

Rapporteurship: Recruitment and retention of Metropolitan police officers

Key information

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Terms of Reference

This investigation aims to:

- Analyse trends in Metropolitan police officer recruitment and retention.
- Identify the barriers affecting the Met's ability to recruit and retain police officers, including any impact that Metropolitan police culture has on recruitment and retention.
- Assess police officer morale, wellbeing and confidence to exercise their duties, and the impact these factors have on officer retention.
- Explore how MOPAC monitors and supports police officer recruitment and retention.
- Consider how the Met and MOPAC could address police officer recruitment and retention challenges, including by considering how positive examples of current practice could be expanded.
- Identify good practice from other police services nationally or internationally with strong recruitment and retention programmes to explore how this could inform London's approach.

Key issues

- In 2019, the then Commissioner said that the Met needed at least 36,000 police officers, a position supported by the Mayor. This estimation has grown over time, based on increases in London's population, as well as additional crime and reform demands placed on the Met. The 2025-26 Budget submission from

the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), stated that the Met's assessment of its resource need was to grow to a workforce of 38,000 officers and 19,000 staff, based on a desired 2:1 ratio.

- The number of police officers in the Met steadily increased from 2019 to 2023 but has decreased over recent years. In October 2025, the Met's police officer workforce was 31,884 full time equivalent (FTE) posts, 8 per cent lower than March 2023 (34,503 FTE).
- Overall police officer strength is impacted by both officer recruitment, the ability to bring new officers into the service, and officer retention, the ability to keep existing officers from leaving the service.
- As London's Police and Crime Commissioner, the Mayor and MOPAC have responsibility for the strategic direction, budget, and oversight of the Met. The Mayor has reported that the Met has applied a variety of initiatives over the years to improve recruitment and retention.

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