

Call for Evidence: Recruitment and Retention of Metropolitan Police Officers

July 2026

Emma Best AM has launched a rapporteurship on behalf of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee examining the recruitment and retention of Metropolitan Police officers.

This investigation will seek to:

- Analyse trends in Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) officer recruitment and retention.
- Identify the barriers affecting the MPS' 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 the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) monitors and supports police officer recruitment and retention.
- Consider how the MPS 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.

Below is information about the investigation and Call for Evidence, as well as key questions the Rapporteur is interested in hearing about.

Who can submit evidence?

This Call for Evidence is open to all who would like to respond. We particularly welcome responses from organisations representing police officers or providing training and support to officers and staff in London, other police services or senior policing figures in the UK or internationally, academics specialising in police officer retention and recruitment, and other groups or organisations with experience in this area.

Why is the Rapporteur exploring this topic?

The London Assembly investigates issues of importance to Londoners and is the body that holds the Mayor to account. The Police & Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), which oversees the Metropolitan Police.

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. MPS Commissioner, Sir Mark Rowley, has described the MPS as "a shrinking organisation" due to budget pressures and reductions in officer and staff numbers.¹

The number of police officers in the MPS steadily increased from 2019 to 2023 but has decreased since. As of March 2026, the MPS's police officer workforce was 31,181 full time equivalent (FTE) posts, 9.6 per cent lower than March 2023 (34,503 FTE).²

¹ London Policing Board, [Transcript](#), 26 June 2025

² MOPAC, [Police Force Strength | London Datastore](#), accessed June 2026

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Recruitment of police officers in the MPS has fluctuated since 2015-16 but has declined since 2022-23. In 2024-25, 1,250 police officers were recruited by the Met, a decrease of 32 per cent on recruitment in the previous year.³

Overall MPS police officer attrition, the rate at which officers leave the service, has remained fairly stable over the past ten years. The police officer attrition rate in 2024-25 was 6.61 per cent. This was slightly lower than the previous year.⁴

In the MPS's reform plan, A New Met for London (NMfL), the MPS set out plans to improve recruitment. This included: improving diversity; reducing the time to hire; and driving up ethical values and standards. However, NMfL also stated that the MPS is facing challenges with recruitment and retention, due to factors including falling real terms pay, the rising cost of living, and the "decline in public confidence in policing".⁵ The second phase of the Plan, which runs from 2025-28, largely continues this approach and reports on progress made to date.⁶

Will responses be published?

Yes, in the large majority of circumstances we will publish written submissions and the name of the individual or organisation that submitted it online. This is so that there is transparency about what evidence the Rapporteur has received.

Exceptions to this are usually applied where there is a legal reason for non-publication or if there is a safeguarding or welfare issue. If there is a reason that you would like your evidence not to be published with your name (submitted

anonymously) or to not be published (submitted confidentially), please let us know and the Committee will consider it. However, this cannot be guaranteed, and the Assembly may be required to release non-personally identifiable information if requested under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

What will the evidence I provide be used for?

The responses to this Call for Evidence may be used to inform recommendations to the Mayor and MPS which will likely be in a report.

If information and/or quotations from submissions to this call for evidence are used in this output, we will cite you. We will inform those who have submitted evidence about the outcome of the investigation in the form of a link to a report or output when it is published.

Where can I find your privacy notice?

The London Assembly and the GLA are committed to protecting your privacy and personal data when you contact us or submit evidence. You can find the GLA's privacy notice [here](#).

Do I need to answer all the questions?

No, you are welcome to answer the questions that are most relevant to you or your organisations and for which you have the most expertise or experience.

³ MPS, [Workforce data report | Metropolitan Police](#), accessed June 2026

⁴ MPS, [Workforce data report | Metropolitan Police](#), accessed June 2026

⁵ MPS, [A New Met for London](#), p. 61

⁶ MPS, [New Met for London Phase 2](#), p. 8

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How do I submit evidence?

Please send evidence in a Word document format (not PDF) by email to:
scrutiny@london.gov.uk

Please use 'PCC Rapporteurship call for evidence' as the subject title.

The deadline for submission is **Monday 31 August 2026**

Key questions

1. What do you consider to be the key factors currently affecting the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS) ability to a) recruit and b) retain officers?
2. What can the MPS and the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) do to support the recruitment and retention of police officers within the current funding package?
3. What is the impact of morale, wellbeing and 'confidence to exercise duties' on retention in the MPS?
 - a) Are there particular career stages where challenges in these areas have a greater impact on an MPS officer's decision to stay or leave?
4. How do recruitment and retention challenges affect different groups of MPS officers – for instance, women, officers from ethnic minority backgrounds, or others with other protected characteristics?

- a) What approaches have proved effective in improving the recruitment, experience and retention of officers from underrepresented groups?

5. How effectively does MOPAC monitor and support MPS officer recruitment and retention? How could it improve this oversight role?

Questions for other police forces

6. How does your organisation approach the recruitment and retention of police officers?
 - a) What have been the most significant challenges you have faced?
7. What specific initiatives or approaches to a) officer recruitment and b) officer retention have proved most effective in your organisation? What made them successful?
8. How has your police service approached organisational culture, workforce diversity and officer wellbeing in the context of recruitment and retention?
 - a) What lessons have you learned, including about what worked well and where improvements could be made?

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About the Rapporteur and Committee

Emma Best AM has launched a rapporteurship on behalf of the London Assembly Police and Crime Committee.

To see Emma Best AM speaking about her rapporteurship, please see video [here](#).

The Police and Crime Committee examines the work of the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), which oversees the Metropolitan Police. It also investigates key issues of importance to policing and crime reduction in London, including serious violence, frontline policing and counterterrorism. To read more about our previous and ongoing work, [please visit our website](#).

Committee Members

- Susan Hall AM (Chairman)
- Marina Ahmad AM (Deputy Chair)
- Emma Best AM
- Unmesh Desai AM
- Lord Duvall AM
- Benali Hamdache AM
- Gareth Roberts AM
- James Small-Edwards AM
- Alex Wilson AM

Submissions

Scrutiny@london.gov.uk

Please send your submissions in a Word document format (not PDF) by Monday 31 August 2026

Contact