PCC Annual Report

2025 - 2026

Police & Crime Commissioner FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

Foreword from the Commissioner

I am delighted to publish my Annual Report for 2026/27.

This year has been a pivotal one in implementing the Police & Crime Plan and real progress has been made. I would like to thank OPCC staff and the Constabulary's police officers and staff for their work on the Plan priorities and delivering improvements in the policing provided to Hertfordshire.

Over the last year, the improvements outlined as priorities in the Police & Crime Plan have begun to be realised. 999 and 101 calls are being answered quicker. Crime is now being recorded more accurately. Key crime types impacting Hertfordshire's communities are beginning to fall, sometimes against the national trend. More crime is being solved. Protective safeguarding powers are being used more regularly.

Operation Hotspot hit the milestone of 50,000 patrol hours over the last two years and Neighbourhood Policing Teams have been uplifted across the county. New initiatives on retail crime reporting, tackling prolific shoplifters, reducing youth violence and Live Facial Recognition technology are being introduced. Our Safer Town Centres project galvanised partnership activity through summer and Christmas.

I actively scrutinise and hold the police to account through Accountability & Performance Meetings and with the support of our volunteer custody visitors and scrutiny panel members. Proactive public engagement has been carried out on live facial recognition, police reform and with our Youth Commission. I continue to advocate for victims of crime and champion the need for improvements across the criminal justice system.

Jonathan Ash-Edwards Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire

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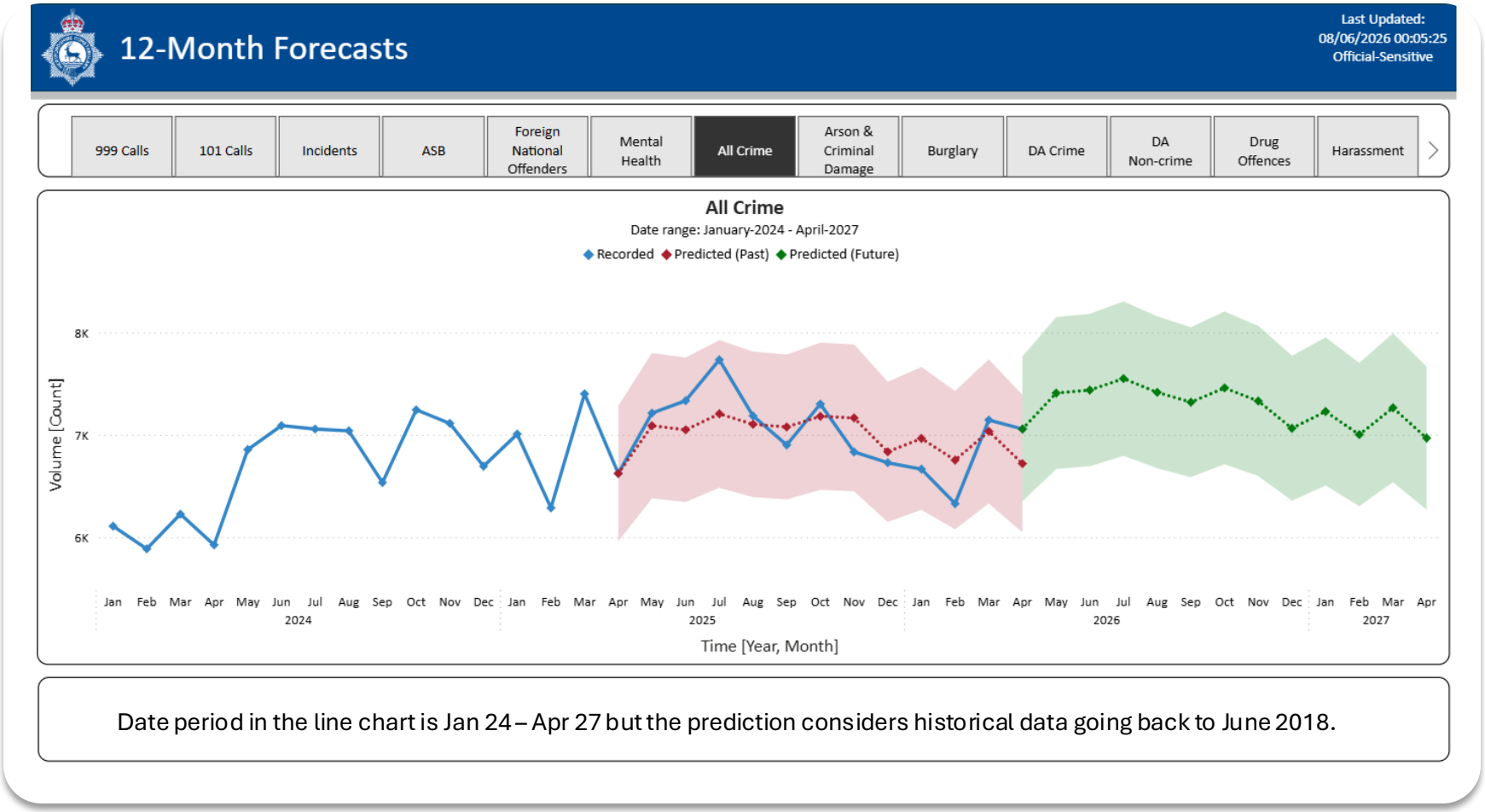
1.1 Better policing for Hertfordshire

Overview of Performance

Overall crime volumes have stabilised following CDI improvements, with a +2.3% increase year-on year.

Predicted demand continues to rise, forecasted at 1.85% increase for 26-27, reflecting improved recording and sustained demand.

Across the force, performance is improving with strong governance, better use of data, and operational innovation driving change.



Date period in the line chart is Jan 24 – Apr 27 but the prediction considers historical data going back to June 2018.

Strategic Performance Objectives

Over the last year, the Constabulary has continued working to implement the recommendations of the 2024PEEL Inspection as well as other priorities outlines in the Police and Crime Plan.

Improvements to crime recording accuracy resulted in an increase in overall recorded crime from 82,268 (Apr24-Mar25) to 84,181 (Apr 25 – Mar 26) representing a 2.33% increase. This increase was primarily seen in recording of domestic abuse, sexual offences, stalking, harrassment and hate crime. Crime types not impacted by crime recording accuracy, such as burglary, vehicle crime, shoplifting and robbery, all fell.

Domestic abuse tagged crime now represents approximately 1,000 crimes per month and is a key area of demand for the Constabulary.

However, I am encouraged by positive improvements in several key areas;

Solving crime:

Performance in Q1 2026 was impressive, in line with the trajectory of improvement, with around 20% of crime being solved each month, putting Hertfordshire 9th best out of 43 police forces. This compares strongly to the 11.6% solved rate in 2024/25, when Hertfordshire was 37th best out of 43 police forces. Q2 2026 is maintaining this strong trajectory and the goal is to maintain rolling 12 month performance before seeking further improvements.

Strategic Performance Objectives cont.

Crime recording:

The 2024 HMICFRS Cause of Concern regarding the accuracy of crime recording, graded 'Inadequate' at the time of inspection, was lifted in mid-2025. At inspection, crime recording accuracy was judged to be 82% and worse for sexual offences.

Monthly compliance for both all crime and sexual offences is now routinely at 92% or better (the standard for a Good judgement) and exceeds that in many months. The Constabulary is working towards a target of 97% accuracy. We are now broadly at the stage where we can say we have an accurate picture of crime, which will allow for judgements to be made in the year ahead about prevention and reduction in areas previously impacted by under-recording.

Reducing crime:

Despite the above increases in the amount of crime being recorded, there has been meaningful progress in reducing crime in 2025/26 areas that did not have crime recording issues:

- Burglary offences (business, community, residential and unconnected buildings) fell by 5.6%
- Robbery offences fell by 13.3%
- Shoplifting fell by 12.0%
- Vehicle crime fell by 8.9%

Strategic Performance Objectives cont.

Protecting vulnerable people

- Hertfordshire Constabulary has improved the use of protective powers such as Domestic Abuse Protection Orders (DVPOs) and the use of the Domestic Abuse Disclosure Scheme (Clare's Law). These powers are critical to protecting vulnerable people from abuse and harm.

- In 2023/24, Hertfordshire was bottom in the country for its use of Clare's Law, but in the year to September 2025, has risen to 5th best nationally, with further improvements ongoing.

Responding to the public

- The 999-call answering target of 90% in under 10 seconds is now routinely exceeded. Q1 2026 achieved 96% within 10 seconds and an average answer time of 3 seconds. The 999 target was not being achieved in 2024.

- There is no national target for 101 calls, so call abandonment rates and average answer times are usually the key metrics. Call abandonment in Q1 2026 was 5% compared to 12% in Q1 2024. Average answer time is now under 60 seconds most months.

Safer Town Centres

Outcomes

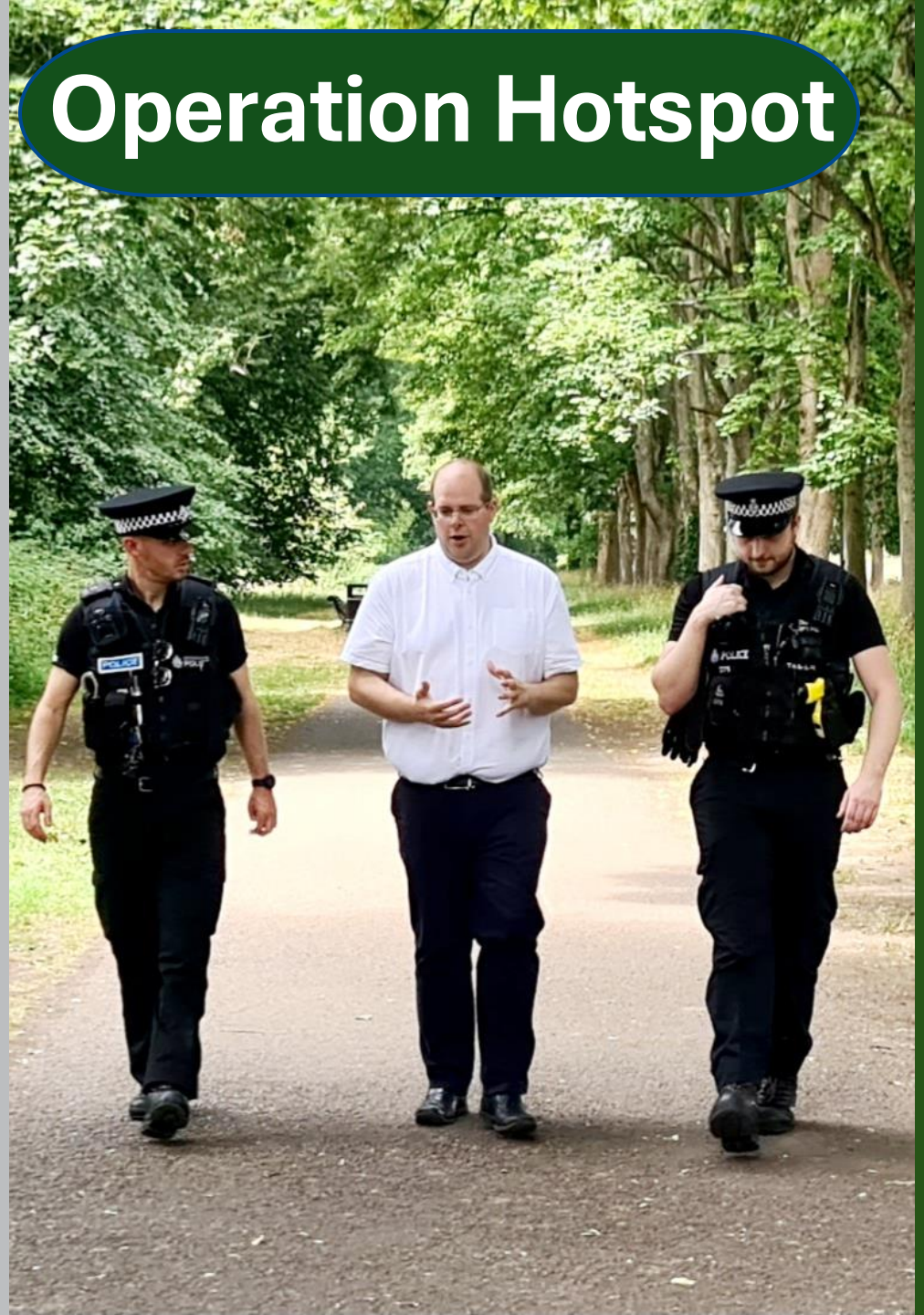
Delivered coordinated Safer Streets activity targeting ASB, retail and street crime in priority town centres, alongside reducing crime and ASB in key locations through high visibility patrols and targeted enforcement. Police visibility increased during peak periods, including the safer town centre summer campaign and the winter of action Christmas campaign, strengthening public presence and reassurance.

Partnership working was strengthened by bringing together councils, businesses and local partners to deliver joint responses, alongside enhanced business engagement through training and prevention activity. This included targeted night-time economy safety operations, as well as prevention and problem-solving measures such as environmental improvements and CCTV deployment.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Safer Town Centres will maintain visible policing, reduce crime through data-led targeting, and strengthen partnerships, prevention and enforcement to improve safety and confidence, including targeted VAWG activity during the World Cup such as Op Vigilant.

Operation Hotspot



Outcomes

Increasing police visibility in high-demand locations by delivering sustained hotspot policing activity, with over 50,000 hours of patrols in the last two years.

This has reduced crime and ASB in hotspot areas : by14.5% during the first year of the programme and strengthened engagement with communities and businesses by building confidence and improving intelligence.

The hotspot patrols have seen an increase in enforcement activity, with year 1 and 2 combined data resulting in 703 arrests and 1,334 stop searches with robust action against weapons and criminality, removing knives and dangerous weapons from circulation and supporting significant knife surrender activity

In addition, a total of 3,245 ASB powers have been used, over 50,000 patrol hours, 370 arrests and 109 knives seized disrupting offending and improving safety in town centres and open spaces and problem-solving interventions, including CCTV installation, environmental design changes and targeted prevention activity has been delivered in hotspot locations.

Forward plan for 2026-2027:

The Government has cancelled hotspot funding for 2026/27. I have allocated some local grant funding to the Constabulary to sustain this work through the summer while we develop a plan for the long term sustainability of hotspot policing.

Strengthen local policing

Outcomes

Neighbourhood policing capacity was strengthened through the deployment of 54 additional officers, increasing visible presence across communities and delivering sustained high-visibility policing through Operation Hotspot and targeted town centre activity aligned to public priorities.

Frontline capacity was further improved by progressing work to free up officer time, alongside enhanced problem-solving and partnership working to embed a more consistent, locally focused approach addressing the root causes of crime and anti-social behaviour, while maintaining a focus on public confidence through alignment with community priorities identified through consultation.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Neighbourhood policing will be embedded as the foundation of local delivery, with stronger community connection, targeted hotspot policing, increased frontline visibility, and partnership-led prevention focused on early intervention and coordinated responses to anti-social behaviour and youth violence.

Youth Violence Pathfinder

Outcomes

The Hertfordshire Pathfinder piloted a multi-agency panel in Dacorum, bringing together partners from policing, education, youth services and other local agencies to identify children who had contact with police but required no further action.

Whilst without the infrastructure of a Violence Reduction Unit (one of only 3 areas nationally), the panel still enabled structured information sharing, a fuller understanding of each child's circumstances, and agreement of actions to reduce risk. Between October 2025 and March 2026, 17 children were reviewed and referred for further positive support, with early outcomes showing improved engagement with education, participation in structured activities, and increased confidence and wellbeing.

Forward plan for 2026-27

To build on the successes of the pathfinder to date and hand over delivery to partners in Dacorum with learning from Year 1 taken to further enhance the model to ensure that more children can access early intervention support.

Serious Violence

Outcomes

Through the Serious Violence Duty, £900,000 has been administered to interventions reaching over 1,000 individuals across Hertfordshire.

This includes:

- sport interventions for children and young people at high risk of serious violence
- trauma informed support for those carrying knives or involved in serious violence
- a personal development programme for young men with convictions or links to serious violence
- a trauma-informed outreach and mentoring programme across six secondary schools in Stevenage
- the use of virtual reality headsets by Police to deter knife carrying and support for the Clear, Hold, Build initiatives

Forward plan for 2026-27

To strengthen governance for the Serious Violence Duty in Hertfordshire by establishing a Serious Violence Governance Board to bring partners together for collaboration and information sharing, and to secure Home Office funding to continue delivering a programme of interventions to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Turning the tide on retail crime

Outcomes

On average, there has been a 17% reduction in monthly recorded shoplifting offences 2024/25 to 2025/26, supported by strengthened collaboration through the first countywide Retail Crime Forum in July 2025, attended by over a hundred representatives from retail, partners and the police.

The Herts Against Retail Crime partnership board has been established to bring businesses and police together, alongside the launch of a new reporting system pilot in St Albans, Bishops Stortford, Stevenage and Welwyn Garden City, grant funding a project at 9 Yards retail park. and the introduction of the ShopSafe Alert app and Auror reporting platform to improve information sharing, reporting and investigation of retail crime.

Hertfordshire Constabulary has reached agreement with the CPS for direct police summonsing in retail crime cases that have a strong evidence base and expected guilty plea.

Forward plan for 2026-27

To accelerate business and police collaboration, further roll out of the ShopSafe Alert system to enable direct reporting to police, deliver a diversionary support programme for prolific shoplifters, and support independent retailers through a new retail crime prevention scheme.

Rural Crime

Outcomes

The Selecta DNA pilot, initially launched on a small scale in
2025, demonstrated positive outcomes and progressed into a full project, proving effective as a crime prevention and investigative tool with none of the tagged equipment being stolen, and over 200 kits supplied to increase coverage for rural communities.

The Fly Tipping Fund has also continued to support private landowners, particularly farmers, with clean-up and prevention measures, with five awards made across St Albans, East Herts and Hertsmere totalling over £7.5k.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Continue to review the effectiveness of the Fly Tipping Fund and levels of application, while expanding prevention and public engagement in rural communities through increased awareness and active engagement at barn meetings, strengthening resilience through practical crime prevention advice, targeted outreach and community-based initiatives.

Burglary

Outcomes

Delivered through Operation Guardian, a countywide framework aligned prevention and enforcement activity to tackle dwelling burglary, contributing to sustained year on year reductions.

This included increased targeted enforcement in high-risk areas, strengthened prevention through consistent messaging and proactive engagement, enhanced investigative opportunities through improved evidence and intelligence capture, and improved community reassurance through visibility, cocooning and targeted engagement with affected residents.

A burglary gold group was established to strengthen governance, accountability and investigative practice, improving outcomes through Op Linkage, stronger tasking, better suspect management, improved forensic focus and clearer repeat victim oversight. Hertfordshire is now ranked 14th nationally and 2nd out of 8 in its MSG, with a 12.0% outcome rate, compared to 38th nationally and 7th out of 8 with a 6.4% rate over the previous 12 months.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Sustain Operation Guardian through a coordinated approach, reducing burglary through data-led targeting while improving prevention, engagement, investigative outcomes and visible policing.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Outcomes

A coordinated countywide approach aligned policing and partners to tackle anti-social behaviour, contributing to reductions in hotspot areas through high-visibility patrols and targeted activity.

This was supported by increased visible policing in high-demand locations, strengthened problem-solving focused on repeat issues, enhanced partnership working, greater use of ASB powers against persistent offenders, improved support for victims, and expanded community engagement to reflect local priorities.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Sustain a countywide approach to ASB with consistent delivery across all districts, reducing incidents through data-led targeting of repeat demand and high-risk areas, while expanding prevention and early intervention, strengthening problem solving and enforcement, increasing visibility and community engagement, and deepening partnership working to deliver a coordinated, victim-focused response.

Tool Theft

Outcomes

In response to residents' concerns and constabulary statistics on tool theft, the PCC
Developed Project Trace: Hands Off Our Tools, bringing together police, national retailers and key partners to design a countywide response.

During 2025/26 work focused on building partnerships, securing support from major retailers, developing crime prevention materials, procuring forensic marking kits and planning a programme of engagement aimed at protecting tradespeople and reducing opportunities for offenders to profit from stolen tools.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Project Trace will give away 1000 forensic marking kits at roadshows across the county, meaning up to 50,000 tools and pieces of equipment will be marked in Hertfordshire.

There will be partnership activity throughout the summer with the constabulary to disrupt the resale of stolen tools at car boot sales.

Road Safety

Outcomes

Over £80,000 was distributed to projects and services, supporting 93 residents affected by life-limiting or fatal road traffic collisions through the Roads Victims Trust, delivering over 950 hours of specialist counselling, issuing over 1,500 educational letters to speeding drivers, installing three Speed Indicator Devices, and providing subsidised training and safety courses for motorcyclists.

Community DriveSafe schemes also increased activity, with volunteers spending over 300 hours monitoring traffic across 11 schemes and 35 locations, supported by two automated speed watch cameras, which monitored over 4.6 million vehicles, issued 2,207 warning letters, and contributed to reducing speeding with only 1.18% of vehicles identified at 40mph or above.

Forward plan for 2026-27

Investment will increase Roads Policing activity in targeted locations to reduce KSIs, Fatal 5 behaviours and concerns about speeding, while increasing the number of Community DriveSafe schemes with additional Police presence during monitoring sessions, and continuing work with partners to use the latest technologies to tackle anti-social driving, particularly noisy vehicles.

Accountability and Performance Meetings

Holding the police to account

The Police and Crime Commissioner continues to hold the Chief Constable to account for the performance of Hertfordshire Constabulary in monthly Accountability and Performance Meetings.

These meetings enable the PCC to scrutinise the delivery of policing and ask questions about performance and topics of public interest.

In 2025/27, 11 APM's were held and broadcast to the public. Over 30 topics were covered in these meetings include:

- Leadership and wellbeing
- Use of AI in policing
- Hare Coursing
- Town Centre Hotspots
- Safer Streets
- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Road's policing and road safety
- Burglary
- Missing people
- Project Vigilant
- Firearms licensing
- Burglary performance
- The use of Live Facial Recognition
- Hate crime and community reassurance
- Progress on PEEL inspection recommendations

These meetings provide robust and transparent oversight of the Constabulary, and helps drive improvements in police performance, strengthen public confidence, and ensures progress is made.

Public Scrutiny Panels

Police performance is also scrutinised through the PCC's public scrutiny panels.

These panels play a key role in holding the police to account and ensuring police powers are used fairly and proportionately.

The PCC hosts two scrutiny panels:

1. **Use of Force**
2. **Stop and Search**

The Panels are made up of a dedicated group of volunteers who live, work, or study in Hertfordshire, ensuring that community perspectives are represented in the scrutiny process.

The Panels meet every two months to review written statements and body worn video, finding good practice, highlighting areas for improvement, and providing assurance to the public that stop and search and use of force powers are being applied appropriately.

Public Scrutiny Panels cont.

Looking ahead, the Panels will continue to strengthen their data-led approach to scrutiny, maintain a focus on fairness, proportionality and transparency, and support efforts to improve community confidence and engagement in the use of police powers.

To achieve this, we will prioritise the following actions in 2026/27:

- Re-establish a data subgroup working across both panels to identify trends and support more targeted, focused scrutiny.
- Work with the PCC's Youth Commission and the Constabulary's Youth Race Inclusion Board to deliver youth-focused scrutiny sessions, ensuring young people's voices inform the process.
- Rebalance meeting structures to prioritise scrutiny time, including introducing a more formal cycle of meetings covering the data subgroup, Panel meetings and joint sessions to share updates more efficiently.
- Develop more targeted communications to increase both the diversity and number of volunteers on scrutiny panels.

Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel

Holding the police to account

In 2025/26, there were **7735** stop and searches across Hertfordshire. This is a **15**% increase from the previous year.

The Panel scrutinised **182** stop and search records. This includes written records, body worn video, strip searches of under-18s, and Section 60s.

79% of records scrutinised received a 'Green' grading meaning that they demonstrated excellent or good practice.

A smaller proportion of records scrutinised (**21%**) raised concerns for the panel, with **14%** graded Amber and **7%** graded Red, indicating more serious issues.

Use of Force Scrutiny Panel

Holding the police to account

In 2025/26, there were **16,418** Use of Force records completed across Hertfordshire. This is an 14% increase from the previous year.

The Panel scrutinised **60** Use of Force records. This included deep dives on under-18s, taser use and custody records.

95% of records scrutinised received a 'Green' grading meaning that they showed excellent or good practice.

A smaller proportion of records scrutinised (**5%**) raised concerns for the panel, with **2%** graded Amber and **3%** graded Red, indicating more serious issues.

Complaints

Improving early resolution

During the year, the team handled 1,603 (up from the previous year at 1,562) complaints, with 69% resolved without referral to the Professional Standards Department. This enabled concerns to be addressed more quickly and with less formality, while still providing clear explanations and outcomes.

The focus throughout has been on early resolution, effective communication and responding constructively to public concerns.

Independent review and organisational learning

The OPCC received 91 complaint reviews, with 16 upheld and 70 not upheld, alongside a small number remaining open.

Reviews provide an important safeguard for fairness and accountability. Where upheld, they highlighted gaps in how complaints were handled or explained. Even where not upheld, they identified learning to strengthen communication, record keeping and customer updates.

Complaints cont.

Key themes from public contact

Alongside complaints, the team supported the PCC with a high volume of non-complaint public enquiries, closing 351 cases during the year, with 24 remaining open.

The most common themes raised were:

- Road safety and speeding
- Local crime and anti-social behaviour
- Violence against women and girls
- Fly tipping
- Firearms licensing

Future return to Model 1 complaints handling

The PCC has decided to revert to Model 1 complaints handling as is the majority position nationally. (Hertfordshire currently does Model 2). This means that initial complaints handling will return to Hertfordshire Constabulary and the OPCC will continue to undertake complaints reviews. It is expected that this will result in earlier intervention in public dissatisfaction and a sustainable complaints function ahead of future governance changes. The statutory complaints framework is the same regardless of the complaints handling model.

Firearms Licensing

Firearms licensing remains a critical area of public safety requiring robust governance, consistent decision-making, and sustained performance improvement.

Historic backlogs and issues with service timeliness resulted in HMICFRS issuing a Cause of Concern to BCH in 2026/27. This was anticipated and the issues raised were not a surprise.

The PCC has prioritised the resolution of these issues and firearms licensing is the most scrutinised topic in Accountability & Performance Meetings, being on the agenda eight times.

Significant improvements have been made by BCH over the last year:

- A doubling of staff resource in firearms licensing
- The number of Herts renewals over the 120-day national decision target has halved
- BCH are no longer the three worst performing forces in the country on timeliness
- Systems, processes, governance and digital case management has been overhauled

Public safety and the quality of decision making remains the overriding priority.

Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement sets out the national threats that policing must address collectively, including terrorism, serious and organised crime, public disorder, civil emergencies, cyber threats, child sexual abuse, and violence against women and girls.

For 2026/27, delivery will be fully integrated into local policing, ensuring national threats are addressed through a clear focus on threat, harm and risk, as identified in the Force Management Statement and aligned to the Police and Crime Plan.

Strategic Approach

- Threat-led policing: Activity is prioritised toward high-harm offences, vulnerability, and prolific offenders who drive disproportionate demand.
- Prevention and early intervention: A continued shift toward preventing harm, not just responding, through targeted, data-led activity and early intervention.
- Partnership delivery: Effective response to SPR threats is dependent on coordinated multi-agency working across policing, local authorities, health, and criminal justice partners.

Strategic Policing Requirement cont.

- Place-based focus: Hotspot and locality-based approaches ensure national threats are addressed through visible, community-focused activity that also strengthens public confidence.
- Regional collaboration: Specialist capabilities, including serious organised crime and counter-terrorism, are delivered through regional arrangements such as ERSOU to ensure sufficient capacity and resilience.

Outcome Focus

Delivery of the SPR in 2026/27 will be evidenced through:

- Reduced crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Improved outcomes for victims and increased crimes solved
- Stronger safeguarding, including increased use of protective powers
- Greater public confidence in policing

For 2026/27, the SPR will be delivered through a joined-up, prevention-led and intelligence-driven approach, ensuring national threats are translated into tangible local impact, with resources focused on the greatest risk to communities across Hertfordshire.

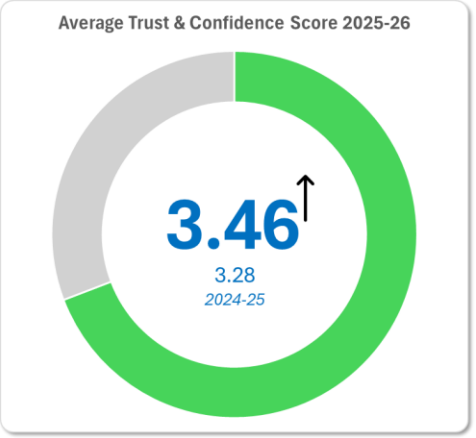
Trust and Confidence

Representing the public

Trust and Confidence

The Herts Connected survey highlights a strong and consistent focus on visible community issues. Speeding emerges as the most significant concern by a clear margin, followed by road-related obstructions, indicating that road safety remains a dominant public priority. Environmental and quality of life issues, including fly tipping and anti-social behaviour, also feature prominently.

Public confidence in Hertfordshire Constabulary remains stable and moderately positive, with average scores consistently ranging between 3.1 and 3.6 over the reporting period. There is a gradual upward trend, with scores increasing from around 3.2 to approximately 3.5 to 3.6, alongside minor month-to-month variation.



Importantly, confidence levels remain consistently above the midpoint, indicating that sentiment is more positive than negative overall. The absence of any sustained decline provides assurance that confidence is being maintained, with evidence of steady improvement over time.

4.3 Live Facial Recognition (LFR): A program of public engagement

Awareness of LFR is high, with 71% having heard a little or fair amount about LFR

2
Public Webinars

3,667
Herts Connected responses

1,058
Independent Research responses

1
Public street polling

In an agreement of Mutual Aid with Bedfordshire Police to utilise their own LFR vans, in total there have been **4** deployments of LFR in Hertfordshire, with **139, 983 faces** scanned by the technology using a watchlist consisting of **2,086** made up of people wanted by Hertfordshire Constabulary or the courts and/or are subject to strict court orders that they have failed to adhere to.

LFR has been positively received by our communities and businesses and as such, I have invested in two dedicated LFR vans to be fully operationalised across the County.

LFR attracts five broad areas of concern amongst the public

Proving the OPCC and Constabulary an opportunity to address and reframe public knowledge

Racial bias

Storing of data

Scrutiny of use

Transparency of use

Incorrect triggers

> I believe it would help cut down shoplifting & street crimes like phone theft. For this reason, it's a good idea. However, I would be concerned that it may accidentally be racially biased

> How can the Police therefore assure the public that FRT will not be used as a cost-effective extension of day to day Stop and Search activities

> It can be useful in specific situations like locating suspects or missing people, but it needs strict safeguards to prevent misuse

> Will the Watchlist be a National or Local Watchlist and can it be used to find missing people?

> How safe is the USB stick? What controls are in place for securing the data onto and off of the USB stick?

> What due diligence has been done to ensure that the LFR technology doesn't disproportionately discriminate against Black people or people from ethnic minorities?

The public are highly supportive of LFR in Hertfordshire

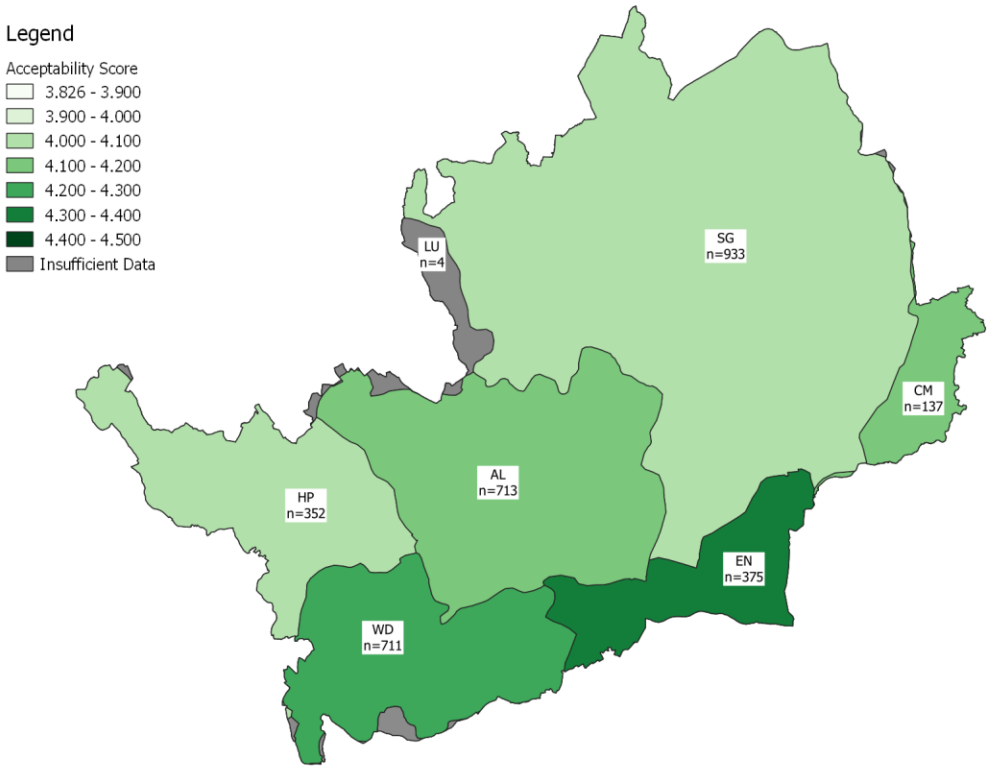
Using mixed methodology to reach a diverse and representative sample

93% think it is acceptable for the police to at least sometimes use LFR

5% believe the technology should never be used by the police

81% think the use of LFR technology will help the police catch more criminals

82% LFR within a town centre/retail space will not affect the likelihood of visiting



Using mixed methodology to reach a diverse and representative sample

Police Reform

As well as representing the public on local policing matters, it's my job to ensure Hertfordshire's best interests are considered ahead of any national changes to the police.

This Spring, I launched a consultation to understand the public's views on the Government's plans to merge police forces across England and Wales.

The plans mean that your local police force could cover a much larger area than just Hertfordshire in future and this could affect the service you receive.

The consultation remains open until 21st June and I am grateful to the residents, businesses and stakeholders who have completed the consultation so far.

Hertfordshire Youth Commission

The Hertfordshire Youth Commission (HYC) enables young people aged 14-25 to inform decisions about policing and crime prevention in Hertfordshire, working in partnership with the PCC and Hertfordshire Constabulary (HC).

Embedding youth voice and lived experience through the HYC is vital, as it enables young people from across Hertfordshire to independently represent the views of their peers, ensuring that decisions and priorities are informed by those directly affected.

The sessions that children take part in throughout the year as part of the HYC feed directly into the Big Conversation, helping to shape and agree the priority areas that the PCC will focus on.

Through the 'Big Conversation' HYC members conducted peer research with over **1,600 young people between May 2025 and December 2025**, ensuring that young people's views and lived experiences meaningfully inform future priorities and decision-making.

Achievements from the previous cohort of Youth commission:

- A key achievement for the Youth Commission was the delivery of a youth sector roundtable at Westminster (House of Commons) in July 2025, featuring discussions focused on Youth Justice, Prevention and Community Safety for Children and Young People, helping to inform future priorities and collaboration.

Key recommendations for the OPCC and Partners

Following an extensive evaluation report in May 2026, several recommendations will be taken forward into the plan for 26-27:

1. The Police to commit to a YIAG session on Knife Crime and Joint Enterprise, and to include young people's feedback into policy and strategic development
2. Local councils to work together with the PCC to make public spaces safer and more secure.
3. Deliver more in-person Knife Crime and Joint Enterprise workshops in both educational and youth settings, working more collaboratively with the police to inform young people on the consequences.

Criminal Justice Board

As Chair of the Hertfordshire Criminal Justice Board (HCJB), the Commissioner has provided leadership across the criminal justice system in Hertfordshire.

Over the past year, as chair the Commissioner has led system-wide preparation for Sentencing Act reforms, strengthened HCJB governance and resourcing and driven a renewed approach to prolific offenders.

Achievements of the Criminal Justice Board include:

- Leading Hertfordshire's system-wide response to Sentencing Act reforms ensuring that relevant agencies are aligned on managing the changes
- Finalising the Fairness in the Criminal Justice System review examining disproportionality across policing, probation, courts, and youth justice.
- Developing a new Navigator diversion pilot to tackle repeat shoplifting and addiction-driven offending.

Victim Services

In 2025/26, **over £2.45million** in funding was used to deliver victim support services in Hertfordshire. This includes funding from the Ministry of Justice, and funding from the OPCC core budget.

Beacon Victim Care, the victim support hub for Hertfordshire, provided tailored **support to over 4,000 victims** over 4 years old. Support is provided to all victims and witnesses with crime types supported this year including burglary, fraud, cybercrime, ASB, theft, and violence with or without injury.

Additional funded services provided specialist advocacy, practical support, and counselling services to victims of VAWG, including Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence, and Stalking.

An additional funding opportunity offered during the year **provided £126,325.66 in funding to 14 organisations** (mostly VCSE organisations), supporting initiatives that strengthened, enhanced, or added resilience to victim support services delivered in Hertfordshire. Initiatives included: specialist training for frontline practitioners, outreach sessions, improved security for refuge and support facilities, and educational campaigns.

Chrysalis Centre

The Chrysalis Centre is the Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Programme for Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire. Interventions within the programme address a range of perpetrator types and behaviours, across all risk levels. **In 2025/26, 743 referrals were received into the service, and 431 individuals were referred** on to one of the programme's specialist intervention or support providers.

Intervention providers work alongside other support professionals to ensure that any wider needs are met, ensuring that perpetrators can successfully engage with an intervention and achieve lasting behaviour change, keeping victims and families safe.

Evaluation of the programme has shown an **81% reduction in DA related crime rates (and a 58% reduction in overall crime rates)** for those who undertook an intervention, compared to a control group who did not.

For 2025/26, the interventions offered were expanded to include a Specialist Intervention Service, delivered by The Change Project, which delivers an intervention for perpetrators of both DA and non-DA related stalking behaviour. Referrals are received directly into the Chrysalis Centre referral hub, and via the Constabulary led Hertfordshire Stalking Intervention Panel.

Home Office funding for the scheme is due to end in September subject to recommissioning.

VAWG advocacy

In 2025/26, a joint commissioning activity was started between Hertfordshire OPCC, Hertfordshire County Council, and the Central East Integrated Care Board, to deliver a joined-up advocacy programme delivering support for all types of VAWG.

This approach was taken response to feedback from victims and survivors that the existing patchwork delivery with multiple VAWG specialist services could be challenging and confusing when trying to identify where to go for support.

In 2025/26, VAWG victim support services funded by the PCC provided advocacy, practical support, counselling and community-based support to around 3,900 victims of VAWG related crime, including domestic abuse, sexual violence and abuse, and stalking.

Finance summary

Significant work has been done to reduce the structural overspends in the Constabulary budget. This progress has continued in 2025/26 with a substantially smaller overspend than in previous years.

The draft outturn for last year is an £634k* overspend (approx. 0.2% of total budget). This is a reduction from a £3m overspend in 2024/25.

The main reasons for the variance are as follows:

Police Officer & Staff Pay	+£342k overspend
Police Officer & Staff Pay Overtime	+£627k overspend
Non-pay	-£336k underspend

*subject to change and budget closure process

Making the case for fairer funding

Hertfordshire has lower than average funding per head of population and the fifth lowest police precept in England & Wales.

For 2026/27, I raised the precept by £15 per household (Band D), with the support of 68% of residents who responded to my survey.

I am committed to delivering value for money for Hertfordshire taxpayers.

The 2026/27 budget required a savings target of £7m which is on track to be achieved through the interventions planned during budget setting.

I continue to make the case to the Home Office for greater precept flexibility to improve policing across Hertfordshire. Moving the precept to the England & Wales average would release funding equivalent to a 10% increase in police officer numbers. I was disappointed that we did not receive flexibility from the Home Office for 2026/27, especially given better funded areas were given flexibility. I will be pursuing this again for the 2027/28 budget.

OPCC structure

The restructure of the OPCC was completed in 2025/26. This was the first such review of the OPCC structure since 2017. The restructure was a significant organisational change aimed at improving efficiency, aligning resources with strategic priorities, and ensuring financial sustainability.

The office has historically been one of the largest nationally as a percentage cost of the overall police budget and exceeded the Home Office guidance of being within 1% of the force budget.

The restructure reduced the size of the office by 18% and is expected to deliver approximately £300,000 in annual savings compared to the projected pre-restructure outturn.

These savings have been allocated to ensure the OPCC does not place any inflationary cost on the overall policing budget in 2026/27 and to increase investment on Police & Crime Plan projects.

The restructure was done in a legally compliant manner with full staff consultation and Unison involvement.

Estates Summary

- HQ Redevelopment remains on track and scheduled to be fully operational in August 2026.
- New Estates Strategy is currently being worked on.
- Actively engaging with Planning Depts within District & Borough Councils to make case for the Commissioner to be legitimate recipient of Section 106 and CIL contributions to mitigate the impact of housing growth.

Estates projects delivered in 2026/27 or in progress:

- Relocation of Harpenden NPT to the Town Hall to generate cost savings and closer joint working with the Town Council. Sale of redundant police station to be concluded in Q2
- Relocation of PCC's office to Welwyn Garden City
- Former Borehamwood police station site advertised for sale having been empty and disused for 10+ years
- Seeking to acquire new premises to accommodate Operational Learning Dept enabling vacation of poor-quality leased accommodation together with achieving associated revenue savings.
- Improved signage at core police stations to improve visibility and presence in communities.

Grants Summary

- £1.3m Home Office/OPCC funding awarded across 6 separate grant schemes/initiatives
- £0.8m Home Office/OPCC funding awarded to 57 projects across 5 separate grant schemes/initiatives
- Over £350,000 OPCC awarded to 49 projects across 4 separate grant schemes

Grant Scheme	Total Funding Awarded	Number of Projects
Home Office-Funded (further £0.491m allocated towards statutory bodies staffing and Young Futures Prevention Partnership delivery)		
Serious Violence Duty	£0.437m	8
OPCC-Funded		
Community Safety	£0.133m	11
Safer Town Centre Scheme	£0.133m	28
Road Safety	£0.081m	5
Fly Tipping on Private Land	£0.008m	5

Grants Project Summary

Safer Town Centre Scheme

- Over £130,000 awarded to 28 projects across Hertfordshire focusing on tackling ASB, VAWG, Community Safety, Retail Crime, and Youth Diversionary Activities.
- *(note: only about £80k spent due to unclaimed overtime/projects)*

Serious Violence Duty/Young Futures Prevention Partnership Income Generation/Management

- The OPCC has continued to lead on securing and administering Home Office funding to enable Hertfordshire's statutory partners to deliver interventions within the Serious Violence Duty and the Young Futures Prevention Partnership.

- In 2025/26, over £900,000 Home Office funding secured/administered by the OPCC led to over 1000 individuals across Hertfordshire benefiting from either targeted 1:1 trauma-informed intensive support, group activities, or training/awareness.

Police & Crime Commissioner FOR HERTFORDSHIRE

PCC Annual Report

2025 - 2026

For all media and press enquires, please email rachel.stone@herts-pcc.gov.uk

For general enquiries regarding the report, please email commissioner@herts-pcc.gov.uk