

Over 50,000 female police officers now in forces

The figure of 50,364 women in the 43 police forces achieved today means there are now more female police officers pursuing criminals and serving the public than since records began – making up 34.9% of the overall workforce. Of the recruits hired since April 2020, 42.5% (13,326) are women.

The government is on track to deliver its manifesto commitment to recruit 20,000 additional officers by March 2023, with 15,343 extra police now hired – making up 77% of the target.

The new recruits are already having a positive impact in forces across England and Wales. For example, Avon and Somerset Police has put more officers into responding to rape and sexual assault through its Operation Soteria following the [Police Uplift Programme](#) and Lancashire Constabulary has expanded its Missing From Home Community Safety Officer team to track down missing children and protect those at risk of exploitation.

Home Secretary Suella Braverman said:

As Home Secretary my first priority is to protect the British public from harm and I am absolutely steadfast in my determination to drive down crime.

That's why I am delighted the government is on track to deliver 20,000 additional police officers by March 2023, with 15,343 already recruited to bring criminals to justice.

This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity for forces to become more representative of the communities they serve and I am heartened to see there are now over 50,000 women in forces across England and Wales for the first time.

With the extra officers recruited I want to continue to see forces doubling down on tackling murder, serious violence and neighbourhood crimes which tear communities apart.

National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Workforce Diversity and Representation, Deputy Chief Constable Rachel Kearton, said:

Reaching 50,000 female police officers is a really positive milestone. The uplift programme has seen many more women apply to join policing across a range of roles and responsibilities.

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds – regardless of their age, gender, race, faith or sexual orientation. By

increasing diversity we will better represent our communities and those who we police by consent.

We know that more needs to be done to ensure that women see policing as an attractive career and as we continue through the police uplift, we hope this positive increase continues.

A recent Home Office survey showed that job satisfaction was 90% for new recruits who have joined the police as part of the government's recruitment campaign, 79% of new recruits have had their expectations of joining the police met or exceeded, whilst 81% intend to stay in the police for the rest of their working lives.

Compared to other roles in the public sector, voluntary resignations in policing are low at 2.5%.

Total police funding has increased by up to £1.1 billion this year, providing up to £16.9 billion for the policing system. In addition, every police officer received a £1,900 uplift to their salary this year which equalled up to an 8.8% increase for those on the lower salary bands.

All recruits must meet the standards set by the College of Policing and the government has worked with chief constables and the college to modernise, standardise and increase resilience in the recruitment process to ensure forces are able to hire the additional officers to keep communities safe.

Anyone interested in applying to their local force can search [Join the Police](#) to find out more.

[Changes to business rates rules for self-catering properties](#)

From April 2023, new eligibility rules for business rates will apply to self-catering properties in England and Wales.

If you don't meet these rules your property will become eligible for paying Council Tax.

The rules will be used in assessments from 1 April 2023. The information about lettings during the 2022/23 operating year will be used to determine whether a property is eligible.

The changes

The new eligibility rules are different depending on whether your property is in England or Wales.

If your property is in England:

To continue to be eligible for business rates, from 1 April 2023 your property must be:

- available for letting commercially for short periods that total **140 days** or more in the previous and current year.
- actually let commercially for **70 days** or more in the previous 12 months.

If your property is in Wales:

To continue to be eligible for business rates, from 1 April 2023 your property must be:

- available to let commercially for short periods that total **252 days** or more in the previous and current year.
- actually let commercially for **182 days** or more in the previous 12 months.

What being let commercially means

When we talk about commercially let properties, we mean properties that are let with the intention of making a profit. This usually means the property is let at market rates and actively advertised. For example, using holiday cottage websites, estate agents, and tourist web pages to advertise the property.

Any non-commercial lettings, for example lettings to family and friends for amounts below the market rates, would not count towards commercial lettings.

Who is affected

The new rules apply only to properties classified as self-catering holiday lets by the VOA within the broad use category of short stay accommodation . They don't apply to other types of accommodation in this category, such as hotels, hostels and guest houses.

There won't be any exceptions in the application of the new eligibility rules. They will apply equally to all self-catering properties across England and Wales.

New self-catering properties will be liable for Council Tax until the property meets the eligibility rules.

When properties will be assessed using the new rules

Valuation officers conduct a rolling programme to check that properties listed as self-catering properties in the non-domestic rating list meet the eligibility rules. A valuation officer will ask for this information in the 'Request for Information' form, which will be sent to you at a later date. It will consider whether you meet the new rules on your actual lettings for your property in 2022/23.

The rolling programme means we will ask customers to give us information at different times during the 2023/24 operating year. But we will be using a universal date, from which we will assess whether the new eligibility rules have been met, of 01 April 2023.

The new eligibility rules will be used in assessments made from 1 April 2023.

Properties may also be reassessed for other reasons. For example, if there has been a change of circumstances or a change of use.

We usually tell customers to tell us as soon as they know about a change in circumstances, such as a self-catering property no longer being used this way. This is so we can add it to the Council Tax Valuation List, and your local council can contact you about your Council Tax bill.

But you don't need to tell the VOA if you know you won't meet the new eligibility rules on lettings until after 01 April 2023. This is because we can't make changes to the Rating List on the new eligibility criteria until it comes into force.

The information used in assessments

The VOA issues forms called 'Requests for Information'. One of them has been designed specifically for self-catering units and holiday cottages. The information provided on this form is used to check that the eligibility rules for self-catering properties are met.

It's important that you return this form in time – you will be liable to a financial penalty otherwise. It's also important to complete it accurately, as it's a legal document and there can be serious consequences for including false information, including prosecution.

Support available

There are a number of reliefs available to assist businesses, including the [Small Business Rates Relief scheme \(SBRR\)](#). You can find out more about reliefs by contacting your local council.

Any questions about business rates or Council Tax payments should be made to your local council.

[Urgent action to protect children with disabilities from abuse](#)

A national review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs has revealed serious failures at 3 residential special schools

registered as children's homes. The independent review looks at the experiences of 108 children and young adults living at Fullerton House, Wilsic Hall and Wheatley House, located in Doncaster and operated by the Hesley Group.

The report shows a culture of abuse and harm, including evidence of physical abuse and violence, neglect, emotional abuse and sexual harm. There was also evidence that medication was misused and maladministered, an over-use of restraints, and unsafe and inappropriate use of temporary confinement. The children affected were placed at these homes from 55 local authorities across the country and there is a complex abuse investigation underway by the Doncaster Safeguarding Partnership, which includes a concurrent criminal investigation by South Yorkshire Police.

Given the severity of the allegations and evidence uncovered, the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel has issued an urgent action to all local authorities to ensure all children with complex needs and disabilities currently living in similar children's homes are safe and well.

Panel Chair, Annie Hudson said:

This national review seeks to make sense of how and why a significant number of children with disabilities and complex needs came to suffer very serious abuse and neglect whilst living in 3 privately provided residential settings.

Our evidence shows that the system of checks and balances which should have detected that things were going wrong simply did not work.

While there are many skilled professionals who work with children with disabilities, we are concerned that these are not isolated incidents. That's why we have asked all local authorities and Ofsted to take urgent action to ensure all children living in similar circumstances are safe and well.

Lead Panel Member for the review, Dr Susan Tranter, said:

Children with disabilities and complex health needs are some of the most vulnerable in our society but they are too often overlooked and forgotten.

Following allegations that a significant number of children who were living far away from home, often with limited communication skills, were trapped in settings where systemic and sustained abuse was inflicted with no respite, we spoke to those responsible for placing the children in these settings and for checking on their welfare to understand exactly what went wrong.

It is clear to us that the standards of practice in care are

failing to meet the needs of children with complex needs. The second phase of this national review will explore the systemic issues in children's social care, health and education that must be addressed to ensure we learn from these horrific incidents and to prevent this from happening again.

Dame Christine Lenehan, Strategic Director of the National Children's Bureau and Council for Disabled Children, said:

This review demonstrates that the residential settings responsible for taking care of these children did not have a clear vision to safeguard them from abuse. The lack of accountability across the residential care system means there is too little ownership for the safety of children with complex needs and, as a consequence, many have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, harm and abuse. We urgently need a shift in thinking, so that these children's rights to live safely in supportive and nurturing homes is guaranteed.

While the complex abuse investigation will hold to account those directly involved in the harm of these children, the national review found that the safety net that should have identified and responded to this abuse failed to act on concerns.

The [phase one report](#) sets out that Ofsted had received a number of complaints dating back to at least 2015, expressing concerns over staffing levels, staff conduct and possible abuse of the children. These complaints had promoted additional monitoring visits and an emergency inspection, but the review has found these were insufficient as both settings had been judged 'good' by Ofsted at the most recent inspection visit. In light of the most recent allegations, Ofsted conducted emergency inspections of the settings in March 2021 and notices of suspension of the service were served.

Additionally, local authorities and partner agencies placing children at these homes put great reliance on the reports provided by the settings despite professionals in different roles having separate information indicating concerns. The processes in place for bringing together information from a range of sources to analyse the pattern of safeguarding concerns was not effective.

To address these, the panel has requested local authorities and Ofsted to undertake urgent action:

- local authorities should review complaints and concerns relating to the workforce in each individual residential special school registered as a children's home over the last three years, and ensure these have been appropriately actioned
- OFSTED should conduct an immediate analysis of their evidence around workforce sufficiency focusing on suitability, training and support

The panel has been assured that the urgent actions will be completed by the

end of November 2022. A second phase of this review will be published in early 2023, setting out the progress against the urgent actions and providing recommendations to government to improve safeguarding in the residential special school and care system.

The independent national Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel is an independent body that was set up in July 2018 to identify, commission and oversee reviews of serious child safeguarding cases. It brings together experts from social care, policing, health, education and the third sector to provide a multi-agency view on cases which they believe raise issues that are complex, or of national importance.

On 5 March 2021, the Doncaster Safeguarding Partnership agreed to initiate a complex abuse investigation (Operation Lemur Alpha) into the 3 specialist residential settings run by the Hesley Group. This was in response to information gathered following a whistleblowing referral reporting 12 allegations of abuse and concerns for children in Fullerton House, which was received by the Doncaster Children Services Trust on 26 February 2021. Further information about the criminal investigation should be referred to South Yorkshire Police, and about the wider complex abuse investigation should be referred to Doncaster Council – contact details available on request.

These matters were formally reported by the Doncaster Safeguarding Partnership to the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel in September 2021. The review was formally launched in January 2022. The terms of reference for the [Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel: review into safeguarding children with disabilities and complex health needs in residential settings](#) is available on GOV.UK. The panel has worked in close co-operation with Doncaster Safeguarding Partners to deliver this phase one review report.

Any families who have concerns about a child can find more information on the [Council for Disabled Children's website](#).

Birmingham anglers catch a whopping pair of fines

The cases were brought by the Environment Agency to Northampton Magistrates Court on Monday 24 October.

Kevin Mallard from Rowley Regis was found guilty of fishing without a licence on 25 May 2022 at Lodge Farm Reservoir at Netherton, near Dudley.

In a separate case Aaron Butler from Smethwick was found guilty of leaving his fishing rod unattended with bait or hook in the water at Highley on the

River Severn in Shropshire on 28 June 2022.

Kevin Mallard, 35, was proved guilty in absence and ordered to pay a total penalty of £619. The penalty includes a fine of £440, costs of £135, and a victim surcharge of £44.

Aaron Butler, 35, was also proved guilty in absence and ordered to pay a total penalty of £443. The penalty includes a fine of £220, costs of £135, and a victim surcharge of £88.

Nichola Tomlinson, Fisheries Enforcement Team Leader at the Environment Agency, said:

We're pleased to see how seriously the courts take these offences. Kevin Mallard and Aaron Butler have both been rightly punished for fishing illegally on separate occasions. While Aaron Butler had a licence to fish, leaving his fishing rod in the water unattended meant he was unable to exercise sufficient control over it.

Illegal fishing undermines the Environment Agency's efforts to protect fish stocks and make fishing sustainable. Money raised from fishing licence sales is used to protect and improve fish stocks and fisheries for the benefit of anglers and, for those caught cheating the system, we will always prosecute.

We hope these penalties will act as a deterrent to anyone who is thinking of breaking the laws and byelaws we have in place across England.

Any angler aged 13 or over, fishing on a river, canal or still water needs a licence to fish. A 1-day licence costs from just £6, and an annual licence currently costs from just £30 (concessions available). Junior licences are free for 13 – 16-year-olds. Licences are available from www.gov.uk/get-a-fishing-licence or by calling the Environment Agency on 0344 800 5386 between 8am and 6pm, Monday to Friday.

The Environment Agency carries out enforcement work all year round and is supported by partners including the police and the Angling Trust. Fisheries enforcement work is intelligence-led, targeting known hot-spots and where illegal fishing is reported.

Anyone with information about illegal fishing activities can contact the Environment Agency incident hotline 24/7 on 0800 807060 or anonymously to Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

Background

Kevin Mallard was charged with the following offence:

At 2:12pm on 25 May 2022 at Netherton Reservoir (known as Lodge Farm Reservoir, Netherton) in a place where fishing is regulated, fished for

freshwater fish or eels by means of unlicensed fishing instrument, namely rod and line. Contrary to Section 27(1)(a) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

Aaron Butler was charged with the following offence:

On 28 June 2022 at Highley on the River Severn, left a rod and line with its bait or hook in the water unattended or so that the person shall be unable at any time to take or exercise sufficient control over said rod and line. Contrary to Byelaw 10 of the Environment Agency National Byelaws which came in to force on 27 May 2001 made pursuant to Section 210 and Schedule 25 of the Water Resources Act 1991 and Contrary to Section 211 of the said Act.

Better protection for victims under pre-charge bail reforms

Victims of crimes like domestic abuse and sexual assault will be better protected following arrests of perpetrators under new provisions collectively known as 'Kay's Law', Safeguarding Minister Mims Davis announced today (25 October).

The reforms, which will come into force this week, will mean police have a duty to take into account the views of victims before releasing someone on bail. Police will be encouraged to use pre-charge bail instead of releasing suspects under investigation, where it is necessary and proportionate.

Kay's Law, named after a victim of domestic violence, is one of many measures the government has taken to support victims, bring perpetrators to justice and protect women and girls across the country. This includes the '[ENOUGH' campaign](#) to tackle violence against women and girls, the second phase of which has launched today (25 October).

The campaign aims to provide bystanders with a range of safe ways to intervene if they witness an incident of violence against women and girls, ranging from sexual harassment on the street, public transport or at work, to unwanted touching, sharing intimate images of someone without their consent and coercive control in a relationship.

The Minister for Safeguarding, Mims Davies said:

There is no place in our society for cowardly acts of violence against women and girls.

Abuse comes in many forms, and by standing against all of them, and holding perpetrators accountable, we can create a society where

women and girls are safe.□

This campaign, as well as our crucial reforms to pre-charge bail under Kay's Law, is part of this vision. However, there is more to be done, and I am committed to continuing this vital work.

'Kay's Law' is named after Kay Richardson, who was tragically murdered by her estranged husband after he was released under investigation, following his arrest for sexual offences against Kay. In 2019, the government launched a review of pre-charge bail legislation which led to the reforms being implemented this week, including the new duty which aims to provide better protection for victims like Kay. The measures were introduced as part of the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.

Following the publication of the government's Tackling Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy in 2021, the government launched the ['ENOUGH' campaign](#) in March 2022.

The second phase of the campaign includes television adverts, billboards, social media and radio advertising which highlight different forms of violence against women and girls and the simple acts that anyone can take to challenge perpetrators of abuse.

Deputy Chief Constable Maggie Blyth, National Police Chiefs' Council Violence Against Women and Girls Coordinator said:

Policing has a key role of going after the violent people who commit these awful crimes but we cannot arrest our way out of the societal issues that lead to this behaviour. If we are serious about long-term change then we need to prevent harm and violence to women and girls by changing attitudes and behaviour across society.

Deniz Uğur, Deputy Director of the End Violence Against Women Coalition (EVAW), said:

We welcome this next phase of the government's Enough campaign to tackle male violence against women and girls, something the End Violence Against Women Coalition has campaigned for for years. We know that without shifting the attitudes behind male violence against women, this violence won't end.

We're pleased to see the Enough campaign focus on what everyone in society can do to end violence against women, because too often, campaigns are targeted at women and wrongly place the responsibility on us to 'keep ourselves safe'. But ending violence against women is everyone's business. We want to see men and boys actively engaged in this conversation, because we should all be able to take action and hold each other accountable.

Preventing violence is always better than waiting until harm has been done to act. Achieving this requires a genuine commitment, because this work takes time and needs dedicated and long-term resourcing.

Farah Nazeer, Chief Executive of Women's Aid said:

We were pleased to help support the development of the Home Office's Enough campaign, to raise awareness of violence against women and girls and encourage people to stop everyday abuse and harassment. Everyone has a role to play in ending violence against women – whether it takes place in the home or in public – and we must all step up and play our part. By changing public attitudes and challenging everyday misogyny and sexism, we can all help to make society a safer place for women and girls.

Graham Goulden, international leadership and bystander trainer and retired Scottish police officer said:

The Enough campaign provides focus on a very important group of people who can make a difference. Bystanders are often present in the build up to incidents, at the time of an incident or afterwards.

When one person speaks up they signal that a behaviour is wrong. They also make it ok for others to intervene as well. Therefore it's important we communicate this message as well as giving friends, colleagues, neighbours and other bystanders the tools to act.

One person can make a difference. The Enough campaign will make a difference.

Through the campaign, the department is working with organisations involved in the night time economy and fitness industry, like gyms, as these are places where violence against women and girls can often occur.

The violence against women and girls [Enough campaign](#) has information and examples of how to intervene safely if you witness violence against women and girls. It also provides information on support services, how to report violence to the police and offers guidance for individuals worried about their own behaviour.

Over the coming weeks, the website will include a dedicated page for teachers with educational materials for use in schools on violence against women and girls.

The campaign has been developed with an advisory group of over 40 voluntary

sector organisations, survivors and academics who have given their expert insight.