Change', which brought together professionals from across the sector to learn about the programme, including the research and evidence that underpins the approach and best practice for engaging with perpetrators.







## 10.2 Other services commissioned

In the 2024-25 financial year, I funded several essential services to provide support to victims of crime to help them cope and recover from their ordeal.

These include:

i. Beacon Victim Care Centre provided by Catch 22 valued at £705,653. This covers 22.5 FTE staff who support for adult and child victims of any crime type.

ii. Herts countywide IDVA service provided by Refuge valued at £239,742.

iii. Hertfordshire ISVA service provided by One YMCA valued at £658,863 with 9x FTE ISVAs and 3x ISVA/IDVAs.

iv. Hospital-based ISVA / IDVA service provided by Herts NHS Trusts valued at £293,442 with a staff structure of 7x FTE ISVAs/IDVAs.

v. Herts ISAC service provided by Safer Places valued at £98,350 with 3x FTE ISACs staff.

vi. Beacon CYP and Family Hub provided by Catch 22 at a value of £110,856. The service consisted of 3x FTE specialist case workers.

vii. Beacon ASB project provided by C22 at a value of £38k. The ASB support service consisted of 1x FTE case worker.

viii. A DA advocate and outreach and SV counselling service provided by Watford Women's Centre Plus valued at £40,000 with 0.5 FTE outreach worker.

ix. Beacon Safeguarding Hub provided by the Victim Support Team based in DAISU at a value of £36,250 with 1.3x FTE staff in a larger team who support victims of standard and medium risk domestic abuse.

**FTE:** Full-time equivalent / **IDVA:** Independent Domestic Violence Advocate / **ISVA:** Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy / **ISAC:** Independent Stalking Advocate Caseworker / **CYP:** Children and Young People / **DAISU:** Domestic Abuse Investigation and Safeguarding Unit

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) is set by the Home Secretary to identify national threats which policing must address. Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables must have regard to the SPR.

The SPR is reflected in the new Police and Crime Plan and I hold the Chief Constable to account for the Constabulary's performance in these areas.

Governance is also provided across the Eastern Region collaboration of PCCs and Chief Constables.

In the autumn, I visited ERSOU (the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit) which leads on serious organised crime and counter terrorism for the region, to understand more about their work.

## **The key areas are:**

- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Terrorism
- Serious and Organised Crime
  - National Cyber Incident
  - Child Sexual Abuse
  - Public Disorder
  - Civil Emergencies

- **May 2025:** Second year of Operation Hotspot begins, focussing on crime hotspot areas across Hertfordshire
- **June 2025:** Retail Crime Forum
- **Summer 2025:** town centres will all have named officers, outreach days and focused crime prevention and reduction over the summer
- **Summer to Autumn 2025:** Launch of new prevention panel to address youth violence across Hertfordshire
- **January 2026:** Youth Commission final conference