



Police and Crime Commissioner
CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH
Darryl Preston

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026



Tackling crime and keeping communities safe



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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston with Simon Megicks, the new Chief Constable for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, who took up his post in September 2025.

Front cover

Commissioner Darryl Preston in
Cambourne, November 2025.

FOREWORD

Police and Crime Commissioner Darryl Preston

This Annual Report covers the period 1st April 2025 until 31st March 2026 and captures progress against my [Police and Crime Plan](#) (2025 – 2028).

Over the last 12 months I have continued to work with Cambridgeshire Constabulary and other partners involved in keeping you safe and to deliver your priorities, namely:

- Safe communities
- Early intervention and prevention
- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour
- Supporting victims and witnesses
- Building trust and confidence

I am pleased to report continued progress across all these areas including:

- **More visible policing** – with all residents now having a named police officer dedicated to their area as a result of the [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee](#).
- **Improvement in response times** – down to three seconds for 999 calls, with officers typically attending urgent incidents within 15 minutes.
- **Supporting early intervention** – just under £600K of Home Office funding to prevent and reduce violence including knife crime across the county.
- **Extended investment into tackling local crime** – investment of £241K to fund dedicated Problem-Solving Coordinator posts in the county's six Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas to tackle issues such as anti-social behaviour.
- **£2.2m awarded** to local services to enable victims and witnesses of crime to access support and safety planning.

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SAFE
COMMUNITIES

EARLY
INTERVENTION
AND
PREVENTION

TACKLING
CRIME AND
ANTI-SOCIAL
BEHAVIOUR

SUPPORTING
VICTIMS AND
WITNESSES

BUILDING
TRUST AND
CONFIDENCE

Foreword

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In September 2025 I welcomed a new Chief Constable, Simon Megicks. Simon, born and raised in Cambridgeshire, began his police service in Cambridge in 1996, working across the Constabulary in both operational and crime roles. He joined Hertfordshire Constabulary in 2015 as Assistant Chief Constable and then moved to Norfolk where he became Deputy Chief Constable.

My commitment to you remains the same as when I was first elected as your Commissioner in 2021 – to support the Chief Constable to deliver the policing service you require, tackling crime and keeping you safe.



Commissioner Darryl Preston with partners from the county's first ever Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Prevention Event, held in Brampton in April 2025.

TACKLING CRIME AND KEEPING COMMUNITIES SAFE

SAFE COMMUNITIES

From initial contact to response, we will support the Chief Constable to ensure police officers are visible and accessible within communities, listening and responding to your concerns.

Whether you live in a village, town or city, we will ensure you get the police service you need.



EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

We will work with police and partners to take an early intervention approach to help prevent crime and serious violence, including violence against women and girls, from happening in the first place.

We will work in partnership to better understand and address the root causes of crime.

We will work with probation and other agencies to ensure that people who have offended change their behaviour and are less likely to reoffend.



TACKLING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We will support and encourage communities to work with the police and other organisations, such as the county's six Community Safety Partnerships, to resolve local issues such as anti-social behaviour, road safety, rural crime and business crime – issues that matter to them.

We will work with the police and agencies, including the courts, prosecutors, probation and local authorities, to ensure they use criminal justice and other enforcement processes effectively to tackle crime and disorder.



SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

We will ensure victims can access support services which offer a bespoke response to their individual needs.

We will provide opportunities for victims and witnesses' voices to be heard.

We will work in partnership with criminal justice agencies to ensure victims and witnesses continue to be placed at the heart of the criminal justice system.



BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

We will hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure police officers and staff always carry out their duties with integrity and social responsibility.

We will aim to strengthen public trust and confidence through independent scrutiny of police powers.

We will support the Chief Constable and senior officers to continue to promote a culture that is inclusive and diverse and reflects the communities they serve.



SAFE COMMUNITIES

From initial contact to response, we will support the Chief Constable to ensure police officers are visible and accessible within communities, listening and responding to your concerns.

Whether you live in a village, town or city, we will ensure you get the police service you need.



My number one commitment to you as your Police and Crime Commissioner is to keep you safe. Through holding the Chief Constable to account, I have worked hard with partners over the last 12 months to progress the priorities set by you in my [Police and Crime Plan](#).

I am proud that in the Crime Survey for England and Wales, of 43 police forces (year ending September 2025) Cambridgeshire Constabulary is the highest ranked force in response to 'police in this area can be trusted'.

The same survey also ranked the Constabulary fifth for 'police deal with local concerns' and fifth for 'overall confidence in local police'.

This is something that does not happen by accident. With increased officer numbers, the Constabulary continues to respond to growing demand. However, the way in which our police force is funded remains a cause of concern – an issue I continue to raise at every opportunity.

Progress...

- **More visible policing** – residents now have a named [police officer](#) dedicated to their area as part of the [Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee](#) announced in April 2025. Through the Guarantee, the Constabulary also committed to respond to all issues of local concern within 72 hours: between June 2025 and January 2026, the Constabulary received £749,456 from the government with 30 additional officers now aligned to neighbourhood policing teams across the county. An additional 12,500 hours of additional visible patrols in 'hot spot' areas were carried out by police officers or PCSOs, funded through a national 'Hotspot Action Fund'.

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Safe communities continued from page 6

- A series of regular online and face to face community meetings set up since July 2025, including 'Coffee with a Cop' sessions, enabled residents to meet named officers, directly raise issues of concern and help shape future policing priorities. As a result of 45,000 community engagements, the police were able to make 312 arrests, carry out 194 stop searches, use 230 ASB Powers and issue 91 Public Space Protection Orders (to January 2026).
- **Improving response and communication** – work to improve call answering times led to sustained improvements in the average 999 caller wait time: to three seconds for 999 calls over the 12-months, down from four seconds a year ago. Out of the 35 police forces in England and Wales currently achieving a 90% target for grade of service, the Constabulary was at 93% and ranked 22nd – in spite of a higher call volume.
- The Constabulary works with local partners to ensure the right agency responds to incidents involving people with mental health needs, in line with the national [Right Care, Right Person](#) model. As well as ensuring the most appropriate specialist support for members of the public, in turn it also saves considerable police time which can be used to respond to other calls for police service.
- **Improving and investing in technology** – the Constabulary continued to explore new technology opportunities, including AI. The search has begun for a supplier to deliver a new Record Management System to facilitate all day-to-day policing business, including crime and intelligence recording and custody and case preparation.
- **Securing a fairer funding deal for our police service** – the government's recently announced [Police Reform White Paper](#) included a commitment to review the way in which police funding is allocated. However, Cambridgeshire remains the fourth lowest funded force in the country – receiving a lower than national average total funding per head of population at £247 compared to a national average of £278. The Commissioner continued to highlight this disparity at every opportunity including with the policing minister. In his [Precept Survey](#) for 2026-2027, the majority of respondents said that while they were happy to support his proposed increase, they expressed frustration that the formula continues to put the county at a disadvantage. In November 2025 Police and Crime Panel members also wrote to the policing minister highlighting the importance of this issue.



'Coffee with a Cop' proved a popular way for local police officers and PCSOs to meet residents.

Safe communities

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15th May 2025 – Commissioner Darryl Preston adds his name after the topping out ceremony for the new Cambridge police station in Milton; it is due to become operational in summer 2026.

- A new police station for Cambridge** – work to progress the county’s newest police station continued at pace over the last 12 months, with the station due to be operational in summer 2026. Located next to Milton Park and Ride outside Cambridge, the new two-storey station is a modern policing facility designed to improve services to the public, manage increasing demand, strengthen community safety and better support frontline officers and staff across the district. The site includes a 24-cell custody suite, doubling existing capacity, alongside consultation and interview rooms, medical facilities and secure detainee holding areas that allow multiple detainees to be processed simultaneously. The building is equipped with air source heat pumps, solar PV, electric chargers and is A-rated for energy efficiency.
- Listening to your views** – public engagement remains a core priority for the Commissioner. Knife crime, county lines and road safety were topics young people at three local schools raised when he asked them about their concerns during visits to lessons at Hinchbrook School in Huntingdon, Hampton Gardens in Peterborough and Abbey College in Ramsey. The Commissioner and his team also spoke to older residents at forums, including University of the Third Age (U3A) in Cambridge and the Golden Age Fair in Wisbech, and at community insight sessions with Cambridgeshire Deaf Association and the Hong Kong community. Routine attendance at community meetings held outside Cambridge in areas such as Northstowe, Milton and Cambourne enabled the Commissioner to understand emerging issues.

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Safe communities

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- To mark National Volunteers' Week, in June 2025, the Commissioner's team ran a week-long social media campaign to raise awareness of the many volunteering roles carried out by members of the community to keep communities safe – you can find out more about these schemes on [page 27](#).
- The Commissioner and his team held regular meetings with [Cambridgeshire Countryside Watch](#) (CCW), which acts as a vital link between the police and rural communities, helping to strengthen trust, improve communication and support preventative activity. In partnership with the [Rural Crime Action Team](#) (RCAT) and neighbourhood policing teams, the Commissioner attended a round-table event with local farmers in September 2025, which provided a space to raise concerns and discuss the complexities of crime in rural communities, particularly around county borders.
- Over the last 12 months, CCW strengthened relationships with Neighbourhood Policing Teams to improve intelligence sharing and updated its 600 members with RCAT crime updates, as well as sharing opportunities to attend farm security events. Members were also encouraged by the Commissioner to have their say on the Sentencing Council's consultation on hare coursing.
- Regular engagement with local business owners enabled the Commissioner to understand emerging issues. Working closely with the Constabulary and town centre partners through shadowing foot patrols and visits to local businesses, the Commissioner maintained strong links with [Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire Businesses Against Crime](#). Based within the county's CCTV office, these teams provide a vital conduit between local businesses and policing by sharing intelligence affecting both the daytime and night-time economies.



The Commissioner visited Milton with South Cambs Community Safety Partnership in February to discuss how the partnership is helping to resolve local issues with police and partners to keep residents safe.

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Safe communities

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- The Commissioner's team continued to ensure local communities guided his holding to account with the Constabulary but also shaped his digital engagement. Examples include timely Facebook posts, such as signposting victim and witnesses impacted by the Huntingdon Train incident on 1st November – which reached over 21,000 people. More than 3,000 people continued to receive the Commissioner's regular newsletter, with additional thematic newsletters covering progress against his [Plan](#) – including early intervention and prevention, supporting victims and witnesses and keeping communities safe.
- The delays caused by the Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Firearms Licensing Department remained one of the biggest issues raised by the public through the Commissioner's mailbox. As a result of an '[Accelerated cause for concern report](#)' from His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS), the Commissioner committed, alongside Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire's Commissioners and the three Chief Constables, to implementing the recommendations as speedily as possible – particularly those relating to risk. An action plan is now in place which is being monitored monthly with oversight through tri-force strategic alliance meetings.
- For the latest HMICFRS assessment on the Constabulary visit: [Cambridgeshire PEEL Assessment 2023–2025 - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#).
- **Public contact** – over the last 12 months, the Commissioner received and responded to 846 pieces of correspondence. Frequently recurring issues included firearms licensing, anti-social behaviour and criminal damage.



People with autism and other neurodiverse conditions shared their reflections of policing at a scrutiny event held in March 2026, hosted by staff from the Commissioner's office, the Constabulary, Healthwatch and UK advocacy charity, VoiceAbility.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION

We will work with police and partners to take an early intervention approach to help prevent crime and serious violence, including violence against women and girls, from happening in the first place.

We will work in partnership to better understand and

address the root causes of crime.

We will work with probation and other agencies to ensure that people who have offended change their behaviour and are less likely to reoffend.



I always talk about prevention being better than cure. By intervening early and addressing the root cause of what makes people commit crime, we can protect our young people from making the wrong choices so there are fewer victims of crime.

Preventing crime remains a core priority for policing, but it is not something that can be tackled by the police in isolation.

Over the last 12 months I have worked with agencies across the county, funding and supporting initiatives to prevent serious violence and anti-social behaviour through continued engagement with young people.

Progress...

- **Preventing and reducing serious violence** – a £599K Home Office grant enabled statutory agencies to build on [preventative activity](#) for projects such as targeted youth outreach work and diversionary after-school activity. As a result, over 4,000 young people and almost 350 adults were reached over the reporting year; more than 650 professionals also received additional training.
- A week-long knife amnesty in May 2025 took 98 weapons off the streets, educated young people on knife crime dangers and saw an extra 220 hours of foot patrols in Cambridge, Peterborough and Wisbech. Additionally, volunteer police cadets test-purchased knives to ensure local shops were not selling to under 18s. The Commissioner and Chief Constable supported [Soham Town Rangers FC](#) to bring the nationally recognised Knife Angel statue to Cambridgeshire in 2026.

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Early intervention and prevention

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- His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) recognised the positive practice of using mock courtrooms to help young people understand the grave consequences of knife crime. An additional £80K Home Office funding was accessed to tackle knife crime in Peterborough.
- Engagement with secondary school head teachers and pupils helped shape early intervention initiatives in the county, resourced through the Home Office Serious Violence Duty Fund. 114 young people from five schools and a sixth form college worked on a new [Safer Corridors toolkit](#), which helps young people to recognise, challenge and report sexual harassment – more about this under the graphic on [page 15](#).
- Football has also generated opportunities to challenge misogynistic views through a Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Prevention initiative led by [Cambridge United](#) in Cambridge-based schools. This was run in tandem with a Cambridge Rape Crisis Empower project collectively reaching 112 young people (61 boys and 51 girls). A [peer mentor project](#) led by staff at Anglia Ruskin University has encouraged young people to take different paths in life.
- **Preventing violence against women and girls** – more than 60 partnership colleagues attended the county's first VAWG Prevention Event in April 2025. It was used to capture local successes, challenges and opportunities and collectively agree six key priorities. These included early intervention with children and young people, preventing VAWG in public spaces, engaging with, and listening to, survivors and victims and challenging and reviewing local workplace policies.

"This is the first place I've felt listened to. It's helped me stay out of trouble and focus on what I need to do next."

Quote from a
Serious Violence Duty
funded project participant



Commissioner Darryl Preston
with Criminology and Politics
sixth form students at
Hinchingbrooke School.

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Early intervention and prevention

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- Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership jointly delivered 17 [Businesses Against Abuse](#) training sessions with the Constabulary. This enabled more than 350 staff from the retail and night-time economy to spot the signs of predatory behaviour and help keep women and girls safe. Sessions were delivered in cities and market towns, supported by the Community Safety Partnerships.
- The [cross-government VAWG strategy](#) – Freedom from Violence and Abuse – published in December 2025, included an ambition to expand the [Drive Project](#) nationally. The programme uses a multi-agency case management approach to manage perpetrators of high-harm, high-risk domestic abuse, providing additional support for victims to keep them safe. A bid submitted by the OPCC and Constabulary was confirmed in April 2026, bringing an additional £900K of resources into the county.
- **Supporting early intervention** – the [Countywide High Harms Board](#), chaired by the Commissioner, supports partners to take a preventative approach across four key high harm issues: drugs, serious violence, serious and organised crime (SOC), and VAWG.
 - The Youth Justice Management Boards across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough continued to provide oversight of outcomes for those young people who enter the criminal justice system.
 - As a partnership, we have been able to align additional national funding streams to enable a coordinated programme of local diversion activity to support those young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system. Last year this included embedding three qualified young people's workers from Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council with neighbourhood policing teams.
 - Over a period of 10 years, the number of children entering the criminal justice system reduced from 255 to 65. This reflects the effectiveness of early intervention and prevention work by partners, diverting children to appropriate support to keep communities safe.

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Early intervention and prevention

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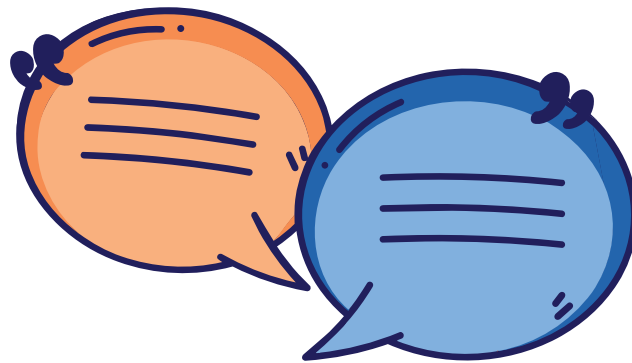
- **Enabling and empowering communities** – 16 grassroots projects benefited from the Commissioner's new [Prevention Fund](#) which enables bids of up to £5K to support early intervention or crime prevention activities. More than £58K has been awarded to proactive diversionary work – which includes schemes in Stretham, Wisbech and Whittlesey. Funding was provided to the Cambridgeshire [Bobby Scheme](#) to provide and install video doorbells for households experiencing ASB from neighbourhood disputes. Cambridgeshire County Council successfully accessed funds to train youth workers to better support neurodiverse young people at risk of online exploitation.
- **Building resilience to cybercrime and fraud** – a free Police Cyber Awareness Day, attended by more than 60 organisations, gave businesses advice on how to keep safe from cyber criminals. Hosted by the county's Local Resilience Forum, the Constabulary followed this up with proactive visits to local market-town based businesses.
- **Preventing future victims of crime** – Domestic Homicide Reviews, now also known as Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews, are statutory, multi-agency reviews of deaths involving people aged 16 and over where violence, abuse or neglect is suspected. They are designed to identify learning to help prevent future harm. Ten reviews were submitted to the Home Office in 2025-2026 and are awaiting quality assurance, with findings informing local policy, partnership practice and staff training.
- **Tackling serious crime** – as Chair of the High Harms Board, the Commissioner continued to oversee a partnership approach to tackling serious crime and drugs. To raise awareness of local issues, the Constabulary delivers quarterly SOC (Serious and Organised Crime) Fusion knowledge events for frontline practitioners. These well-attended sessions have covered topics such as reporting organised immigration crime, modern slavery and human trafficking, county lines exploitation, serious organised acquisitive crime and prevention advice on fraud and cybercrime. The Constabulary reports that more than 1,000 practitioners have attended these events.

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Early intervention and prevention

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- **Keeping communities safe** – in line with its Prevention and Problem-Solving Strategy, the Constabulary continued to use problem solving approaches to reduce crime, disorder and community concerns. An example of this is an initiative where young people aged 15 to 23, along with their parents, were warned that their behaviour could lead to football banning orders and/or criminal convictions. Called [Operation Yellow Card](#), the approach was highlighted as good practice by the College of Policing.
- **Breaking the cycle of reoffending** – the Commissioner contributed £130K towards countywide drug treatment services. Additionally, at the Commissioner's request, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Resilience Forum hosted a tabletop exercise to assess local arrangements for dealing with an incident relating to drug-related deaths, contaminated drugs and multiple overdoses. Learning from the exercise is being taken forward and will be monitored through the Drug and Alcohol Delivery Board.



Safer Corridors Toolkit

Putting young people in the driving seat of efforts
to eradicate sexism, sexual harassment and
sexual assaults.

The 'Safer Corridors' toolkit helps young people to recognise, challenge and report sexual harassment. Commissioner Darryl Preston joined educational

and safeguarding leaders in March 2026 to [relaunch the toolkit](#), which also helps teachers confidently tackle misogyny and sexism in schools.

TACKLING CRIME AND ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR

We will support and encourage communities to work with the police and other organisations, such as the county's Community Safety Partnerships, to resolve local issues such as anti-social behaviour, road safety, rural crime and business crime – issues that matter to them.

We will work with the police and agencies, including the courts, prosecutors, probation and local authorities, to ensure they use criminal justice and other enforcement processes effectively to tackle crime and disorder.



Crimes such as anti-social behaviour, criminal damage and anti-social driving can cause misery in our communities. While the police work hard to respond to local issues, other partners also have a role to play.

That is why I continue to invest in our local Community Safety Partnerships who support the police alongside other partners to resolve issues that concern residents. I have also worked with criminal justice partners to make sure those who commit crimes are held accountable.

Progress...

- **Dealing with local issues** – every police force area has been asked to produce an anti-social behaviour action plan to set out how it will work with partners to reduce and prevent ASB. In Cambridgeshire, the Constabulary's action plan details how the force will work with partners to identify issues. You can download [a copy of the plan](#) from the Constabulary's website.
- The Commissioner invested £241K in 2025-2026 to provide dedicated Problem-Solving Coordinator posts in each of the six Community Safety Partnership (CSP) areas. These posts provide additional capacity, enabling the partnership to work with communities to resolve local issues of crime and disorder. Examples of outcomes include:
 - **Cambridge City CSP** dealt with multiple problems related to drug dealing and cuckooing (a type of exploitation where a victim is manipulated into having their home used by criminals, typically as part of county lines). Letter drops to householders, intelligence sharing with police, the installation of re-deployable CCTV, welfare visits to vulnerable tenants, the installation of noise recording equipment and the seizure of an unregistered dog all helped resolve the issues.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

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- **East Cambridgeshire CSP** worked with a local housing team in response to a complex case involving allegations of domestic abuse, racism and verbal abuse. The CSP offered practical help and support, the police intervened and, as a result, the demand on local services ceased.
- **Fenland CSP** handled a complaint from a resident regarding suspected drug dealing – within 24-hours of receiving the information through partnership working with the Neighbourhood Policing Team, officers patrolled the location and stopped and searched a suspicious vehicle which contained suspected Class A drugs and mobile phones. The car was seized as the driver had no licence or insurance and the complainant was updated on the incident.
- In **Huntingdonshire**, the CSP worked with Huntingdonshire District Council, St Neots Town Council and the police to address ASB in St Neots. This involved joint visits to residents, school visits and engagement at local meetings. With a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) put in place in Ramsey, the CSP worked with the County Council and Constabulary to tackle areas at risk of child criminal exploitation.
- **Safer Peterborough Partnership** worked with allotment holders, police, fire and Peterborough City Council to tackle multiple incidents of arson and criminal damage at a council-owned and community-run allotment. As a result, safety and security recommendations were implemented to 'design out' crime. With high-visibility patrols and ongoing monitoring, the incidents have stopped.
- In **South Cambridgeshire**, the CSP enforced a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) to tackle ASB at Milton Park and Ride. Implementation of the PSPO was approved in November 2025, enabling the local authority to issue fines to perpetrators and the possibility of offenders being prosecuted in court. Cambridgeshire County Council also installed automatic number plate recognition cameras, which will be used to enforce the PSPO.

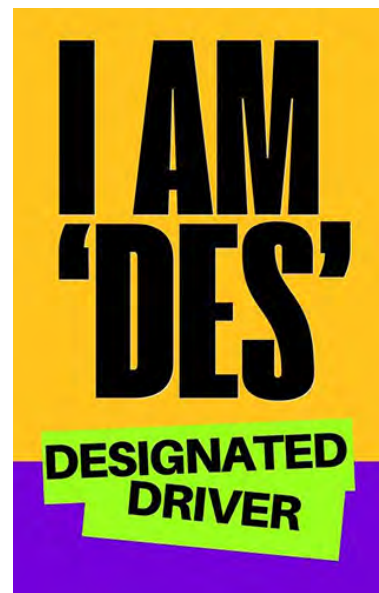
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Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

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- **Improving road safety** – there are still far too many people killed or seriously injured on our roads. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough's Road Safety Partnership has stepped up efforts to educate road users through a range of targeted road safety campaigns. As newly appointed Chair of the partnership in September 2025, the Commissioner launched a new [Road Safety Fund](#) to enable statutory agencies in the partnership to bid for up to £3.5K for preventative projects and resources. [Three projects](#), totalling £6K, were funded in the first six months, including activity to promote Bikesafe workshops more widely to attract younger motorcyclists to enhance their skills.
- Funded by the Commissioner, the Constabulary's Casualty Reduction Officer delivered road safety workshops across primary and secondary schools, as well as targeted sessions for older drivers. These reached around 2,000 younger drivers, 500 older drivers and nearly 4,000 schoolchildren. The officer also established a new Young Driver Working Group and engaged over 1,300 people through various public events.
- Also funded by the Commissioner, the Constabulary's Community Speedwatch Co-ordinator worked with local communities to establish new Community Speedwatch schemes tackling village speeding, backed by three enforcement vans. There are now 110 active groups across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, involving around 1,000 volunteers.
- **Tackling crime in rural areas** – a force-wide investigation into hare coursing and associated criminal activity, which took place in January 2025, resulted in 43 arrests and 29 individuals charged with a total of 39 offences. These included attending a hare coursing event, making off without payment, theft from shops and driving offences. Future preventative measures include applications for Criminal Behaviour Orders, Community Protection Notices, revoking driving licences and vehicle destruction orders.

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The annual 'I am Des' campaign ran across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in partnership with Vision Zero, as well as Cambridge and Huntingdonshire Business Against Crime, during November and December 2025. Participating premises displayed the posters and offered special incentives for Designated Drivers, which included free or significantly discounted soft drinks.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

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- **Combatting serious and organised crime** – in October 2025, illegal goods, worth an estimated £280K, were seized from local shops during [Op Machinize](#). The police worked with Peterborough City Council and Immigration Enforcement, with officers seizing more than 8,000 suspected illegal vapes, nearly 280,000 cigarettes and 20kg of hand rolled tobacco from shops in Peterborough and one in Whittlesey. More than 8,500 bottles of alcohol were also confiscated from unlicensed premises and seven of the high street businesses visited were subjected to closure orders due to concerns about money laundering.
- **Addressing crimes affecting businesses** – the Commissioner continued to engage with local businesses to hear their concerns. In January 2026, the Cambridgeshire Chambers of Commerce hosted a roundtable discussion with the Commissioner to explore the challenges facing policing and issues which impact on the business community. There were discussions on challenges in relation to cybercrime, the use of new technology, anti-social behaviour and theft. Building on success in the south of the county, a Spree Offender Team was launched in Peterborough and Fenland in July 2025 to target persistent offenders of high-volume crimes such as thefts from shops, non-dwelling burglaries, cycle crime and thefts from vehicles – 25 arrests in the first month led to 91 charges. The Constabulary regularly report on [court outcomes](#) based on the work of the Spree Offender Teams.
- **Reducing re-offending** – discussions with key partners including the Combined Authority, probation, HMP Peterborough and Jobcentre Plus were held to improve education, training and employment pathways for prison leavers to reduce re-offending. Chaired by the Commissioner, progress was monitored through Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board (CCJB), including how the local Integrated Offender Management scheme helped to reduce the number of offences committed by individuals. The scheme closely supervised persistent and problematic offenders who are deemed likely to reoffend or cause harm in local communities.
- **Protecting the public** – communities were safeguarded from serious harm through effective risk assessments and risk management plans put in place by [MAPPA](#) (Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements). The Constabulary worked with probation and other services to monitor and rehabilitate individuals who presented a risk of serious harm in our communities, through committing crimes such as domestic abuse, child sexual abuse and criminal exploitation, modern slavery and human trafficking and serious sex offences.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

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- **Bringing offenders to justice** – [Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board](#), which the Commissioner chairs, reviewed local issues such as court backlogs and how to improve outcomes for victims. At his [October 2025 Business Coordination Board](#) (now the Police Accountability Board), the Constabulary provided an update on its approach to Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) – improving positive outcomes for survivors of rape was a key focus. Through the CCJB, better engagement between the Constabulary and CPS has been reported. There are now dedicated Victim Liaison Officers (VLOs) in all CPS Rape and Serious Sexual Offences Units. The VLOs have been central in improving the experience of the victim in the Criminal Justice System.
- **Tackling hate crime** – a range of activities was delivered by the six Community Safety Partnerships to tackle hate crime, including the development of hate crime training for schools. Fenland CSP, in partnership with the Constabulary, delivered hate crime awareness training to 58 frontline workers and community organisations across Fenland. Training for Hate Crime Champions was also delivered to 33 practitioners from education, Registered Social Landlords, police, health and the local authority.
- All public libraries across all six CSP areas became registered hate crime reporting centres, with staff trained on how to operate an effective reporting centre.



Stagecoach continued to run this bus 'wrapped' with the 'Call it out' message as part of the *Buses and Businesses Against Abuse* initiative, launched in 2024.

SUPPORTING VICTIMS AND WITNESSES

We will ensure victims can access support services which offer a bespoke response to their individual needs.

We will provide opportunities for victims and witnesses' voices to be heard.

We will work in partnership with criminal justice agencies to ensure victims and witnesses continue to be placed at the heart of the criminal justice system.



All victims of crime who live in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough have access to high quality specialist emotional and practical support to help them deal with the impact of the crime they have experienced.

These locally commissioned services include a county-based [Victim and Witness Hub](#), which offers a unique 'report to court' support service – highlighted on the [College of Policing's Practice Bank](#).

Since being elected as Police and Crime Commissioner, I have made it a priority to listen to victims and survivors and the staff who deliver our life-changing and life-saving services to ensure they match what people need, within the budget available.

Our partnership work continues to champion the importance of putting victims at the heart of everything we do.

Progress...

- **Ensuring all victims and witnesses of crime who live in the county can access appropriate support** – over the 12 months of this report, £2.2m was invested in the provision of local support services. The model centres around the Victim and Witness Hub whose staff work with a range of specialist services to ensure victims and witnesses can access support bespoke to their needs. For example, the [Bobby Scheme](#) supported 728 elderly victims of burglary last year, providing advice and guidance and helping to secure their homes, reducing the risk of repeat victimisation and increasing their feelings of safety.

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Supporting victims and witnesses

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- **Victim and Witness Hub** – co-ordinators in the Hub supported 6,427 victims and witnesses over the past year. Trained volunteers contributed a collective 408 hours of support – equivalent to an additional 56 working days. Hub staff have been proactively reaching out to victims of crime in rural communities to offer emotional and practical support through a partnership with the [Rural Crime Action Team](#). Through a local survey supported by [Peterborough Positive](#), staff working in retail and business settings were asked what they would find helpful after experiencing a crime.
- Operational plans to support victims and witnesses following a major crime incident were tested in November 2025 after the Huntingdon train incident. Local victims and witnesses were offered the support of a specialist Victim and Witness Care Co-ordinator to help them cope with the impact of the incident. This postholder provides 1-1 emotional and practical support to victims of serious violence in the county and helped 174 people in the past year with one victim expressing their gratitude for the 'kindness, understanding and continued support' received.
- **Specialist sexual violence support** – a countywide all-age and gender service offering support and advocacy to victims and survivors of sexual violence helped change the lives of 2,263 people in the past year. The Cambridge and Peterborough Rape Crisis Partnership is funded by the Commissioner to provide a local helpline and email support and a countywide Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) service. These specialist staff offer confidential support and guide survivors through recovery – including attending court if required.
- The Commissioner continued to monitor the performance of the county's joint police and NHS England funded [Sexual Assault Referral Centre](#) (The Elms) through local and regional contract meetings and overseeing plans, including building work, to reach a new forensic accreditation standard. The Elms, which supports local victims during the day, is now open 24/7 on behalf of the region, giving victims the opportunity to access help and support at any time. Up to 42 people a month seek forensic and healthcare support following recent or historical sexual violence.

*"You've saved my life.
My life is precious
and I'm worthy of
respect and love –
you taught me that.
Thank you."*

Quote from a survivor
of sexual violence

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Supporting victims and witnesses

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- **Specialist domestic abuse support** – three local charities were awarded a share of £300K over two years via a bid for a [community grant round](#) to expand the offer of face-to-face group work for up to 500 survivors of domestic abuse across all six districts. This joint OPCC and Cambridgeshire County Council work builds on the existing model of support which ensures all victims and survivors can access help whether they have reported a crime to the police or not. This new service enables, for the first time, such support to be offered in market towns including Ely, Huntingdon, March, Northstowe, St Ives and Wisbech, as well as Cambridge and Peterborough. A small grant was also awarded to the [Edge Cafe](#) in Cambridge to pilot group work in this community.
- The OPCC prepared a tender process under the new [Procurement Act 2023](#) for a countywide service which offers all victims of police-reported medium risk domestic abuse specialist support and safety planning. The specification was informed by the early findings from the 12-month delivery pilot – in which 1,182 victims were offered specialist support within 72 hours of the service receiving the referral – and also as a result of focused stakeholder engagement. Peterborough Women's Aid was successful in securing the contract delivering services across the county from the Victim and Witness Hub.
- The Commissioner provided funding to the [Road Victims Trust](#) – a charity helping bereaved families and people who have experienced life-limiting injuries following a road collision. Through the use of volunteer counsellors, the charity was able to triple the value of the Cambridgeshire funding award – with 17 volunteers delivering 1,204 hours of support to victims in Cambridgeshire. Valued at a conservative £100 per hour, this equates to more than £120,000 of added value.
- **Developing knowledge and skills of police officers and staff** – the OPCC led a successful bid to the Home Office to roll out Phase Two of [Raneem's Law](#), basing independent specialist domestic abuse workers for eight hours a day, 365 days a year in the Constabulary's Force Communications Centre. The workers listen in to 999 and 101 calls (and [Rapid Video Responses](#)) and provide live time review, support, advice and challenge (and escalation) in how the call handlers and officers are dealing with cases.

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Supporting victims and witnesses

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- **Creating opportunities to listen to the voices of all victims and witnesses** – local survivors of sexual violence shared their experiences of accessing support from statutory and support services as part of an innovative engagement project. ‘[Engage Visually](#)’ was funded by the Commissioner to capture and illustrate local survivors’ voices to inform the re-commissioning of the countywide support and ISVA service and help shape the delivery of local statutory services. Feedback independently gathered from 45 survivors helped create two illustrations which showed their experiences of support services and other agencies. This unique project reflects months of work and has already shaped future service provision – with verbatim comments included in the [Countywide Sexual Violence Support Service](#) specification used in the commissioning process. The feedback has guided the Commissioner’s questioning at his Police Accountability Board.
- Work to streamline the requests for victim feedback by staff across criminal justice services and ensure it drives meaningful change is the focus of a new Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board Victim and Witness Sub-group. Professionals from police, courts, probation, the Crown Prosecution Service and the court-based witness service have also been scrutinising their own agency compliance with the [Victims’ Code](#). The Code sets out the service and information people should expect from agencies when they become a victim of crime.



Under Section 4 of the Victims’ Code, victims or witnesses of crime are entitled to be referred to free, confidential support, whether or not a crime has been reported. In Cambridgeshire, there are free support services which centre around the Constabulary-run Victim and Witness Hub

BUILDING TRUST AND CONFIDENCE

We will hold the Chief Constable to account to ensure police officers and staff always carry out their duties with integrity and social responsibility.

We will aim to strengthen public trust and confidence

through independent scrutiny of police powers.

We will support the Chief Constable and senior officers to continue to promote a culture that is inclusive and diverse and reflects the communities they serve.



Policing in our country is based on public consent.

While a number of high-profile cases involving police officers have affected trust and confidence nationally in policing, it is important to remember the majority of officers and staff enter the service for the right reasons – to catch criminals and keep people safe.

Here in Cambridgeshire, I am proud of our Constabulary which continues to build on its strong ethical culture, introducing a wide range of independent scrutiny panels and promoting diversity and equality within policing.

Over the last twelve months, I have continued to seek reassurance from the Chief Constable that officers and staff carry out their duties with integrity.

Progress...

- **Consistent ethical and professional behaviour in policing** – the [Annual Integrity Report](#) sets out how the Commissioner gains assurance that ethical standards, transparency, legitimacy and professional behaviour are consistently upheld across Cambridgeshire Constabulary.
- **A robust and transparent recruitment process** – overseen by an independent member and the College of Policing, it led to Simon Megicks [being confirmed as the county's new Chief Constable](#) in September 2025. The process was led by OPCC staff on behalf of the Commissioner, with the final decision informed by the views of senior community stakeholders, police officers and staff from representative staff associations who made up the interview panels.
- A new [Deputy Chief Constable](#) and Cambridgeshire resident Chris Balmer joined the [senior team](#) in December 2025, supporting the Chief Constable to lead the force and chair the Force Performance Board.

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Building trust and confidence

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- **Retention of skilled staff** – supporting officer and staff wellbeing remains high on the Constabulary’s agenda. Locally, a new internal mobile app features health and wellbeing advice – any staff who become victims, witnesses or who are facing misconduct investigations can access support from 36 new Welfare Support Officers. Nationally, a [Mental Health Crisis Line](#) for policing, launched through the [National Police Wellbeing Service](#), was contributed to by the Constabulary.
- **Delivering a policing service in a sustainable way** – a Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority grant enabled the installation of a £700K [solar canopy car park scheme](#) at Police HQ. It is expected to save the force an estimated annual 294 tonnes of CO₂e carbon emissions.
- **New tools and technology** – officers are being trained to use the new Taser 10 in line with the College of Policing [Authorised Professional Practice](#). The device’s design supports the de-escalation of incidents using more overt warnings (brighter green laser dot and louder alerts) and reduces the need for higher levels of force. Facial recognition technology use and governance is being reviewed to provide assurance that it is lawful, proportionate, ethical and compliant with legislation. Guidance has also been published to support staff on the use of Microsoft’s Artificial Intelligence tool, Copilot, which has been launched in-force.
- **Promoting equality and diversity** – through its Ethics, Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Statement of Intent, the Constabulary continued to embed ethics, diversity, equality and inclusion in all aspects of policing, creating a workforce that is representative of the diverse communities it serves and developing a more inclusive culture where all staff feel valued and supported. The Commissioner continued to receive regular updates on progress against the delivery of the [Police Race Action Plan](#) at his Police Accountability Board.



A College of Policing taser training session.

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Building trust and confidence

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- **Scrutinising police actions** – the OPCC and Constabulary’s [Joint Audit Committee](#) provided independent scrutiny and assurance on the OPCC’s refreshed strategic risk register, which identifies shared risks with the Constabulary and sets out appropriate mitigation. Work is ongoing to review the OPCC corporate governance framework (which sets out decision making structures and schemes of delegation) ready for future change and transition to new governance arrangements in April 2028.
- Those who monitor conditions in custody for detainees ensure police officers are carrying out their powers – such as Stop and Search and Use of Force – to the highest ethical standards and who give up their time to bolster policing services, were recognised at a celebration event during National Volunteers’ Week in June 2025. Volunteers from the Commissioner’s [Community Scrutiny Panel](#), [Independent Custody Visitors](#), Special Constables and Volunteer Police Cadet Leaders learnt how each improved the transparency and accountability of the force’s work.
- The Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) scheme continued to operate effectively throughout the year, providing regular, independent, oversight of custody environments and the treatment of detainees. Visitors offered assurance around detainee welfare and rights and conditions, while also identifying areas for improvement and good practice. In recognition of the strength and quality of the scheme, the ICV programme achieved Platinum status this year, reflecting its maturity, effectiveness and ongoing contribution to accountability and public confidence in custody arrangements.
- Independent scrutiny was further strengthened through the continued operation of Community Scrutiny Panels which provide an important mechanism for independent challenge and transparency around the use of police powers. Over the year, panels scrutinised a range of cases and themes, supporting proportionality, consistency and organisational learning. In addition to the standing panels, targeted thematic scrutiny sessions were held with groups who may face barriers to engagement, including members of the Deaf community, autistic and neurodiverse communities and young people. These sessions provided valuable insight into lived experience, enabled constructive challenge and feedback on police interactions – and supported mutual understanding, trust and confidence between communities and the police.

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Building trust and confidence

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- In February, the Beds, Cambs and Herts Tri-Force [Animal Welfare Visiting Scheme](#), run by the Commissioner's team, was awarded a [Certificate of Compliance](#) by the national charity Dogs Trust after meeting national standards for monitoring the welfare of serving police dogs. In doing so, it recognised the group's open and transparent process of monitoring the welfare needs of the police dogs.
- Overseeing police complaints** – the Commissioner provides independent oversight of the police complaints system to ensure complaints are handled fairly, transparently and in accordance with statutory requirements. Over the last 12 months, the OPCC completed 41 complaint reviews, with six upheld with recommendations focusing on improving evidence gathering, strengthening decision making, enhancing communication with complainants and supporting learning and continuous improvement across the force. Further assurance was provided through dip sampling of complaints and Complaints Resolution Team cases, alongside quarterly complaints reporting to the Police and Accountability Board. This work identified recurring themes relating to investigations, call handling and arrests, as well as opportunities to improve communication, supervision and transparency.
- Commissioning approach** – a [Commissioning and Grants Strategy](#) set out the approach taken by the OPCC to oversee this year's £6m budget – which involved managing 85 funding awards (excluding small grants) across 50 providers. This included appropriate and proportionate due diligence and financial and outcome monitoring and the completion of detailed returns to government departments. In the past year the team has led multiple successful local commissioning processes to ensure key services are available to people who live in our communities, using the Procurement Act 2023.
- Understanding and addressing disproportionality** – the Cambridgeshire Criminal Justice Board sought updates on how agencies across the criminal justice system addressed issues of disproportionality locally to ensure best practice was shared across agencies. The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) in the East of England recently reported on [its plan](#) to tackle racial disproportionality to ensure fair prosecution decisions for all.



The Commissioner with members of the Beds, Cambs and Herts Tri-Force police dog welfare scheme.

FINANCE AND GRANTS

The Commissioner received a total of £209.6m funding for the period of this annual report – a £12.1m increase on 2024-2025.

In Cambridgeshire, police funding comes from two main sources: a central government grant and the policing part of council tax.

While the Commissioner is responsible for the policing budget, the Chief Constable is responsible for delivering an effective and efficient policing service, which provides value for money – and for the financial management of the Constabulary within the agreed budget allocation.

The [financial \(statutory\) accounts](#) will be available on the Commissioner's website during 2026. Details about how the [OPCC's budget](#) is calculated are also on his website.

Commissioning and grants

In 2025-2026 the Commissioner managed a £5,953,104 commissioning portfolio consisting of the following:

Government grants

Ministry of Justice

Victim Services Grants	£953,812
Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Victim Support Services	£887,618
Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund	£304,018

Home Office

Domestic Abuse and Stalking Perpetrator Intervention Fund	£388,220
Serious Violence Duty	£599,402
Hotspot Action Fund	£1,000,000
Hex Hyper Local Fund	£80,500

Local funds

Crime and Disorder Reduction	£1,381,494
Casualty Reduction and Support Reserve (Road Safety)	£147,916
Police Property Fund – Prevention Fund – Small Grants	£58,497
Partnership Contributions	£151,627

The Commissioner's website includes details about his approach to [commissioning awards](#).

NATIONAL POLICING PRIORITIES

Strategic Policing Requirements

The government's Strategic Policing Requirement 2023 (SPR) outlined national threats to public safety, guiding Police and Crime Commissioners in planning and collaborating with Chief Constables to address policing challenges effectively.

The SPR identified national threats are:

- Serious and organised crime (including county lines and fraud)
- Terrorism
- National Cyber Event
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Public Disorder
- Civil Emergencies
- Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG)

Through his regular governance arrangements, including his [Police Accountability Board](#) meetings, the Commissioner remained confident that the Constabulary had the ability to provide an effective and proportionate response to these national threats. You can read the papers and minutes presented to the Commissioner on his website.

The Commissioner also has a responsibility to hold the Chief Constable to account for how national policing priorities are being addressed. The Constabulary has provided the following local updates for the reporting year 2025-2026:

- Serious offences involving a sharp/bladed weapon increased by more than 12% however, knife crime remains below the national average.
- Possession of weapons and hospital admissions – while hospital admissions for assaults involving a sharp object have increased year-on-year, the longer-term picture shows a reduction of almost 50% since the year ending March 2020. Increases in recorded knife-related offences can be partly attributed to improved recording and reporting practices.

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National policing priorities

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- Homicide increased by nine to 16 recorded cases over the reporting period.
- Drug offences increased by more than 74%, largely driven by a change in recording practices – which now include the importing of drugs (formerly recorded as intelligence submissions). This reflects increased proactive policing activity and may not indicate a direct increase in underlying drug-related harm.
- Recorded crime increased by just over 2%. Although some serious crimes have increased, there were reductions in other crime types as a result of positive and focused policing:
 - Personal robbery offences reduced by just under 1%, which is consistent with local trends in acquisitive crime.
 - Vehicle crime reduced by 7%, with a notable decrease in theft from motor vehicles (down 14%) and interference with a vehicle (down 23%), indicating the positive impact of targeted preventative measures.
 - Residential burglary increased by just under 14%.
 - Cycle theft reduced by more than 16%, reflecting a longer-term downward trend.
 - Online and cyber-enabled recorded crime reduced by more than 2%.
 - Criminal damage reduced by more than 2%, with a notable decrease in damage to dwellings (9%) and vehicles (8%).
 - Anti-social behaviour reduced by just under 4%.
 - Theft from the person reduced by 27%, representing a significant improvement through targeted policing.
 - Shoplifting reduced by 6% – which can be attributed to recent targeted activity, including Op Retail, aimed at directly addressing retail crime and repeat offenders.

National and local evidence suggests that increases in VAWG-related offences may reflect both genuine increases in offending and improved victim confidence in reporting, alongside continued improvements in recording practices. The Constabulary continues to prioritise the prevention and investigation of these offences in line with national and local commitments.

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National policing priorities

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- **Victims' satisfaction** – overall victim satisfaction was 77.9% over the reporting period, representing a slight decrease of 0.5% compared to the previous year. While overall satisfaction remains relatively high, variation exists across crime types. For example, satisfaction for victims of hate crime reduced notably, highlighting an area for continued focus and improvement by the Constabulary.

The Crime Survey for England and Wales (year ending December 2025) showed that the Constabulary continues to perform strongly compared to other forces nationally on measures of public trust and confidence:

- Cambridgeshire is ranked 1st with just under 80% of residents agreeing that the 'police in their area can be trusted'; 4th with just under 87% of residents agreeing the 'police would treat you with respect'; 8th for 'police would treat you fairly' (with 66% of surveyed residents agreeing) and 4th for 'overall confidence in local policing', with just under 74% of residents expressing confidence.
- **Domestic abuse** – satisfaction among victims of domestic abuse increased to 81%, representing an improvement of more than 4%. This reflects ongoing efforts to improve the service provided to victims of domestic abuse.
- **All-crime prosecution outcome rate** – the all-crime prosecution (positive outcome) rate increased to 15.6%, up 0.6% compared to the previous year. Despite this improvement, performance remains slightly below the national average and improving outcomes for victims, particularly in more complex and serious crime types, continues to be a key focus for the Constabulary.



Commissioner Darryl Preston at the Boat House Business Centre in Wisbech, November 2025.

CONTACT THE COMMISSIONER

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for
Cambridgeshire and Peterborough,
PO Box 688, Huntingdon, PE29 9LA

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news and activities via:

-  www.cambridgeshire-pcc.gov.uk
-  www.facebook.com/CambsPCC
-  www.instagram.com/pcccamb
-  www.linkedin.com/in/darryl-preston
-  0300 333 3456
-  cambs-pcc@cambs.police.uk
-  www.cambs.police.uk



Tackling crime and keeping communities safe