



# **POLICE REMUNERATION REVIEW BODY SUBMISSION**

## **2026-2027**



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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This submission is the twelfth annual report from the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) and is provided as formal evidence for the 2026–27 review of police pay, terms and conditions for officers serving in the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). It is informed by the remit letters issued by the Justice Minister and the Home Secretary and should be read as an update to, rather than a repetition of, issues set out in previous PFNI submissions.

PFNI has consistently warned over the past decade that policing in Northern Ireland is operating beyond crisis point. Despite these warnings, the structural and financial pressures facing PSNI have continued to intensify. Since devolution, policing and justice funding has fallen significantly behind other public services, with police funding dropping from 3.8% of total Northern Ireland public expenditure in 2010 to 2.4% in 2023. When inflation is accounted for, PSNI now operates with approximately 40% fewer resources than at the point of devolution, at a time of increasing demand, more complex crime, and a persistent terrorist and paramilitary threat.

The absence of a stable, multiyear funding settlement has compounded these challenges. PSNI continues to rely on late, in year monitoring rounds to remain financially viable, undermining long term planning, workforce reform and transformation. Currently PSNI are planning for budgetary deficits over the next 3 financial years of £57 million, £92 million and £149 million. Existing reporting already shows that even a £21m gap this year forces short term ‘sticking plaster solutions’ rather than sustainable planning. A sequence of much larger deficits—£57m, £92m, £149m—would turn long term strategy into crisis management. While the December 2025 monitoring round provided welcome funding for recruitment and the recommended police pay uplift, this remains a short-term intervention rather than a sustainable solution. In year funding settlements have compounded these challenges. PSNI continues to rely on late, in year monitoring rounds to remain financially viable, undermining long-term planning, workforce reform and transformation.

Severe workforce pressures persist. The suspension of officer recruitment between 2022 and 2025 led to dangerously low officer numbers, negatively affecting morale, wellbeing and service resilience. Although recent recruitment campaigns represent an important first step in rebuilding towards the Chief Constable’s target of 7,000 officers by 2028, current numbers remain unsustainable and continued investment is essential to deliver the Workforce Recovery Plan. Officer safety and wellbeing are of acute concern.

Assaults on police officers remain unacceptably high, with officers routinely subjected to serious violence, including stabbings, vehicle ramming and sexual assaults. These attacks have profound personal, operational and organisational consequences, reducing police availability and increasing trauma, sickness and attrition. PFNI’s ‘Let Them Protect’ campaign highlights the urgent need for stronger sentencing, public support and improved protective measures, including the wider rollout of Taser as a less lethal tactical option.

The 2023 PSNI data breach, which exposed the personal details of nearly 9,500 officers and staff, continues to have lasting personal and professional consequences. The prolonged delay in resolving compensation claims has further damaged morale and trust, while evidence that dissident republicans obtained the data underscores the enduring security risk faced by officers and their families.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based upon the evidence presented, and the prevailing economic, political, and policing environment, the PFNI set out the following recommendations to the PRRB for the 2026/27 review of police pay, terms and conditions.

### Recommendation 1

The 2025/26 pay increase was insufficient to cover the inflationary reduction in real pay that has taken place in previous years. Unfortunately, the position of police pay is worse than this time last year, which is an unacceptable situation. Police Federation research shows that overall, federated ranks are 21.7% worse off compared to 2010. The Police Federation of England and Wales have made the following recommendation - the annual pay award for 2026/27 should be at least 7% and remain at 7% for the following three years.

PFNI are aware that the NPCC have recommended a pay award uplift recommendation of 3.5%, highlighting any pay award above 2.5% must be fully funded. PSA recommended a pay award of at least CPI plus 1%. The Scottish Police Federation agreed a minimum 3.5% uplift for 2026/2027 last year as part of a two year pay deal.

PFNI seeks immediate action to compensate for the current pay degradation and a clearly defined timeline to restore police pay. This should include substantially above inflation pay increases for the next number of years.

This should be in the form of an equal percentage rise across all ranks, reflecting pay parity with England and Wales colleagues, with similar application to the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) and the Dog Handler's Allowance.

Given the persistent, year on year delays in delivering the PSNI pay award, it is our position that an interest payment should be considered to address the financial loss and uncertainty officers experience as a result.

### Recommendation 2

The introduction of Unsociable Hours Allowance should CRTP be phased out. In conjunction with colleagues from PFEW, the PFNI seeks an increase to the percentage rate of the unsocial hours allowance for every full hour worked between 8pm and 6am on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10% to 20% and for the allowance to be reckonable for pension purposes.

### Recommendation 3

An increase to On-Call Allowance from £35 to £45 as a minimum, the payment to be reckonable for pension purposes and uplifted in line with the annual pay award to reflect the impact performing this duty and the adverse impact this continues to have on the work life balance of police officers.

#### **Recommendation 4**

An increase in annual leave entitlements for federated ranks as follows:

- An uplift in annual leave entitlement to align with colleagues in Police Scotland.
- Reduce the time taken to reach the top of the scale from 20 years to 5 years, so that 30 days (maximum entitlement) would be reached after 5 years.
- An option for officers to buy up to 5 days annual leave at the start of annual leave year.
- Introduce a period of 'Long Service Leave' (LSL) for officers. This would be a one-off period of 6 weeks' long service leave for federated ranks officers who have served for 10 or more years. This would be separate, and additional to, the annual leave (& public holidays) entitlement.

#### **Recommendation 5**

- The introduction of a temporary time-limited payment for Inspectors and Chief Inspectors, to be claimed when more than 48 hours are worked in any week.
- The introduction of a determination to facilitate Inspectors and Chief Inspectors to carry over, for a further 12-month period, any rest days in lieu not taken due to exceptional circumstances, exigencies of duty or work demands.

#### **Recommendation 6**

A determination is added to the PSNI Regulations stating that pay increments are payable annually. This would align the PSNI Determinations with Annex F of the England and Wales Police Regulations 2003.

#### **Recommendation 7**

An amendment to mutual aid payments to mirror the provisions in place for officers in place in Scotland.

#### **Recommendation 8**

An uplift in Police officer business mileage reimbursement to 55p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 35p thereafter (retain 5p per mile for passengers).

#### **Recommendation 9**

For Constables and Sergeants any outstanding rest days after 3 months should have the choice of being converted into pay, this would operate in a similar way to time off in lieu (TOIL).

For the Inspecting ranks this should be the case once the rest day reaches 12 months and they have been unable to take the rest day owed to them.

An option for officers to buy up to 5 days annual leave at the start of the annual leave year. This is quite common in the NHS and other organisations.

### **Recommendation 10**

PFNI believes that police officers are fully experienced earlier than presumed, and there should be a shorter Constable pay scale.

### **Recommendation 11**

Officers are entitled to know their shift pattern 90 days in advance. PFNI request that consideration to be given to a payment when excessive shifts are changed within the 90-day window.

### **Recommendation 12**

Bonus payments should be increased to reflect awards payable nationally and team recognition awards should be introduced in PSNI to ensure parity with colleagues in England and Wales.

### **Recommendation 13**

Annual uprating of allowances – In November 2023 staff associations sought an increase either in line with inflation or the corresponding pay award, for all allowances set at a flat rate where there is no uprating mechanism in place. We again request that the PRRB recommend this as a basic measure against continual reduction on the real terms value of these allowances.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is the twelfth annual written report submitted by the Police Federation for Northern Ireland (PFNI) to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB). It has been prepared as evidence for the 2026/27 review of the pay, terms and conditions of police officers serving within the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI). The contents of this submission have been made with reference to the remit letter published by the Justice Minister, Naomi Long dated 24 February 2026. (Appendix A) and the remit letter published by Sarah Jones MP, Minister of State for Policing and Crime on the 19<sup>th</sup> February 2026. (Appendix B).
- 1.2 The previous eleven reports produced by the PFNI provide, in detail, information on what we believe are the key issues within policing in Northern Ireland (NI) at that time. This report should be considered as supplementary to these details and does not seek to replicate the information previously provided nor the commentary but rather provides an updated position on these key issues.
- 1.3 Over the last twelve years the PFNI have been explicit in our concerns relating to policing in NI and the problems and delays with the pay review process. The PFNI believe that policing remains beyond the crisis point we have been warning about for some years and that appropriate and tangible steps are urgently necessary to address the very real and valid concerns of serving officers and staff associations.
- 1.4 Since 2010, the Northern Ireland Executive has consistently prioritised funding Health and Education, with Policing and Justice left behind. Funding levels for the PSNI have largely remained static over this 15-year period, with funding for Health almost doubling to £8.4bn and Education up by 25% to £3.3bn. Data from the Office of National Statistics shows that in 2010 Police funding accounted for 3.8% of total NI Public Expenditure, this fell to just 2.4% in 2023.

As a result, in real terms, the impact of inflation means that PSNI has now 40% less resources than at the point of devolution. This is at a time when policing is facing increased demand (including in non-crime areas such as mental health), more complex crime, and an enduring terrorist and paramilitary threat to our officers and communities.<sup>1</sup>

There are also significant structural weaknesses with how PSNI is funded. In Northern Ireland policing continues to be allocated an annual settlement only, often notified after the start of the financial year. Indeed, in the last financial year, PSNI could only break even with 15% or £121m additional funding secured by way of in-year Monitoring Rounds and again entered this year with a projected deficit of £21m. This lack of a consolidated and multi-year settlement has a negative impact on long-term planning, reform and transformation.

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<sup>1</sup>Source: [committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/152258/html/](https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/152258/html/)

Following the December 2025 monitoring round, the Department of Justice was allocated £11.6m including £7m for PSNI recruitment and £4.7m for an uplift to police pay. The Minister also welcomed £7m to meet the full cost of Year 1 of the PSNI’s workforce recovery plan. As a result, the Justice Minister confirmed funding for PSNI recruitment and the full recommended pay uplift for police officers.<sup>2</sup>

- 1.5 PSNI halted recruitment of student officers in October 2022, and this had a significant impact on Police officer numbers as officers continued to exit the organisation. The reduction in officer numbers had an impact on the morale, motivation and pressure on those officers who remained in service. On 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2025 PSNI launched an officer recruitment campaign, the first campaign in four years with an aim of boosting officer numbers to 7,000. At the close of the campaign PSNI had received 4,822 student officer applications.

In January 2026 PSNI launched a further officer recruitment campaign which had been planned and progressed at risk, in the absence of confirming funding.<sup>3</sup> The belated funding confirmation from the DOJ was received in December 2025. Chief Constable Jon Boutcher says he wants the Police Service of Northern Ireland to be seen as an “employer of choice” and be “representative of the community we serve”.

PFNI says the latest recruitment drive is the start of a re-building process that has the capability to deliver tangible change over time. PFNI Chair Liam Kelly said: *‘This Federation welcomes this important first step to bring officer numbers up to the 7,000 by 2028 as outlined in the Chief Constable’s Recovery Plan. Currently, we have 6,266 officers who include 231 student officers. This figure remains dangerously low and unsustainable for both our workforce and the public we serve.*

*Therefore, this latest recruitment effort is all about the much-needed rebuilding and restoration of police officer numbers. Year 1 of the Recovery Plan nears completion with a more significant uplift in officer numbers planned for Years 2 and 3. This will require ongoing additional funding from the Executive to ensure that PSNI officer numbers can continue to grow*<sup>4</sup>. At the close of the campaign PSNI had received 4,104 student officer applications.

- 1.6 Assaults on Police continue to rise, year on year, with officers being spat on, kicked, head-butted, punched, bitten and subject to sexual assault. Increasingly attacks on Police have seen Police vehicles being deliberately rammed by offenders. Data from the PSNI shows there were 2,630 assaults on officers between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025, with more than 100 reported incidents of police vehicles being rammed up to September 2025. “Unfortunately, a number of officers have been subjected to disgraceful and, quite frankly, disgusting behaviour being assaulted whilst simply doing their job.”

<sup>2</sup>[Long confirms PSNI recruitment funding and police officer pay uplift | Department of Justice](#)

<sup>3</sup>[The Police Service of Northern Ireland launches a new drive for student officers and police staff who ‘want to make a difference’ | PSNI](#)

<sup>4</sup>[PFNI Chairman: Recruitment drive is start of re-building officer numbers Police Federation NI](#)

Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton called for respect to be shown to officers *'It should never be accepted as 'part of the job' for anyone to be punched, kicked or spat at. Police officers come to work knowing that it's a tough calling, but they should expect to be able to do their duties without fear of attack.'*<sup>5</sup>

One neighbourhood officer suffered leg injuries after a police vehicle was rammed by a car in 2023. Two years on, the constable still deals with injuries and is "extremely hesitant" to use the stairs while carrying his newborn baby in case he falls.

A local policing team officer was subjected to a sexual assault while on duty in 2023 during the arrest of a man. *The PSNI said the man became verbally abusive, threatened to cut her throat, and said he was going to 'abuse' her. She said: 'He kissed my hand and placed his face into my chest and when I pushed him away, he leaned forward and placed his face on my chest again and nuzzled my chest with his face before I pushed him off again.'* The male was convicted of sexual assault in court and received a custodial sentence and was also subjected to a sexual offenders' prevention order for seven years.

A police officer has described being sprayed on the face with blood that was HIV positive as 'very stressful.' The officer was attending to a detained patient in Craigavon Area Hospital in August when he *'began shouting and started to get irate'*. She said he *'ripped his cannula out of his hand with some force which caused it to fling round the room and spray myself and another constable with blood. This blood got into my eye and mouth. This incident was very stressful as I am anxiously waiting on the results. It has left me [feeling] very shaken, and I do wonder if being subjected to this type of assault is worth all my efforts to keep our communities safe.'*<sup>6</sup>

On the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2025 PSNI reported that nine police officers from Derry City & Strabane were assaulted over the weekend. They were kicked, punched, bitten and spat on as they dealt with four separate incidents, three in the Strabane area and one in Derry City. They were spat on, hit on the head with glass, bitten, punched and kicked. Some of these officers were unable to continue with their shifts, as they required medical treatment, while others were able to remain on duty<sup>7</sup>.

In the early hours of the 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025 a Police officer was stabbed and required stitches to his leg while responding to a call in Derry City and Strabane. In total, three additional police officers and one custody detention officer were also assaulted. Widespread commendation of the attack followed with PFNI saying *'This is a shocking, brutal and barbaric attack on officers. They were set upon with a frightening viciousness. "One officer sustained a stab injury and required hospital treatment. The other officer was attacked at chest height, but their protective vest thankfully prevented the weapon causing serious injury'*<sup>8</sup>.

<sup>5</sup>[PSNI officers assaulted more than 2,500 times over 12 months](#)

<sup>6</sup>[PSNI: Officer left 'shaken' after being sprayed on the face with HIV positive blood -BBC News](#)

<sup>7</sup>[Nine officers assaulted - kicked, punched, bitten and spat on | PSNI](#)

<sup>8</sup>[Federation condemns 'brutal and barbaric knife attack' | Police Federation NI](#)

Fourteen PSNI officers were assaulted across Fermanagh, east Tyrone, Armagh and south Down in separate incidents on Boxing Day, 26<sup>th</sup> December 2025. The 14 assaults included a biting incident which led to one officer being hospitalised.

Two police officers were injured when a car rammed a patrol vehicle in Forkhill, in South Armagh. The car later crossed over the border, police said. As a result, two officers were injured and the patrol vehicle sustained damage which rendered it unusable<sup>9</sup>.

New figures have shown that Police vehicles are being rammed almost once a week. In 2025, 21 vehicles have required repairs at an estimated cost of £140,000, with the service emphasising that it means they may not be available to respond to situations where lives are in danger. DCC Singleton said: *'In these cases offenders are, in essence, using their vehicle as a weapon against us, and this is a scary and traumatising experience for any police officer to go through. It is a testament to the courage of our people that they will put themselves in situations where they are at risk, in order to protect communities from harm.'*<sup>10</sup>

This is the stark nature of some of the attacks on police officers in Northern Ireland, with the number of assaults on officers reaching a five-year high in February 2023. Currently, the daily average assault on police offences for the latest 12-month period (February 2025 to January 2026) is 7, a total of 2,624 offences. The figure for the same period in the previous year (February 2024 to January 2026) was 8, a total of 2,975 offences. This figure remains unacceptably high and this issue remains a priority for PFNI and our stakeholders.

Official crime statistics recorded a total of 2,810 assaults for the period 2024/25 - assault with injury on a Constable was 881 incidents, a decrease of 9.9% on the year 2023/24. Assault without injury on a Constable was 1,929 incidents, a decrease of 18.5% on the year 2023/24.

In June 2025, in response to the unacceptably high levels of assaults/attacks on police, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland launched the **'Let Them Protect'** campaign to highlight the escalating number of assaults on police officers and to push for stronger sentencing and greater public support for frontline policing<sup>11</sup>. At campaign launch, there were 9 assaults on police officers every single day in Northern Ireland. The multimedia campaign was jointly supported by the PSNI, the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The campaign was created to raise awareness of the growing frequency of attacks on PSNI officers. Highlighting the personal, operational, and service-wide impact of assaults and push for tougher sentencing for offenders and legislative reform.

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<sup>9</sup> [14 PSNI officers assaulted in St Stephen's Day incidents](#)

<sup>10</sup> [PSNI officers assaulted more than 2,500 times over 12 months](#)

<sup>11</sup> [Let Them Protect](#)

At the launch, PFNI Chair Liam Kelly emphasised that assaults are happening daily, describing the figures as *'These figures are shocking and appalling. It's high time we saw a much tougher approach with assailants who strike, kick, punch and spit at our colleagues.* At the campaign launch, PFNI revealed that nine PSNI officers report being assaulted every day and over the previous three years, there were 9,415 assaults, including 2,826 causing injuries.

In support of the campaign, Chief Constable Boutcher said *'it is simply not acceptable to assault or attack police officers. We cannot, and will not, simply stand by and accept it.'* The Justice Minister, Naomi Long said it was *'not acceptable that officers come under this kind of bombardment...that their lives are put at risk by being physically assaulted and attacked.'*

The Chairman of the Northern Ireland Policing Board, Mukesh Sharma, said being attacked was not anybody's *'normal day'* at work and added that *'nor should it be.'* Mr Sharma added that officers *'step forward when others step back'* putting their lives *'on the line for others every day'* and do not deserve to come to work to be *'kicked, bitten or assaulted in any other way'<sup>12</sup>.*

In January 2026 PFNI renewed its call for a wider roll out of Taser in PSNI, highlighting a serious knife attack on two officers in Londonderry, noting that it could easily have been fatal. PFNI state that many officers are reluctant to use firearms because they are a potentially lethal option, leaving them without an effective middle ground in violent confrontations.

Only a small number of specially trained PSNI officers currently carry Tasers, and overall Taser usage has declined in recent years. PFNI state this leaves frontline response and neighbourhood officers — the ones most frequently assaulted — without a vital non-lethal tool to protect themselves and the public.

The PSNI use of force statistical report outlines that between October 2024 and September 2025 PSNI officers drew or pointed their conventional firearm on 566 occasions, with the weapon being discharged on 1 occasion. This was an increase of 38% on the previous year. In the same period, the small number of specially trained PSNI officers drew their Taser on 299 occasions, an increase of 36%. The Taser was fired on 22 occasions, an increase of 38%.

The PFNI 'Let Them Protect' campaign stressed that assaults on officers reduce police availability for the community and that Tasers offer a safer, less-lethal alternative compared with firearms, batons, or PAVA spray. Other police services, including An Garda Síochána, have already expanded Taser access in response to rising attacks.

Evidence from across the UK shows Tasers reduce injuries to both officers and offenders by allowing greater distance and quicker resolution of violent incidents. PFNI proposed a pilot

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<sup>12</sup> [PSNI: 'Attacks on police should not be part of the job' - BBC News](#)

programme in the areas with the highest assault rates to demonstrate the impact on officer safety and public harm.

The PFNI Chairman said *'I think the wellbeing and welfare of our police officers has a higher priority than the wellbeing of somebody who's attacking them with a sword, or machete or a knife. It's a tactical option. It's a less lethal option, and again, as we've seen in that incident in Derry/Londonderry, we could quite easily have had two officers killed, and that's despite them having conventional firearms with them.'*

- 1.7 On the 8th of August 2023, the personal information (surnames, initials, ranks/grades, locations, and departments) of 9,483 police officers and staff working in the Police Service of Northern Ireland were published on a public website following a Freedom of Information request.

The inadvertent release of sensitive personal information led many officers to fear for their own safety and that of their families. This heightened sense of vulnerability caused stress and anxiety among the force. To help officers and staff mitigate risks, the PSNI offered a £500 payment to each affected member. This fund was intended to enable them to take practical security measures and provide reassurance to themselves and their families.

The breach negatively affected morale within the PSNI. At least eight officers cited the data breach as a factor in their decision to leave the service, indicating a tangible impact on staff retention. An independent review highlighted outdated data management practices and a siloed approach to information security within the PSNI. The breach exposed weaknesses in internal structures and prompted calls for modernisation and reform.

Two men were charged in 2025 after police officer data from the 2023 breach was found on their phones, confirming that Violent Dissident Republicans held sensitive officer information obtained from the data breach and that the threat remains active. This case remains active with a future Crown Court trial at a date to be confirmed. Overall, the PSNI data breach had significant personal, financial, operational, and cultural repercussions for the officers involved, affecting their sense of security, trust in the organisation, and career decisions.

PFNI engaged directly with the Information Commissioner's Office, presenting personal testimonies from officers that detailed the significant impacts experienced by both officers and their families as a result of the breach. PFNI continues to support its members through ongoing legal proceedings aimed at securing appropriate compensation for the officers affected by the data breach and its adverse consequences.

The PFNI has expressed strong dismay over the prolonged delay in settling the PSNI data breach case. PFNI highlighted that the ongoing uncertainty and slow progress in reaching a settlement have caused significant frustration and demoralisation among officers affected by the breach. It was emphasised that officers feel let down by the lack of timely

resolution, which has extended their anxiety and mistrust regarding the handling of their personal data. This delay has not only impacted morale but also undermined confidence in the PSNI's ability to protect its staff and resolve critical issues efficiently. This underscores the urgent need for a swift and fair settlement to restore trust and provide closure for the officers involved.

In February 2026 a universal offer of £7,500 plus £1,200 costs was made to all claimants in the case. This was in full and final settlement of each claim and was a welcome development. However, for many officers the impact on them and their families is not sufficiently addressed by this offer and the matter will remain ongoing for some time as officers seek appropriate compensation.

- 1.8 In 2023 at the PFNI Annual Conference, a motion was passed that called on the Chief Constable to seek legislation that would set out clear timeframes in relation to officers that are being dealt with under the misconduct regulations. This would benefit both officers, the organisation and assist with public confidence.

PFNI have continued to highlight the impact delayed misconduct investigations have on officers. Misconduct investigations are a critical component of maintaining public trust, organisational integrity, and officer accountability within the PSNI. However, prolonged delays in concluding these investigations have significant consequences for our members.

Delays in misconduct investigations create significant personal and professional pressures for PSNI officers. Prolonged uncertainty leads to anxiety, reputational harm, financial impacts and reduced wellbeing, especially when officers spend years suspended or restricted. These restrictions limit their ability to perform core duties, stall career progression, and contribute to feelings of stagnation.

Extended investigations also affect wider teams: workloads increase, trust can erode, and morale suffers when processes are viewed as slow or inconsistent. Even when allegations are unfounded, officers may still face lasting reputational damage, as lengthy delays create a perception of guilt that can strain relationships with colleagues and the public. In the absence of legislation or regulatory change, PFNI continue to seek agreement on an internal policy on timelines as an interim measure.

- 1.9 On 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 significant public order occurred in Northern Ireland, dominated by widespread riots, violent disorder, and sustained attacks on police, triggered by community tensions following a high-profile criminal case. Violence spread across multiple towns, resulting in over 100 injured officers, dozens of arrests, and the deployment of specialist public-order tactics.

Riots erupted after two Romanian-speaking teenagers were charged with attempted rape in Ballymena. Disorder quickly escalated, driven by anti-immigration sentiment and sectarian tensions. Over the two-week period 107 police officers were injured with 56 people were arrested, with 27 remanded. Police deployed water cannon and fired 32 AEPs

(attenuating energy projectiles). The aftermath of the riots saw homes, businesses, and vehicles damaged or destroyed and a mass exodus of Roma families from Ballymena.

Due to the current state of PSNI's limited resources and to maintain operational effectiveness, as disorder escalated, PSNI made a formal request for mutual aid from police forces in Great Britain. These were deployed mid-June, supporting public-order operations during one of the most intense periods of unrest in recent years. The additional resources permitted rest cycles for officers who had been heavily committed since Day 1 of the public order and ensured PSNI could respond to simultaneous incidents without losing control of the wider response.

June 2025 represented one of the most volatile periods of public disorder in Northern Ireland in recent years. The scale of violence, the number of injured officers, and the breadth of locations affected highlight a significant strain on PSNI limited resources, deep community tensions, and the need for sustained public-order capability.

- 1.10 The Omagh Inquiry commenced formal hearings in 2024 and has required extensive disclosure, legal engagement, and document-handling from PSNI. The Inquiry's own published financial reports show expenditure exceeding £4 million between April and September 2025. While these figures reflect Inquiry spending rather than PSNI's internal costs, they illustrate the scale and intensity of the process.

PSNI has not published a standalone cost figure for its internal contribution, but court evidence and internal reporting confirm a substantial resource burden. This includes significant internal expenditure on staff abstraction, overtime, legal support, and specialist disclosure work. High volumes of document review, redaction, and intelligence-handling require senior staff, analysts, and legal advisors, generating sustained cost pressures.

There is also an opportunity cost, resources diverted to the Inquiry reduce capacity for other policing priorities, including legacy investigations and operational support. The Inquiry has contributed to wider financial strain within PSNI, already operating under constrained budgets. Inquiry related abstractions reduce operational resilience and limits the organisation's ability to respond to emerging threats or high-risk incidents. Sustained high workload has increased pressure on teams responsible for disclosure, legal liaison, and information governance.

Operationally, the diversion of resources has disrupted core policing functions and delayed other major investigations. Reputationally, the Inquiry continues to place PSNI under sustained scrutiny, with potential implications for public confidence and stakeholder relationships.

- 1.11 In April and May 2023 PSNI conducted a workplace cultural audit carried out by an independent external consultancy firm. The key findings of the survey evidenced there were several underlying assumptions that many employees held, that drive patterns of behaviour in the organisation.

Assumptions:

- We must deliver above all else.
- We should be fearful.
- Our strength comes from being cohesive.

Following consideration of the survey, through engagement with the staff associated the following recommendations were prioritised:

- Maintain and strengthen positives – recognising and celebrating excellence.
- Build trust and reduce fear – empowerment.
- Invest in people – build capability and capacity for all.
- Review promotion process – shared belief in a fair and equitable process.
- Show employees they are valued – reward and recognition of one team approach.

Following on from the cultural audit, in October 2025 PSNI launched its first Inclusion Survey with over 50% of officers and staff taking part in the survey with initial results showing:

- 78% of respondents stated they felt respected and valued by their colleagues.
- 72% of respondents stated they felt valued and respected by their line manager.
- Only 21% feel PSNI recognise the work that they do.
- Only 28% feel valued and appreciated for their work.
- Only 28% agree that PSNI is a well led and managed organisation.
- The vast majority of the workforce report confidence in identifying and reporting inappropriate behaviour.
- Only 33% of officers agree that if they make a genuine mistake at work, they will be supported.
- 48% of officers agree they feel proud to work at PSNI.

The Inclusion Survey was an initiative as part of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2025-2023, which identifies a Workforce Focused approach as one of PSNI's key strategic aims. By understanding staff experiences, perceptions of inclusion, and areas for improvement, PSNI can take targeted action to foster a more supportive, equitable, and engaging workplace.

1.12 The House of Commons Northern Ireland Affairs Committee focus heavily on policing capacity, funding pressures, legacy issues, and community confidence. Previous comments consistently highlight structural challenges facing the PSNI and the wider justice system. The 2025–26 inquiry into Policing and Security in Northern Ireland inquiry is ongoing, having opened on 24 September 2025, and the Committee is still taking written and oral evidence. The Committee announced that the inquiry aims to examine:

- The current policing and security threat picture in Northern Ireland
- The operational capacity, funding, and resilience of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI)
- The continuing impact of dissident republican terrorism and paramilitary activity
- The safety and wellbeing of police officers and staff, including attacks, threats, and retention issues
- The effectiveness of cross-border and UK-wide security cooperation in the post-Brexit context.

Although the Committee has not yet produced conclusions, recurring themes in written and oral evidence include:

- Persistent Security Threats
- PSNI Resourcing and Workforce Pressures
- Officer Safety and Intimidation
- Legacy of the Past and Policing Confidence
- UK Government Responsibility.

A central question under examination is the extent to which the UK Government adequately funds and supports policing and national security functions in Northern Ireland, given that these pressures are not solely devolved matters. The Committee will publish a formal report once evidence sessions conclude.

- 1.13 In December 2025 the Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) published its Eighth Report since its creation in 2017. In December 2025 the Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) published its Eighth Report since its creation in 2017. The IRC monitors progress towards ending paramilitary activity in Northern Ireland and makes recommendations to inform government priorities and commitments. November 2025 marked the tenth anniversary of the Fresh Start Agreement, and the IRC report uses this milestone to take stock of what has been achieved and what still remains to be done on tackling and ending paramilitarism.

*'24/25 is the first financial year since records began in 1969 in which there were no security related deaths reported by the PSNI in Northern Ireland. We welcome this positive development.'*

*'Paramilitarism remains a live and serious issue, with paramilitary groups still posing a threat to communities, individuals, and society. The intimidation, coercive control, and threats linked to paramilitary groups persist, and the structures of paramilitary groups that continue intact can be used to facilitate organised crime and other forms of violence. A particularly serious manifestation of that reality over the last two years has been the link between paramilitarism and racist violence connected to the issue of immigration.'*

*'The comprehensive and innovative approach of the Fresh Start Agreement remains the correct direction of travel, and a dedicated focus on paramilitarism continues to be required. We advocate for the 'Twin Track' approach: acknowledging that policing and criminal justice measures are essential in bringing paramilitarism to an end, but they must be accompanied by specific policies and practice to address the socioeconomic disadvantages and vulnerabilities of individuals and communities most affected.'*

The IRC make three recommendations in their report:

1. Sustained, strategic investment in the policing and criminal justice system is required.
2. A particular focus on paramilitarism needs to be maintained after the end of the current mandate for the Executive Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime in March 2027.
3. A whole-system approach to tackling paramilitarism, with collaboration, suitable structures, and ownership of responsibilities.

*'The Twin Track approach requires sustained, strategic investment in the criminal justice system, including policing and problem-solving justice. This must be supported by focused work to build safer and more resilient communities. This work is an investment in Northern Ireland's future.'*

The IRC correctly identify paramilitarism has proven itself a resilient phenomenon and comment. *'We strongly believe that the need will remain for continued resourcing of these measures across the board, which is a key theme of this Report. We appreciate that this is a time of budgetary constraint. However, resolving the issue of paramilitarism is fundamental to consolidating the peace process as well as ensuring Northern Ireland achieves its full social and economic potential.'*

*'We maintain that the work to tackle paramilitarism is a worthwhile and necessary investment in Northern Ireland's future peace and prosperity.'*

While acknowledging the competing priorities of the Department of Justice IRC make the following comment *'there are longstanding challenges facing the Northern Ireland criminal justice system which have impacted public confidence in the rule of law and thereby hampered efforts to end paramilitarism. These include adequate resources for all criminal justice agencies, police recruitment, issues with bail and remand, prison overcrowding, and delays across the court system. This means a renewed commitment to sustained, strategic investment in all areas of the criminal justice system, including policing, is necessary if the Fresh Start goal of definitively ending paramilitarism is to be achieved.'*

The IRC welcomed the specific focus which the Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) has brought to tackling criminality linked to paramilitary groups and the new structures which facilitated greater interagency cooperation. *'PCTF has had considerable successes, in particular in tackling illegal drugs. Decisions about the future of PCTF must prioritise how that focus can be sustained and interagency cooperation maintained.'*

The IRC highlighted the requirement to increase investment in neighbourhood policing. *'Neighbourhood policing is essential to building relationships with communities and, therefore, to the tackling of paramilitarism. Properly resourced neighbourhood policing teams can be more responsive, creating a greater sense of safety and reducing any lingering perception among communities that paramilitaries are needed to maintain safety or public order. While we commend the efforts of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) to develop innovative ways to mitigate the strain on neighbourhood policing and build relationships with the public, this alone will not resolve the issue. We call for greater investment in neighbourhood policing teams.'*

The IRC highlight the growing evidence of interaction between paramilitary organisations and organised crime gangs, with specific reference to *'the involvement of paramilitaries in intimidation around housing and compelling evidence of a paramilitary dimension to race and hate crime.... and have highlighted the connectivity between drugs and paramilitarism.'* and *'the link between ongoing paramilitarism and domestic violence which heightens the fear for female victims and increases the risk of further abuse when seeking support services.'*

ICR have stated in 2024/25 there was evidence of paramilitary involvement in racist incidents that occurred around the highly charged issue of immigration.

Based on the analysis above, IRC conclude that paramilitarism in Northern Ireland is different to criminality and organised crime elsewhere in the UK and beyond. There are clear overlaps between paramilitary groups and organised crime groups, but there are significant differences too, and those differences have to be taken into account when devising policy responses.

When summarising paramilitary activity in 2024/2015 ICR concludes - *a number of high-profile paramilitary-linked incidents are noted in this reporting period, including very severe forms of violence, as well as incidents connected to the illegal drugs trade, feuds within and between groups, and riots connected to racism and anti-immigration sentiment. While some criminal acts were explicitly paramilitary, others were more difficult to define, such as where a paramilitary dimension was suspected but where the PSNI did not publicly attribute responsibility to paramilitary leaders.*'

Looking forward IRC are clear on the requirement to adequately resource the PSNI,

*'In order to provide a robust policing and criminal justice response, frontline services must be adequately resourced. We are cognisant of the financial realities of the public sector, but it is clear that the budget for the Department of Justice is out of step with other departments, and around 65% of that already squeezed budget is spent on policing.'*

*'The PSNI budget has remained at almost the same level since 2010, which, when adjusted for inflation, represents 15 years of real-terms cuts. Under these circumstances it is not surprising that the PSNI is facing a £23m budget shortfall and growing officer shortages.'*

*Police are on the frontline of dealing with paramilitarism, so it is essential that they are appropriately resourced. The Chief Constable, Jon Boutcher, has repeatedly raised the challenges the PSNI faces in carrying out their duties with their current budget allocations. The PSNI is reported to have experienced the largest expenditure reduction of any UK police force since 2010. This has had an impact on officer numbers, which have fallen as low as 6,233, significantly less than the 7,500 recommended in the 1999 Patten report.'*

*'The PCTF continues to make significant inroads: seizing assets and proceeds of crime, arresting suspects and disrupting paramilitary-linked criminality, including drug dealing.'*

*'The ongoing resourcing pressures faced by the PSNI make delivering proactive and preventative policing, community reassurance, and public safety an enduring challenge.'*

*'In particular, the decline in the number of Neighbourhood Officers working on the ground in communities reduces the ability of the PSNI to engage and address the needs of those communities. These pressures will only increase when EPPOC funding falls away, unless there is a clear mechanism for its replacement. As March 2027 approaches, there is as yet no clarity for what will happen to PCTF when Programme funding is no longer available.'*

*Other specialist parts of the PSNI such as Organised Crime Branch, Terrorism Investigation Unit and the Tactical Support Groups also play important roles in tackling paramilitarism.'*

The IRC go on to make specific commentary on the importance of properly resourced Neighbourhood Policing: *'We remain convinced that Neighbourhood Policing is vital to effectively dealing with paramilitarism.'*

*Neighbourhood Policing has been particularly affected by the PSNI's resourcing issues, and the number of Neighbourhood Police officers has dropped to 558; 394 fewer than the 952 the PSNI has said it needs to provide an effective Neighbourhood Policing service to its communities. Over the last five years, the number of Neighbourhood Police has consistently fallen, and in parallel, the percentage of respondents to the Northern Ireland Life and Times Survey who agree that the PSNI keeps their community safe has dropped from 55% to 34%.'*

The report stresses repeatedly that policing and justice agencies face long-standing resource challenges, and that these funding pressures directly hinder efforts to end paramilitarism. It specifically highlights problems with:

- Police recruitment constraints
- System-wide resourcing pressures affecting the justice sector
- The need for strategic, sustained investment in policing and criminal justice to meet Fresh Start Agreement goals

The IRC warns that inadequate funding for the criminal justice system—including policing—risks undermining efforts to tackle paramilitarism. They IRC are also very clear on the need for greater investment in neighbourhood policing:

- They note the pressures on PSNI's neighbourhood policing capacity.
- State that the PSNI has attempted to mitigate these pressures through innovative measures.
- Concludes that these efforts are insufficient without additional investment.
- Calls directly for more funding for neighbourhood policing in order to reduce the influence of paramilitary groups and restore public confidence.

The report also highlights that expanding problem solving justice initiatives—many of which depend on PSNI participation—requires additional resources. It notes that PSNI is actively working to embed these approaches, but expansion would require increased funding.

The Commission warns that insufficient resources across policing and justice will jeopardise the goal of ending paramilitary activity, adding that the consequences will be felt across society if sustained investment does not continue.

In summary, the challenges faced by PSNI in relation to paramilitarism are:

- Ongoing paramilitary coercion and control
- Paramilitary involvement in organised crime
- Rising racist and hate related violence connected to paramilitary influence
- Persistence and resilience of paramilitary groups despite progress
- Continued fear and community harm
- Increasing complexity of policing demands
- Need for sustained, coordinated multi-agency action

In short, while the security situation has shown positive indicators, the scale, persistence, and growing complexity of paramilitary-linked harm places increasing financial and operational strain on the PSNI, underscoring the need for robust and predictable funding to meet these continuing threats effectively.

## 2. THE POLICING ENVIRONMENT

Northern Ireland’s policing context remains deeply shaped by post conflict dynamics and political division. Post conflict sensitivities continue to influence operational policing, with the PSNI still operating in a society where paramilitary influence persists, and some communities remain mistrustful of police. This is a persistent theme identified across official reports.

The PSNI also faces unique pressures due to legacy (Troubles related) cases, which successive Chief Constables warn could “financially cripple” frontline policing because of high litigation and investigation costs. Estimates suggest a potential £1 billion bill over the next decade for civil cases alone.

Policing continues to sit in a highly politicised space, with responsibility shared across the Northern Ireland Executive, the Department of Justice, Westminster (for national security), and oversight by the Northern Ireland Policing Board. The Policing Board itself includes political appointees reflecting the major parties, reinforcing policing's political salience.

The terror threat level remains significant, though reduced from severe to substantial in 2024, meaning an attack is still likely. Policing continues to operate under threat from dissident republican groups.

Financial pressures—including legacy litigation costs—significantly constrain the service. Officer numbers have fallen well below recommended levels, with only about 4,500 deployable officers, and despite new pay awards and recruitment funding, rebuilding strength will take years.

The PSNI operates in one of the UK’s most complex political and security environments, with sustained pressure on budgets and staffing and high expectations from both the public and political levels.

This section of our submission provides updated commentary on two key aspects of policing that are significantly affected by political decision-making: namely the pay review process and associated remit letters, and the setting of the PSNI budget.

### Pay Review Process

- 2.1 It is deeply frustrating that, twelve years after the introduction of what was intended to be an evidence based-, independent pay review system, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland still feels obliged to begin each submission by scrutinising the process itself. We would far rather devote our efforts entirely to presenting the evidence required for a fair and robust pay review. Yet the realities of how the system continues to function—both nationally and locally—leave us no alternative but to highlight serious, ongoing concerns.
- 2.2 The PRRB process is the only mechanism through which police officers’ pay, terms, and conditions are independently reviewed. It is therefore central to the policing landscape. Since 2014, however, its operation has had a profound and often negative effect on morale, motivation, and officers’ confidence in a system that was supposed to provide fairness, transparency, and independence.
- 2.3 The shortcomings that have characterised the PRRB since its inception—repeated deviations from independence, opaque decision making, and political interference—have

been well-documented in our submissions over the past decade. While this commentary provides an update rather than a repetition of previous detail, it is impossible to ignore the cumulative impact: for twelve consecutive years, the PFNI and our members have witnessed a process that appears neither impartial nor genuinely independent.

- 2.4 The most recent pay review round has only reinforced this view. In our assessment, the PRRB process is now totally ineffective. The Government not only sets the PRRB's remit but also defines the financial and political parameters within which recommendations must sit. Even when the PRRB makes evidence-based recommendations, the Government can choose not to implement them.
- 2.5 This strips the process of any meaningful independence. The PFNI believes strongly that:
- The PRRB must make recommendations free from political or financial constraint.
  - Affordability is a matter for Government—not the PRRB.
  - The review body should focus solely on what officers should be paid based on evidence, not what Government is willing to fund.
- 2.6 When recommendations are shaped in advance by Treasury limits or political priorities, the process ceases to be independent and becomes merely administrative. Officers deserve a mechanism that acts in their interests, reflects the realities of policing, and upholds the principles on which it was established.
- 2.7 Until the fundamental flaws at the heart of the PRRB are addressed, the PFNI will continue to challenge its operation. Our commitment is unwavering: to ensure that police officers in Northern Ireland receive pay, conditions, and recognition that are fair, justified, and genuinely independently assessed.
- 2.8 The Remit Letter 2026/27 from the Minister of State for Policing and Crime, Sarah Jones MP, to the Police Remuneration Review Body published in February 2026, states *'We accepted your recommendation for the 2025/26 pay award. However, since it came in well above the figures we set out as affordable within our evidence, we again had to take difficult decisions and make savings elsewhere in the Home Office's budgets to provide additional funding to forces to help with the increased costs. We undertook a rigorous in-year savings exercise and put in place enhanced spending controls, finding efficiencies across various programmes and reducing discretionary spend. As the Spending Review confirmed, all pay must be funded from Departmental budgets and there will be no additional funding available for pay settlements. During this pay round, you will receive evidence from my department, HM Treasury and key stakeholders. My department's evidence will set out the funds available to policing for 2026/27, following the Spending Review in June, as well as the recruitment and retention context alongside pay and earnings data, and will provide an update on our Police Reform White Paper.'*

This would appear to be prematurely directing the PRRB to make a pay award recommendation based on affordability, rather than make an independent, evidence-based, decision about what they consider fair pay.

- 2.9 The Minister of State for Policing and Crime made the following commentary in relation to delayed pay awards *'The police pay year begins on 1 September and we are committed to announcing pay awards as close to this date as possible. To support this, I would be grateful if you could submit your report at the earliest point that allows you to give due*

*consideration to the relevant evidence. To support with this, the Government will provide its written evidence as soon as possible after the police funding settlement is published, as this will inform the affordability position.'*

2.10 In their eleventh report on Northern Ireland the PRRB made the following comments –

*'We observe that the latest pay award for the federated and superintending ranks was received in December 2024 instead of September 2024. This was earlier than in recent years but still the ninth consecutive time that the annual pay award for our remit group in Northern Ireland was received late.'*<sup>13</sup>

*'We wish to emphasise the cumulative damage to officer morale from repeated late receipt of the annual pay award. We recognise that other public sector workforces in Northern Ireland have also experienced prolonged delays with their pay awards because of the particular political and budgetary context. However, police officers provide invaluable support to their many public sector partners and are our remit group and therefore our priority. We hope that the improved timing with the pay award last year can be built on and that this year it is paid on time.'*

PRRB further commented, *'The PSNI advised us that its officers were experiencing the same cost of living effects as officers in England and Wales as a result of inflation, and that this was further compounded by delays in authorised pay awards.'*

PRRB commented as follows on the evidence submitted by PFNI in relation to delays implementing pay awards, *'It added that it was crucial to remember that police officers in Northern Ireland were currently facing the consequences of the eighth consecutive delay in implementing recommendations from the pay review process.'*

*It said it had previously presented evidence on the impact of these delays on morale within the PSNI and the real-life implications of such disregard for the personal finances of serving police officers, especially during a time of widespread concern about the cost of living. It stressed that consideration had to be given to the cumulative impact of year-on-year delays on officers in relation to their welfare and wellbeing. The PFNI advised us that this remained a major concern for the PFNI and a significant source of anger and disillusionment among its members'.*

Year after year, the PRRB has explicitly called on the government to implement police pay awards in a timely manner, repeatedly stating that the continued delays are wholly unacceptable. Yet, despite these clear and consistent warnings, little has changed. The same unacceptable delays persist, fostering growing dismay, anger, and frustration among our members. There appears to be no meaningful progress, no accountability, and no consequences for either the Department of Justice (DOJ) or the Department of Finance (DOF). This prolonged inaction has caused lasting damage to our members' confidence in the system and has seriously undermined trust in what is supposed to be a fair, independent, and transparent pay review process.

On behalf of our members, the PFNI formally records its profound dismay, anger, and disillusionment with the current police pay process. At a time when our members are grappling with a continuing cost of living crisis and continue to endure the consequences

<sup>13</sup> [PRRB Northern Ireland 2025 report.pdf](#)

of the most significant data breach in the history of UK policing, they have once again been forced to wait for their pay award. This latest delay has compounded an already intolerable situation, with our members receiving their 2025 pay award four months after their colleagues in England and Wales. Consideration must be given to the cumulative impact of year-on-year delays on officers in relation to their welfare and wellbeing. Such repeated delays demonstrate a systemic failure that shows a clear disregard for the welfare, morale, and professionalism of police officers in Northern Ireland. Given the persistent, year on year delays in delivering the PSNI pay award, it is our position that an interest payment should be considered to address the financial loss and uncertainty officers experience as a result.

2.11 In addition to the concerns outlined above, the PFNI has consistently experienced delays in accessing the PRRB report, which has further frustrated and undermined confidence in the pay review process. In correspondence with the Department of Justice (DOJ) in May 2024, the PFNI formally requested that a copy of the PRRB report be shared once it was received by the DOJ. While the report was received by the Justice Minister on 26 June 2024, it was not shared with the PFNI as a key stakeholder until 9 October 2024—more than three months after its receipt.

While the PFNI acknowledged at the time that the report was ultimately shared in confidence prior to the Minister accepting and ratifying the PRRB recommendations, this did little to alleviate the significant concern surrounding the delay. The PFNI found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to justify to our membership why a key stakeholder was excluded from accessing a finalised, independent report for such a prolonged period, particularly when the recommendations within the report are fixed and remain unchanged.

The PFNI does, however, note that in 2025 the PRRB report was shared with us in August, representing a welcome improvement in engagement and transparency. While this earlier sharing is appreciated, it only serves to highlight that previous delays were avoidable. The PFNI now expects that this practice will continue as a matter of course and not as an exception. As a recognised key stakeholder in the police pay process, the PFNI should routinely receive the PRRB report at the earliest possible opportunity once it is received by the DOJ.

The PFNI reiterates that timely access to the PRRB report is essential to maintaining trust, transparency, and confidence in the pay review process. Any future delays will further erode confidence among our members and reinforce the perception of a system that consistently fails to treat police officers in Northern Ireland with the fairness and respect they deserve.

2.12 We reiterate this point year after year, yet despite its fundamental importance, it continues to be overlooked or disregarded. Police officers are unique among public sector workers in that they cannot join a trade union nor take industrial action. This statutory restriction removes from them the most basic mechanism available to workers to advocate for fair pay and conditions. In the absence of these rights, it is imperative that the processes governing police pay are demonstrably fair, balanced, and responsive, and that officers can have confidence that their interests are being properly considered. Government Departments must therefore engage meaningfully with, and respond to, the needs of those serving in the police service. It is wholly unacceptable for the concerns of police officers to be marginalised simply because they are legally prohibited from

withdrawing their labour or exerting industrial pressure. The lack of industrial rights should demand greater care and responsibility from Government, not indifference. In this context, it is welcome that the PRRB acknowledged this principle in its latest report and reflected as follows in its commentary.

*‘We also give weight to the fact that police officers, unlike the vast majority of employees in the public and private sectors, are prohibited from taking industrial action. We highlight that over the past year some employers have agreed significantly enhanced pay deals as a result of industrial action or the threat of such action. We were also mindful in setting a pay award of the practicalities and pressures of policing on officers’ personal lives.’*

*‘As part of our work, we considered the impact of pay negotiations and recent industrial disputes across the public sector. This is an important factor in our deliberations, given the prohibition on police officers taking industrial action in contrast to the vast majority of workers in both the public and private sectors. This year policing parties, both employer representatives and staff associations, have emphasised that this restriction must be recognised in setting a pay award for police officers.’*

*‘As we have said previously, the prohibition on police officers taking industrial action means that we have a moral obligation to deliver a just, fair and equitable pay award. We are conscious that over the past year some employers have agreed significantly enhanced pay deals as a result of industrial action or the threat of such action. In a number of cases, pay has been boosted as a result of strike action. Given these outcomes, we have therefore given weight to the inability of police officers to take equivalent action in formulating our recommendation for a pay award for 2025/26.’*

Our members have clearly observed that other public sector professionals—particularly those who retain the right to strike—have secured more favourable pay outcomes. Since 2010, policing has fallen markedly behind professions with which it was once reasonably benchmarked, including experienced nurses and teachers. It is difficult to ignore the correlation between those improved outcomes and the fact that such professions have, in recent years, been forced to resort to industrial action to secure fair treatment. Police officers, denied that option, increasingly feel they have become the “easy target” for restraint and delay, despite facing ever more violent, complex, and demanding working conditions.

Police officers deserve a pay award that properly reflects current cost of living pressures, the unique and onerous responsibilities placed upon them by society, and the significant restrictions imposed on both their professional and private lives—including the absence of industrial rights. The PFNI feel strongly that one of the major reasons for policing disinvestment has been tied to the lack of industrial rights our members face. After all, every public service has had to use their right to strike in recent years to secure a fair pay deal - which is an option not available to police officers. This principle is not optional; it is fundamental to the integrity of the police pay review process and must be applied consistently if trust and confidence in that process are to be maintained.

- 2.13 The PFNI continues to recognise the theoretical merits of a pay review process that allows all key policing stakeholders to engage on an equal footing through the submission of robust and meaningful evidence. However, the ongoing and well documented- failures of the current system have so significantly undermined confidence in the process that it can no longer be viewed as effective or fit for purpose.

As a direct consequence, the PFNI has, for the fourth consecutive year, taken the exceptional step of submitting a substantially reduced written submission and has aligned itself with colleagues in England and Wales in calling for a fundamentally different approach to police officer pay—one that is genuinely meaningful, timely, and free from unnecessary bureaucracy.

The PFNI’s decision reflects not disengagement, but a clear signal that the existing process is failing to deliver fair or credible outcomes for police officers. In its current form, the process lacks both transparency and accountability, and it has proven incapable of responding adequately to the unique constraints placed upon police officers, including the absence of industrial rights. The continued expectation that PFNI participate fully in a system that repeatedly fails to command the confidence of those it serves is neither reasonable nor sustainable.

In light of these persistent failures, the PFNI believes there is now a compelling case for direct engagement on pay and conditions between the PFNI, the PSNI, and Government. Furthermore, serious consideration must be given to alternative dispute resolution mechanisms, including structured mediation and, where necessary, binding arbitration. Such approaches would provide a more credible, equitable, and efficient framework for determining police pay—one that reflects the unique status of police officers and restores a measure of trust, legitimacy, and integrity to the process.

2.14 PFNI agree with the previous PRRB definition in relation to parity – *‘We define parity as meaning the same pay scale and allowances across the police service in England, Wales and Northern Ireland to reflect the fact that the role of police officer is fundamentally the same across all three areas, while also recognising the need for variation in geographical allowances to reflect exceptional local conditions. This means that the NITA, which is unique to Northern Ireland, is from a Northern Ireland perspective the one allowance excluded from the parity principle. On all non-geographical allowances, the PSNI should plan for convergence with England and Wales’.*

2.15 The following information is provided as a summary of some of the issues which have arisen following recommendations made by the PRRB relating to issues of pay for police officers in NI over the last number of years (See table below).

Year	PRRB Recommendation	NI Outcome	Delay
2019/20	A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officers pay points for all ranks – from September 2019.	Delayed until February 2020	6 months
	An increase of 2.5% in the current level of the NITA – from September 2019.	Delayed until February 2020	6 months
	Dog Handlers Allowance should increase by 2.5% - from September 2019.	Delayed until February 2020	6 months
2020/21	Removal of the lowest point on the Sergeants' pay scale – from September 2020.	Delayed until January 2022	17 months
	A consolidated increase of 2.5% to all police officers pay points for all ranks – from September 2020.	Delayed until December 2020	4 months
	An increase of 2.5% in the current level of NITA – from September 2020.	Delayed until December 2020	4 months
	Dogs Handlers Allowance should increase by 2.5% - from September 2020.	Delayed until December 2020	4 months
2021/22	Pay point 0 of the Constable pay scale is uplifted by £250 – from September 2021.	Delayed until March 2022	7 months
	A 1% increase in the NITA for all police officers – from September 2021.	Delayed until March 2022	7 months
2022/23	A consolidated increase of £1,900 to all police officers pay points for all ranks.	Delayed until February 2023	6 months
	A 5% increase has also been applied to the NI Transitional Allowance.	Delayed until February 2023	6 months
	A 5% increase to Dog Handler's Allowance.	Delayed until February 2023	6 months

<b>2023/24</b>	A consolidated increase of 7% to all police officers pay points for all ranks – from September 2023.	Delayed until April 2024	8 months
	An increase of 7% in the NITA for all police officers – from September 2023.	Delayed until April 2024	8 months
	An increase of 7% in the Dog Handlers Allowance – from September 2023.	Delayed until April 2024	8 months
<b>2024/25</b>	A consolidated increase of 4.75% to all police officers pay points for all ranks – from September 2023.	Delayed until December 2024	3 months
	An increase of 4.75% in the NITA for all police officers – from September 2023.	Delayed until December 2024	3 months
	An increase of 4.75% in the Dog Handlers Allowance and the additional rate for officers with more than one dog be raised from 25% to 50% of the rate for the first dog – from September 2023.	Delayed until December 2024	3 months
<b>2025/26</b>	A consolidated increase of 4.2% to all police officers pay points for all ranks – from September 2023.	Delayed until January 2026	4 months
	An increase of 4.2% in the NITA for all police officers – from September 2023.	Delayed until January 2026	4 months
	An increase of 4.2% in the Dog Handlers Allowance and the additional rate for officers with more than one dog be raised from 25% to 50% of the rate for the first dog – from September 2023.	Delayed until January 2026	4 months

<b>Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2021</b>	Delayed until March 2022	7 months
<b>Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2022</b>	Delayed until February 2023	6 months
<b>Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2023</b>	Delayed until November 2023	2 months
<b>No delays since September 2023</b>		

- 2.16 Taken together, the scale, frequency, and persistence of these issues demonstrate a clear and continuing deterioration in the police pay process over recent years. Were similar failures to affect police officers in England and Wales, they would rightly provoke widespread concern and immediate intervention. Instead, police officers in Northern Ireland are repeatedly expected to absorb delay, uncertainty, and inequity, with patience seemingly regarded as a substitute for fairness. This differential treatment is no longer defensible and further reinforces the perception that officers in Northern Ireland are consistently treated as a lower priority within the system.
- 2.17 PFNI has previously experienced significant difficulties in the timely payment of contractual incremental progression to officers advancing to the next point on their respective pay scales. Despite sustained engagement and efforts to resolve these issues without recourse to legal action, ongoing delays left PFNI with no alternative but to initiate Judicial Review proceedings. While the eventual resolution of this matter in November 2023 was welcome, PFNI remains of the firm view that the situation was entirely avoidable.

In its Tenth Report on Northern Ireland, the Police Remuneration Review Body recommended the introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland to ensure that police officer increments are paid on time. In response, a proposed interim solution was developed in June 2024, whereby Department of Justice (DOJ) officials would invite an increment only pay remit in circumstances where wider pay negotiations had not been concluded by 31 July. The stated aim of this approach is to prevent undue delay in the payment of incremental progression due from 1 September. Where delays in broader pay negotiations are anticipated, PSNI would be invited to submit a temporary approval pay remit to secure authorisation for incremental progression.

While this arrangement provides a pragmatic mechanism to address the immediate risk of delay, PFNI does not consider it to be a sufficient or enduring solution. It fails to address the underlying structural vulnerability whereby future changes in policy, process or timelines could once again result in delayed incremental payments.

In their eleventh report, PRRB made the following comments in relation to the timing of the payment of increments: -

*'We welcome acceptance of our 2024 recommendation to bring forward payment of the first constable increment to exactly twelve months from first joining the service and the payment on time of all officer increments in 2024/25. However, we understand the PFNI's concerns and the NIPB's preference for the payment of increments to be set out in regulation rather than subject to ministerial determination in view of recent delays and their impact on officers. We question why, if the DOJ recognises all officers' legal entitlement to pay progression, it does not take this small step that would bring reassurance to many. The current position is in contrast with the situation in England and Wales where officer increments are set out in regulation and paid on time each year.'*

Accordingly, PFNI continues to call for a formal determination to be incorporated into the PSNI Regulations, explicitly confirming that pay increments are payable annually. Such a provision would provide clarity, certainty and legal protection for officers, and would bring PSNI Determinations into alignment with Annex F of the Police Regulations 2003 for England and Wales. PFNI believes this regulatory amendment is both proportionate and

necessary to prevent a recurrence of past failures and to ensure officers receive their contractual entitlements in a timely and consistent manner.

2.18 According to PSNI figures, in the years 2014 – 2025, some 253 probationers walked away from their police careers during their probationary period. In 2022 alone, the figure was 49 leavers – the highest ever yearly total in recent years. In 2023 the figure was reduced to 44 leavers; however, this remained a worrying trend. 2024 has seen a reduction in the number of probationary officers leaving the service, down to a figure of 27. This has reduced again in 2025 with 22 leavers. However, this figure remains unacceptably high, given the cost of recruitment and training, even without considering the impact on workforce recovery.

There is clear evidence that financial pressures were a significant factor in officers' decisions to leave. Anecdotally, many departed for roles that offer higher remuneration and substantially reduced day-to-day demands. This continuing loss of experienced staff imposes a considerable financial burden on the organisation through increased recruitment, training, and overtime costs.

Moreover, the rising number of departures has a cumulative and detrimental effect on those who remain in service. Morale and motivation are weakened, and operational pressures intensify as fewer officers are required to absorb the same or greater workload. This situation is not sustainable and directly undermines organisational resilience, effectiveness, and public service delivery.

This is exacerbated by the fact that in the period 2014 – 2025, some 146 student officers left the organisation, with 16 student officers leaving in 2022 and a further 16 leaving in 2023. The year 2024 seen a welcome reduction, with only 3 student officers leaving the service, however that increased in 2025 with 14 student officers leaving the organisation.

Number of Constable Leavers at each Pay Point								
Year	Pay Point 1	Pay Point 2	Pay Point 3	Pay Point 4	Pay Point 5	Pay Point 6	Pay Point 7	Pay Point 8
2020	16	3	1	1	0	0	0	185
2021	26	14	3	1	2	1	0	168
2022	29	17	11	7	3	4	0	240
2023	25	9	11	14	7	4	5	171
2024	7	7	9	13	5	5	3	243
2025	8	3	13	15	11	5	8	201
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1208</b>

<b>PSNI Leavers by Year - Probation Constables and Student Officers</b>			
Year	Probationer Constable	Student Officer	Total
2014	7	5	12
2015	2	14	16
2016	5	13	18
2017	15	8	23
2018	10	16	26
2019	13	17	30
2020	19	13	32
2021	40	11	51
2022	49	16	65
2023	44	16	60
2024	27	3	30
2025	22	14	36
<b>Total</b>	<b>253</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>399</b>

Prepared by Workforce Planning, HR, People & Organisational Development, PSNI

### Number of Constable Leavers at each Pay Point (Calendar Years)

Further analysis of the number of Constable leavers at each pay point shows a continuation of leavers as they progress through the first number of years in the service. The table shows pay points 1 to 4 are the key attrition points with figures particularly high at pay point 1 and 2 in up to 2023. More recently the key attrition points are appearing at pay point 3, 4 and 5. This remains a concern given the costs of recruitment and training officers who leave so early in their career. The increase in student officer and probationary officer pay should continue to have an impact on reducing the numbers of officers leaving the service early in the career.

The erosion of police pay has been longstanding and cumulative, originating during the period of austerity and continuing in the years since. The pay ground lost during austerity has never been restored. Instead, successive pay awards have failed to keep pace with inflation, resulting in a sustained decline in the real terms value of police pay.

By the end of 2025, the cumulative real terms reduction in the pay of Constables exceeded 21.7%, and despite subsequent pay uplifts, a significant proportion of this loss remains unaddressed. The continued gap between police pay and the cost of living demonstrates that recent awards have stabilised rather than reversed long-term pay erosion.

This prolonged decline has had clear and measurable consequences for recruitment, morale and retention, particularly among experienced frontline officers. The evidence increasingly demonstrates a direct link between remuneration, workforce stability and the Police Service’s ability to retain skilled and experienced officers in an already challenging and high risk operating environment.

2.19 Regrettably, many of our members have lost confidence that their unique role, responsibilities and personal risk are meaningfully recognised by Government

departments. Police officers in Northern Ireland continue to operate under severe restrictions on both their professional and private lives, while facing an enduring threat to their personal safety. Yet, despite these exceptional obligations, officers increasingly perceive that their service and sacrifice are not properly valued.

This sense of disengagement has been reinforced by comparisons across the wider public sector. Police officers observe colleagues in health, education and other sectors exercising the right to industrial action and, in many cases, securing comparatively stronger pay settlements. As police officers are prohibited from taking industrial action, this disparity has contributed to a growing perception that policing is treated as an 'easy target' for pay restraint, rather than as a profession requiring specific protection and recognition.

Since 2010, policing has fallen significantly behind the professions against which it was once benchmarked. This divergence has continued despite the increasingly complex, dangerous and demanding nature of frontline policing. Officers are clear that persistent real terms pay erosion has undermined morale, damaged trust, and contributed directly to retention challenges within the service.

Recent periods of public disorder have again demonstrated society's reliance on policing to maintain safety and stability. Officers have repeatedly stepped forward at times of heightened risk, working extended hours, losing rest days, and placing significant strain on themselves and their families. These sacrifices have been made without hesitation and have been central to preventing unrest from escalating into widespread and sustained disorder. That commitment, however, has not been matched by a commensurate improvement in pay or conditions.

At its core, this is an issue of fairness. While affordability is frequently advanced as the rationale for suboptimal pay awards, affordability is a political and budgetary choice, not an objective assessment of the value of policing. The Police Remuneration Review Body's role is to make independent, evidence based recommendations, without being constrained by fiscal considerations that properly fall to Government. Any disconnect between recommended pay levels and affordability should be addressed by Ministers, not absorbed by police officers through continued pay erosion.

The evidence remains clear: police pay has experienced more than a decade of sustained real terms degradation, which devalues and diminishes the unique, demanding and high risk work undertaken by police officers in Northern Ireland. Despite recent pay uplifts, a substantial proportion of the losses accumulated since the start of austerity remain unresolved, leaving frontline officers over 21.7% worse off in real terms than they were at that point.

PFNI's submission to the PRRB therefore sets out a clear and credible proposal for the restoration of police pay, aimed at reversing long term degradation, rebuilding confidence among officers, and ensuring that policing in Northern Ireland remains sustainable, resilient and fit for the challenges it faces.

## The Remit

2.20 The PFNI view the annual remit letter as the starting point of each annual review round.

We note in the Remit Letter 2026/27 from the Minister of State for Policing and Crime to the Police Remuneration Review Body published in February 2026, it states *‘We accepted your recommendation for the 2025/26 pay award. However, since it came in well above the figures we set out as affordable within our evidence, we again had to take difficult decisions and make savings elsewhere in the Home Office’s budgets to provide additional funding to forces to help with the increased costs. We undertook a rigorous in-year savings exercise and put in place enhanced spending controls, finding efficiencies across various programmes and reducing discretionary spend. As the Spending Review confirmed, all pay must be funded from Departmental budgets and there will be no additional funding available for pay settlements.*

*During this pay round, you will receive evidence from my department, HM Treasury and key stakeholders. My department’s evidence will set out the funds available to policing for 2026/27, following the Spending Review in June, as well as the recruitment and retention context alongside pay and earnings data, and will provide an update on our Police Reform White Paper.’*

We must stress that this appears to improperly pre-empt the PRRB’s role by steering it toward a pay award recommendation driven by affordability constraints, rather than allowing it to exercise its full independence and reach an evidence based judgment on what constitutes a genuinely fair pay settlement.

2.21 This year’s Northern Ireland remit letter published by the Justice Minister, Naomi Long on the 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026. The Minister has requested the PRRB considers the following matters:

- How to apply the pay award for 2026/27 for police officers in the PSNI up to and including chief superintending rank; and
- Consideration of the regular elements of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance in relation to the Northern Ireland security threat level for Police Officers and the Dog Handlers’ Allowance.

2.22 We note in the letter it states *‘The Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay Policy has not yet been set for 2026/27, but I would ask that the PRRB considers the affordability and budgetary position, along with the different funding structures available in Northern Ireland. Further detail on this will be set out in both written and oral evidence.’* PFNI maintain our position that the PRRB should make its recommendation independently of any financial or political constraints. There needs to be a disconnect between affordability and recommendations by the PRRB. Recommendations that are unaffordable should be for the Government to address and not the PRRB.

2.23 The publication of the remit letter followed pre-consultation with relevant policing stakeholders, outlining the key points to be addressed within the upcoming review round (See Appendix C). It is our position that this letter sets the parameters within which the review body are to operate each year; notwithstanding the wider PRRB Terms of Reference. The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Section 132 (64B) is clear that *“The Police Remuneration Review Body may include in a report under this section any recommendations it considers appropriate arising out of matters referred to it under this section (whether or not it is required to do so by a direction under subsection.”*

2.24 The PFNI have previously submitted recommendations in this submission for consideration by PRRB under The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 Section 132 (64B). On 14 January 2026 PFNI submitted matters in this submission to the DOJ to be considered for inclusion in the current remit letter. On 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 PFNI received correspondence from The Justice Minister, Naomi Long setting out her rationale for not including our recommendations in this year's remit letter. (See Appendix D)

2.25 In the eleventh report on NI the PRRB state *'We observe that PSNI officers' annual increments were paid on time this year (for the first time since 2021) but also that implementation of our pay award recommendation in 2024/25 was again delayed, this time by three months. We note that police officers in England and Wales were paid on time.'*

PRRB further state *'Table 1.1 shows that the annual pay award for PSNI officers has been subject to delay for each of the last nine years and that it was last received on time in 2015/16. We are very concerned at the impact of this repeated occurrence on morale levels in our remit group.'*

Table 1.1: Delays in implementation of the annual pay award

- Pay year. Payment delay
- 2015/16 On time
- 2016/17 8 months
- 2017/18 6 months
- 2018/19 6 months
- 2019/20 6 months
- 2020/21 4 months
- 2021/22 7 months
- 2022/23 6 months
- 2023/24 8 months
- 2024/25 3 months

*The timings in 2024/25 were an improvement on previous years. We hope both the pay award and annual increments are paid on time in 2025/26.*

2.26 PRRB further state *'On our visit to the PSNI in Belfast in January 2025, officers told us that in contrast to England and Wales, the pay award in Northern Ireland was often delayed and that this led to significant frustration. One comment was that it felt like policing was the least important priority in spite of the assistance it gave to other public services and that this seemed unfair given the restrictions on police officers' lives. It was also emphasised to us that the nature of police work in Northern Ireland constrained officers on where they could live. We were advised that Northern Ireland was still not a normal policing environment in spite of recent changes in the threat level.'*

2.27 PRRB further state *'Surveys continue to show low levels of morale in Northern Ireland policing. They indicate that pay levels and delayed pay awards remain key drivers of low morale, alongside other factors, such as reduced officer numbers.'*

2.28 PRRB further state *'The PSNI observed that delays in approving pay awards could affect police officer morale and that they created a sense of disparity on pay and associated terms and conditions. It added that PSNI officers were experiencing the same cost-of-living effects as officers in England and Wales because of inflation and that this was further compounded*

*by any delay in an authorised pay award. In oral evidence, the PSNI said that achieving parity meant receiving the pay award at the same time as England and Wales officers, not just the same amount.'*

2.29 PRRB further state on the timing of the annual pay award *'We observe that the latest pay award for the federated and superintending ranks was received in December 2024 instead of September 2024. This was earlier than in recent years but still the ninth consecutive time that the annual pay award for our remit group in Northern Ireland was received late.'*

2.30 PRRB lastly state in relation to delays *'We wish to emphasise the cumulative damage to officer morale from repeated late receipt of the annual pay award. We recognise that other public sector workforces in Northern Ireland have also experienced prolonged delays with their pay awards because of the particular political and budgetary context. However, police officers provide invaluable support to their many public sector partners and are our remit group and therefore our priority. We hope that the improved timing with the pay award last year can be built on and that this year it is paid on time.'*

2.31 Despite the annual commentary from PRRB in relation to delays, predictably, delays with the main pay award were again experienced by officers amid a cost-of-living crisis. Payment of the main pay award was delayed by 4 months until January 2026. (See Appendix E)

2.32 As in previous pay review rounds, PFNI remains unequivocally opposed to the continued expectation that police pay increases should be funded from within existing PSNI budgets. This concern has been consistently raised by PFNI across the last six pay review cycles, reflecting the deeply entrenched and unresolved nature of the issue.

2.33 PFNI considers this approach to be both fundamentally unfair and operationally unsustainable. Requiring pay awards to be absorbed within already constrained budgets directly undermines the ability to deliver fair and justified remuneration for police officers, while simultaneously placing additional pressure on workforce numbers, service delivery and officer wellbeing.

2.34 In effect, this funding model operates as a structural barrier to fair pay, ensuring that any uplift is offset by reductions elsewhere and denying officers the genuine recognition their commitment, professionalism and increasingly demanding working conditions warrant.

## PSNI Budget

2.35 Over the past fifteen years, the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) has experienced sustained and structural budgetary pressure, resulting in a significant reduction in its capacity, resilience and long-term sustainability. Despite operating in a uniquely challenging security environment, policing in Northern Ireland has not benefited from the same levels of investment or recovery seen in other parts of the United Kingdom.

2.36 Since the start of austerity, PSNI funding has fallen sharply in real terms. Between 2010/11 and 2019/20, PSNI’s annual funding reduced by approximately 20% in real terms, equating to around £200 million. This reduction was more severe than that experienced by most police forces in England and Wales and occurred in a context where PSNI lacked the ability to offset cuts using financial reserves, due to Northern Ireland’s unique budgeting arrangements. Although headline budgets have appeared relatively static in cash terms since 2019, inflationary pressures mean that PSNI continues to operate with a significantly diminished budget.

2.37 Evidence demonstrates that policing and justice have fallen well behind other public services in funding growth. While the Northern Ireland block grant increased by over 50% between 2011/12 and 2024/25, the Department of Justice budget grew by only around 13%, with policing accounting for approximately 65% of that constrained allocation. Health spending has increased by almost 90% since 2010 and Education spending has increased by approximately 25%

As a result, police funding as a proportion of overall Northern Ireland public expenditure has declined significantly, despite rising demand and risk.

2.38 On the 8th August 2024 the Justice Minister, Naomi Long made the following comment in the Northern Ireland Assembly ‘As I have said many times, policing and justice have not been this stretched since devolution in 2010. Though the total Northern Ireland block grant has increased by 53% in the past 13 years, the DOJ has seen just under 13% growth in its budget allocation. Policing makes up around 65% of our budget, and so it has endured the same sustained and profound squeeze.<sup>14</sup>

2.39 A persistent weakness in PSNI funding is the absence of a multiyear financial settlement. Northern Ireland has not agreed a comprehensive multiyear budget since 2011, leaving PSNI dependent on annual allocations and late in year monitoring rounds.

This has resulted in:

- Recurrent projected deficits at the start of financial years
- Reliance on in year funding to “break even”
- Inability to plan workforce growth, reform or capital investment

In several recent years, PSNI has entered the financial year with projected deficits exceeding £20–£100 million, requiring emergency cost control measures, recruitment freezes and service reductions.

2.40 Budgetary pressures have translated directly into reduced officer and staff numbers. Officer numbers have fallen to historically low levels, dropping below 6,300 officers at points in 2023–24—well below the 7,500 officers recommended by the Patten Report and short of the Chief Constable’s stated minimum requirement of 7,000 officers.

<sup>14</sup> [Official Reports](#)

2.41 These funding reductions have occurred against a backdrop of increasing demand, including:

- Growth in reported incidents
- More complex investigations
- Increased non crime demand, particularly relating to mental health
- Sustained terrorist and paramilitary threat levels

The Chief Constable has repeatedly warned that PSNI is being required to absorb additional responsibilities, including acting as a safety net where other public services are unable to respond, further stretching limited resources.

2.42 A further structural pressure arises from the cost of legacy cases and civil litigation relating to the Troubles. Former and serving Chief Constables have warned that these costs are unpredictable, uncontrollable and risk financially crippling frontline policing if not separated from core operational budgets. Estimates suggest potential legacy related- costs could reach £1 billion over the next decade<sup>15</sup>.

2.43 Multiple oversight bodies have highlighted PSNI’s funding crisis, including: The Northern Ireland Audit Office, The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee, HMICFRS and The Independent Reporting Commission

The Northern Ireland Affairs Committee has repeatedly concluded that policing faces structural underfunding, declining capacity and worsening community confidence, and that short-term financial fixes are insufficient.

2.44 The evidence is clear and consistent: PSNI has experienced over a decade of real terms budget erosion, compounded by single year budgeting, rising demand, workforce depletion and unfunded legacy pressures. While recent monitoring round allocations and short-term uplifts have stabilised the position temporarily, they have not reversed long term decline.

2.45 Without sustained, multi-year and needs based investment, PSNI’s ability to protect communities, retain experienced officers and maintain public confidence will continue to be undermined. Addressing these challenges requires a strategic funding settlement, separation of legacy costs from operational policing, and recognition of the unique role policing plays in Northern Ireland’s peace and security.

2.46 In evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Inquiry – Policing and Security in Northern Ireland, PSNI submitted written evidence which is summarised as follows: The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) presents a stark warning that policing in Northern Ireland has reached a tipping point. While the transformation of policing since the Patten Report is widely regarded as a peace process success, 15 years of sustained underfunding, unresolved legacy burdens and a continuing security threat now risk undermining that progress. PSNI remains a worldclass, highly accountable police service, but it is now smaller, less visible, less accessible and less responsive than at any point since its creation.

<sup>15</sup> [Cost of Troubles cases ‘will financially cripple policing in NI’ | The Independent](#)

The primary challenge facing policing and security in Northern Ireland is chronic underfunding by both the Northern Ireland Executive and Westminster. Since 2010, policing and justice have been consistently deprioritised compared with health and education. Police funding has fallen from 3.8% of total NI public expenditure in 2010 to 2.4% in 2023. In real terms, PSNI now operates with around 40% fewer resources than at the point of devolution.

Officer numbers have fallen to around 6,250, the lowest in PSNI's 24-year history. This is far below the Patten recommendation of 7,500 officers and below what PSNI considers safe. Recruitment resumed in 2025, but rebuilding capacity is slow and barely keeping pace with attrition. A Workforce Recovery Plan aims to increase officer numbers towards 7,000, but funding remains uncertain and recruitment continues "at risk".

PSNI receives single year budgets, often confirmed after the financial year has begun. In the previous year PSNI required £121m (15%) of in year monitoring funding just to break even. PSNI has no policing precept, no ability to hold reserves and no borrowing powers. Policing is instead funded through multiple short-term, ringfenced funding streams, which PSNI describes as unsustainable.

The consequences of underfunding are already visible. Neighbourhood policing has been severely degraded. Planned requirement: 952 neighbourhood officers, Current level: approximately 450. In some areas, neighbourhood policing exists "in name only". This results in reduced visibility and slower response times for non-emergency calls and has led to the closure of enquiry offices and reduced community presence.

Specialist capabilities are also affected. Tactical Support Groups reduced from 13 to 11, reduced proactive roads policing despite rising road deaths and increased reliance on mutual aid from Great Britain, notably during serious disorder in August 2024 and June 2025.

There are also repercussions in investigative capacity and public protection. Crime investigations are taking longer, delaying justice for victims. Major Incident Teams carry around 20 cases each, far above recommended limits. Dangerous offender management ratios are well above safe thresholds (1:115 vs recommended 1:50). The April 2025 Police Effectiveness and Efficiency inspection of PSNI by His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire & Rescue Services (HMRCFRS) confirmed the harsh realities of long-term underfunding<sup>16</sup>.

The recent A Police Ombudsman report into the Alexander McCartney case highlighted that under resourcing compromised child protection. *'A Police Ombudsman investigation has found that PSNI cybercrime teams did not have the capacity or capability to effectively manage the risk posed by online child sex abuser Alexander McCartney.*

*Chief Executive Hugh Hume said it was clear that PSNI teams tasked with detecting and investigating online child sexual abuse were under-resourced and under pressure, significantly compromising their ability to detect and prosecute offenders and keep children safe.*<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> [The Police Service of Northern Ireland: An inspection of police effectiveness and efficiency - His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services](#)

<sup>17</sup> [PSNI did not have capacity or capability to manage risk posed by prolific online child sex offender](#)

There is a Workforce Impact. PSNI officers and staff are described as exhausted. Sickness rates are significantly higher than in other UK police services. Ill-health retirements are increasing. There is a clear correlation between shrinking workforce numbers and rising sickness. Psychological stress and fatigue are increasingly prevalent due to workload, threat and complexity.

The Legacy of the Past is a Major Ongoing Burden. PSNI was never designed or funded to investigate thousands of Troubles era crimes. Legacy investigations currently cost £24m per year, taken directly from the core policing budget. PSNI receives no additional funding for supporting the Independent Commission for Reconciliation and Information Recovery (ICRIR).

PSNI faces:

- Around 1,000 legacy related civil claims
- Costs of approximately £25m already paid since 2018
- Major inquiries (Omagh Bomb, Pat Finucane, potential Sean Brown inquiry) will cost tens of millions, with no additional funding provided.
- PSNI warns this approach is unsustainable and diverts resources from present-day policing.

This has an impact on trust and recruitment with the failure to resolve legacy issues undermining confidence, particularly in the Catholic/Nationalist/Republican community. It is clear legacy perceptions remain a significant barrier to attracting officers from all communities.

In relation to the security situation PSNI updated that the terrorist threat level remains Substantial. Police officers remain the primary targets of violent dissident republican groups. Northern Ireland policing faces unique security costs, including:

- Armed officers
- Fortified stations
- Armoured vehicles

Even when the threat level drops, operational demands do not reduce, meaning long-term security funding is essential.

PSNI presented evidence that workforce representativeness and recruitment remain areas of challenge. Catholic representation among applicants has remained at around 30% for over a decade. Appointment rates are lower than application rates. Attrition is now disproportionately affecting Catholic officers recruited during the Patten era. Wider barriers include:

- Ongoing security threat
- Legacy issues
- High public scrutiny
- Competitive labour market (NI unemployment at 2.6%)

PSNI has introduced a Race and Ethnicity Action Plan and leadership development initiatives, but progress is constrained by funding.

PSNI submitted evidence in relation to the Patten Review summarising that over 90% of Patten recommendations have been implemented or embedded. Alongside this, governance, accountability and human rights frameworks remain robust. However, resource constraints are now putting key Patten achievements at risk,

particularly: neighbourhood policing, community-based policing and workforce development

Community confidence remains an area of critical importance for PSNI. Overall public confidence in policing remains broadly stable and positive. Despite the resourcing and budgetary concerns, Northern Ireland remains one of the safest parts of the UK. However, victims of crime report lower confidence in policing, crime reporting is declining and significant perception gaps persist between community backgrounds. PSNI acknowledges past damage to trust with ethnic minority and LGBTQIA+ communities and outlines ongoing efforts to rebuild relationships.

PSNI concludes that policing in Northern Ireland is operating below safe and sustainable levels. Despite extraordinary efforts by officers and staff, continued underinvestment in PSNI risks harm to the public, harm to the workforce, the erosion of public confidence and potential reversal of hard-won Patten progress. Without sustained, multiyear funding, proper separation of legacy costs from core policing budgets, and political prioritisation of policing, PSNI warns it risks becoming an emergency response only service, unable to deliver the policing Northern Ireland needs.

2.47 In evidence to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee Inquiry – Policing and Security in Northern Ireland, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland submitted written evidence of a critical deterioration in policing capacity, officer welfare, and resourcing. The submission stresses that these challenges stem from chronic underfunding, unresolved financial liabilities, and failure by the devolved administration and national Government to uphold commitments made in the Patten Report.

In relation to officer numbers and capacity the Patten Report recommended 7,500 officers, yet numbers have fallen to 6,190 as of October 2025—1,310 below the original benchmark, despite population growth of 251,000 since 1999. External analysis (Leapwise, 2024) suggests Northern Ireland needs 8,005–8,540 officers, placing the PSNI at least 2,350 officers short of the upper requirement.

Part-time officer numbers have collapsed from a Patten expectation of 2,500 to only 143. Declining strength has eroded service delivery: slower response times, depleted detective capacity, and severe shortfalls in neighbourhood policing (more than 400 officers below requirement).

PFNI members continue to operate in a high threat environment with significant operational pressures. Northern Ireland is not a permanently peaceful society: dissident republican targeting persists, particularly affecting Catholic officers and their families. Officers experience significant threats, including racist attacks, intimidation, and vehicle ramming incidents during enforcement activity. Between September 2024 and September 2025 there were 2,663 assaults on officers, including 885 resulting in injury, representing more than half the deployable workforce. High workload, trauma exposure, and inadequate staffing have driven ill-health retirements from 25 in 2018 to 200 in 2024—a 400% increase.

Among the issues our members are contending with, the impact on their morale, officer burnout, and recruitment challenges are to the fore. Burnout, excessive working hours, and escalating psychological injury are causing officers to leave for safer, better paid roles. Recruitment is constrained by budget deficit (£23m in 2025) and political failure to

approve the Chief Constable’s Recovery Plan, which aims for 7,000 officers by 2028. Intimidation continues to deter Catholic applicants, undermining service representativeness. PFNI rejects 50/50 recruitment, arguing that merit based intake is essential, especially when underlying recruitment volume is insufficient.

PSNI faces unprecedented financial pressures and unresolved liabilities. The PFNI outlines four major unfunded pressures exceeding £400 million:

- Legacy cases: approx. £25m annually
- PSNI Recovery Plan: approx. £200m
- 2023 Data Breach: potential settlement ~£120m
- Holiday pay claims: significant, undetermined

The Northern Ireland Executive sought Treasury reserve funding for the data breach but was refused; the Treasury stated these pressures were foreseeable. The PFNI argues this is unfair and places undue burden on officers whose personal data were exposed.

There remains the overarching issue of inadequate funding structures. The PSNI relies primarily on the devolved Department of Justice budget, supplemented by Additional Security Funding (ASF)—£37.8m in 2025/26—described as “miniscule” relative to need. Annual budgeting and monitoring rounds prevent medium-term planning and have contributed to progressive under resourcing. PFNI proposes three year budget cycles to allow sustainable workforce planning and improve delivery of strategic outcomes.

PFNI continue to have concerns in relation to oversight and governance. PFNI considers the Northern Ireland Policing Board overly politicised and insufficiently strategic, advocating for fewer political members and more independent expertise. The relationship with the Police Ombudsman is described as adversarial, with hopes for a more balanced approach under new leadership. Likewise, relations with the Department of Justice are strained, particularly over delays to pay awards and weak advocacy for adequate resourcing.

Due to the challenging resourcing position PSNI had to rely on Mutual Aid during major disorder in June, contrary to Patten’s principle that Northern Ireland should maintain enough internal capacity to manage public order events without external support. PFNI states this shortfall demonstrates that current officer numbers are dangerously inadequate, increasing pressure on frontline staff.

With regard to strategic partnerships, cooperation with An Garda Síochána and the National Crime Agency is strong and effective, particularly on cross border organised crime and terrorism. However, the PFNI stresses that partnership effectiveness cannot compensate for a structurally weakened domestic police service.

PFNI have a clear message to the Pay Review Body - the current condition of the PSNI is unsustainable:

- Officer numbers are at record lows.
- Workloads, assaults, burnout, and ill-health retirements are escalating.
- Funding pressures are severe, unresolved, and disproportionate compared with the rest of the UK.

- Without intervention from national Government, public safety and officer welfare will continue to deteriorate.

The PFNI concludes that only a significant uplift in investment, including pay, staffing, and long-term budget certainty, will stabilise the service and protect communities. PFNI urge national Government not to penalise the PSNI for failures in devolved governance and to ensure officers receive the support and recognition afforded to their counterparts in Great Britain.

2.48 Chief Constable Jon Boutcher has repeatedly highlighted the severe strain on officers caused by budget pressures, diminishing officer numbers, and rising assaults. Following concerns raised at the PFNI Annual Conference in 2025, he described the PFNI's concerns as "hard-hitting" but -accurate. He stated: *'I share the Federation's concerns and frustration about resourcing pressures. This is a message I hear from officers across the country and it is one I have been delivering at the Policing Board, Stormont and Westminster.'* He has stressed that resourcing constraints directly undermine policing capability, impacting officer welfare, family life, and community safety<sup>18</sup>.

In relation to critical funding gaps and legacy costs, has been outspoken about the significant financial burden of legacy casework, noting that legacy obligations cost over £20 million annually, all of which is taken from the core policing budget intended for current service delivery.

In separate commentary, he stated that the UK Government has "failed to accept fiscal responsibility" for the legacy of the Troubles, leaving the PSNI to carry more than 1,100 civil cases and almost 200 murder cases that fall outside new legislation. These costs, he warned, are rising sharply and jeopardise the Service's operational capabilities<sup>19</sup>.

The Chief Constable has repeatedly raised concerns at the Policing Board, Stormont, and Westminster about the lack of an effective policing budget and the uncertainty caused by short-term allocations. He fully supports the need for substantial additional funding, warning that without it the PSNI cannot maintain officer numbers or keep pace with increasing demand.

The Chief Constable has revealed a PSNI Recovery Plan aimed at raising officer numbers to 7,000 within three years, stressing that this is still below what the Service requires—and well below his own assessment of policing need. He has been clear that policing must be front and centre of the Northern Ireland Executive's programme for government and that the Service cannot function as intended without renewed investment.

After criticism for appealing directly to the Prime Minister for policing resources, Mr Boutcher stated he was entitled and obligated to engage both Westminster and the NI Executive on funding issues. He strongly rejected claims that he overstepped protocol, arguing that effective policing is a shared national and devolved responsibility<sup>20</sup>.

Across his public commentary, Chief Constable Jon Boutcher consistently underscores that:

<sup>18</sup> [Justice Minister And PSNI Chief Address Policing Challenges | Northern Ireland News, 23/05/2025](#)

<sup>19</sup> [Government has failed to accept fiscal responsibility for legacy of Troubles, says PSNI Chief Constable Jon Boutcher](#)

<sup>20</sup> [PSNI should be 'front and centre' of programme for government says Chief Constable Boutcher | UTV | ITV News](#)

- The PSNI is under unsustainable pressure due to chronic underfunding and reduced officer numbers.
- Legacy related financial burdens and increasing public safety demands are overwhelming current resources.
- Officer welfare, operational resilience, and public confidence are at risk without decisive financial intervention.
- Both Westminster and the NI Executive must take shared responsibility for restoring the PSNI to a viable operational footing.

## PSNI Resources

2.49 The Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), created in 2001 following the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland (the Patten Report), was envisaged as a service comprising 7,500 full time officers, conditional on a stable security environment. Patten also recommended a Part Time Reserve of up to 2,500 officers, particularly drawn from underrepresented areas. This strategic vision subsequently informed the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) agreement, in which both the UK and Irish Governments reaffirmed the objective of returning officer numbers to 7,500.

Independent benchmarking commissioned by the Chief Constable, comparing the PSNI with UK police services and international practice, provides a compelling evidence base for a substantially larger workforce. This analysis indicates that 8,500 officers would more accurately reflect the operational demands and complexity of modern policing in Northern Ireland<sup>21</sup>.

Despite these clear benchmarks, the PSNI currently employs approx. 6,300 police officers and approximately 2,200 police staff, representing the lowest staffing levels in the organisation’s history. This severe contraction has occurred at a time of sustained increases in demand, workload complexity, and threat level. Workforce decline has mirrored reductions in the PSNI’s financial settlement, and officer replacement rates have not kept pace with departures.

Since 2021–22, the situation has worsened markedly as recruitment slowed in response to acute financial pressures. Analysis within the Leapwise report indicates that, had PSNI resourcing kept pace with trends across UK policing since 2010, the organisation would now employ between 8,005 and 8,540 officers, supported by 2,464 to 3,018 police staff. The PSNI has formally acknowledged that current staffing levels mean it is “increasingly unable to keep people safe.” In its submission to the draft Programme for Government, the Service warned that it has reached a “watershed moment” as headcount falls to levels far below those envisaged by Patten or NDNA<sup>22</sup>.

In response, the PSNI has submitted an Outline Business Case for Workforce Recovery to the Department of Justice. This sets out a pathway to restoring officer numbers to 7,000 and staff numbers to 2,572 within three years. However, even under current Police College capacity, achieving the independently recommended establishment of 8,500 officers may not be feasible until 2039.

Recruitment resumed in April 2024, aimed solely at preventing further decline. A more substantive recruitment campaign launched in January 2025 yielded 4,822 applications, reflecting continued public interest in policing careers despite ongoing risks and pressures. A further recruitment campaign was launched in January 2026 and received 4,104 applications. The recent increase in monthly student officer intakes of up to 50 student officers is a positive move but will take some time to see tangible results.

PFNI has welcomed renewed recruitment efforts but emphasised that these are only an initial step. PFNI notes that:

<sup>21</sup> [Leapwise Report - Assessing the officer and staff requirement for the Police Service of Northern Ireland](#)

<sup>22</sup> [PSNI Response to Draft PfG Consultation 2024-27.pdf](#)

- The Service remains 700 officers short of the immediate target of 7,000.
- It is 1,200 officers below the Patten benchmark of 7,500 for a peacetime establishment.
- Many units are operating dangerously below strength, placing unsustainable pressure on officers.

PFNI has warned that without adequate funding to support recruitment and retention, the current crisis will deepen, with significant consequences for public safety and officer wellbeing. PFNI have expressed concern that political leaders have not yet demonstrated the appetite necessary to address the scale of the workforce challenge.

The Federation remains fully supportive of the PSNI's recruitment initiatives and continues to work with the Service to shape and refine workforce expansion programmes.

The PSNI's ability to meet public expectations and statutory obligations is constrained by structural under resourcing, with consequences now visible in inspection findings, service performance, and officer safety. Without a decisive pay recommendation that improves recruitment and retention—and an aligned multiyear funding settlement—the workforce recovery will stall, prolonging risk to officers and communities.

The PRRB has a critical opportunity to stabilise the workforce and rebuild capacity. We ask the PRRB to endorse our recommendations to support a credible recovery and safeguard public protection in Northern Ireland.

### 3 ECONOMIC ANALYSIS

#### Cost of Living Crisis – Latest Insights

3.1 Households in the United Kingdom have experienced a significant fall in living standards since late 2021. As of January 2025, 57 percent of UK households reported that their cost of living increased compared with the previous month. Although this was down from a peak of 91 percent in the Summer of 2022, it is evidence of a persistent problem facing the country. The households that are facing increasing prices mainly attributed this increase to higher food, electricity, and fuel costs. The crisis is even more acute for the poorest UK households, which typically spend a higher proportion of their income on food and housing costs.

In February 2026, 59 percent of households in Great Britain reported that their cost of living had increased in the previous month, compared with 72 percent in April 2025. Although the share of people reporting a cost-of-living increase has generally been falling since August 2022, when 91 percent of households reported an increase, the most recent figures indicate that the Cost-of-Living Crisis is still ongoing for many households in the UK.

Although various factors have been driving the Cost-of-Living Crisis in Britain, high inflation has undoubtedly been one of the main factors. After several years of relatively low inflation, the CPI inflation rate shot up from 2021 onwards, hitting a high of 11.1 percent in October 2022. In the months since that peak, inflation has fallen to more usual levels, and was 2.5 percent in December 2024, slightly up from 1.7 percent in September. Since June 2023, wages have also started to grow at a faster rate than inflation, albeit after a long period where average wages were falling relative to overall price increases.

The cost of living increased sharply in the UK during 2021 and 2022. The annual rate of inflation peaked at 11.1% in October 2022, a 41-year high, before subsequently easing. In May 2024, inflation fell to 2.0% (the Bank of England’s target) for the first time since July 2021. Even though inflation is no longer high, it’s important to stress that the cumulative effect of rising prices means households face a much higher cost of living than in 2021. Households that were struggling before the period of high inflation have been most severely affected.<sup>23</sup>

Although the UK economy returned to growth in 2021 and avoided high levels of unemployment, inflation reached levels not seen for decades in 2022. The CPI inflation rate reached a peak of 11.1 percent in October 2022 and did not fall below double figures until April 2023 and took until May 2024 to reach the Bank of England's target rate of two percent. Furthermore, while wages are currently growing faster than inflation, this was not the case for twenty months between November 2021 and June 2023, when inflation consistently outpaced wage growth. Due to the crisis, real household disposable income in the UK fell by 2.2 percent in the 2022/23 financial year, representing the biggest fall in living standards since at least 1956.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> [Great Britain cost of living increase 2026 | Statista](#)

<sup>24</sup> [Cost of living crisis in the UK - statistics & facts | Statista](#)

## Consumer Price Inflation UK- Main Points

The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 3.2% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.6% in the 12 months to December 2025. On a monthly basis, CPIH fell by 0.3% in January 2026, while it was little changed in January 2025.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 3.0% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.4% in the 12 months to December 2025. On a monthly basis, CPI fell by 0.5% in January 2026, compared with a fall of 0.1% in January 2025.

Transport, and food and non-alcoholic beverages made the largest downward contributions to the monthly change in both CPIH and CPI annual rates. Core CPIH (CPIH excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco) rose by 3.3% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.5% in the 12 months to December 2025; the CPIH goods annual rate fell from 2.2% to 1.6%, while the CPIH services annual rate fell from 4.5% to 4.3%.

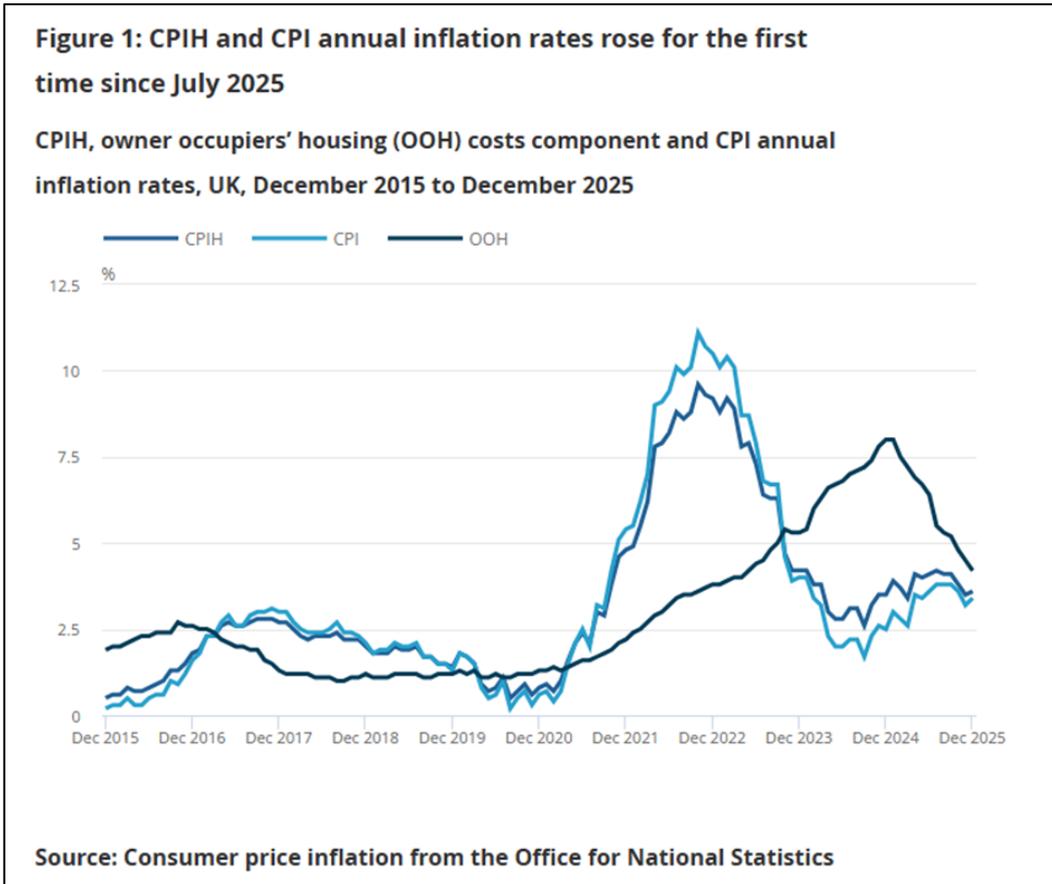
Core CPI (CPI excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco) rose by 3.1% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.2% in the 12 months to December 2025; the CPI goods annual rate fell from 2.2% to 1.6%, while the CPI services annual rate fell from 4.5% to 4.4%.

**Table 1: CPIH, OOH component and CPI index values, and annual and monthly rates**  
UK, December 2024 to December 2025

		CPIH Index (UK, 2015 = 100)	CPIH 12-month rate (%)	CPIH 1-month rate (%)	CPI Index (UK, 2015 = 100)	CPI 12-month rate (%)	CPI 1-month rate (%)	OOH Index (UK, 2015 = 100)	OOH 12-month rate (%)
2024	Dec	135.1	3.5	0.3	135.6	2.5	0.3	131.3	8.0
2025	Jan	135.1	3.9	0.0	135.4	3.0	-0.1	131.8	8.0
	Feb	135.6	3.7	0.4	136.0	2.8	0.4	132.4	7.5
	Mar	136.1	3.4	0.3	136.5	2.6	0.3	132.9	7.2
	Apr	137.7	4.1	1.2	138.2	3.5	1.2	133.2	6.9
	May	138.0	4.0	0.2	138.4	3.4	0.2	133.7	6.7
	June	138.4	4.1	0.3	138.9	3.6	0.3	134.2	6.4
	July	138.5	4.2	0.0	139.0	3.8	0.1	134.0	5.5
	Aug	138.9	4.1	0.3	139.3	3.8	0.3	134.5	5.3
	Sept	138.9	4.1	0.1	139.3	3.8	0.0	135.1	5.2
	Oct	139.5	3.8	0.4	139.8	3.6	0.4	135.7	4.8
	Nov	139.4	3.5	-0.1	139.5	3.2	-0.2	136.5	4.5
	Dec	139.9	3.6	0.4	140.1	3.4	0.4	136.8	4.2

Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics

## Consumer Price Inflation Rates



The Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) rose by 3.2% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.6% in the 12 months to December 2025 (Figure 1). On a monthly basis, CPIH fell by 0.3% in January 2026, while it was little changed in January 2025.

The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) rose by 3.0% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.4% in the 12 months to December 2025. On a monthly basis, CPI fell by 0.5% in January 2026, compared with a fall of 0.1% in January 2025.

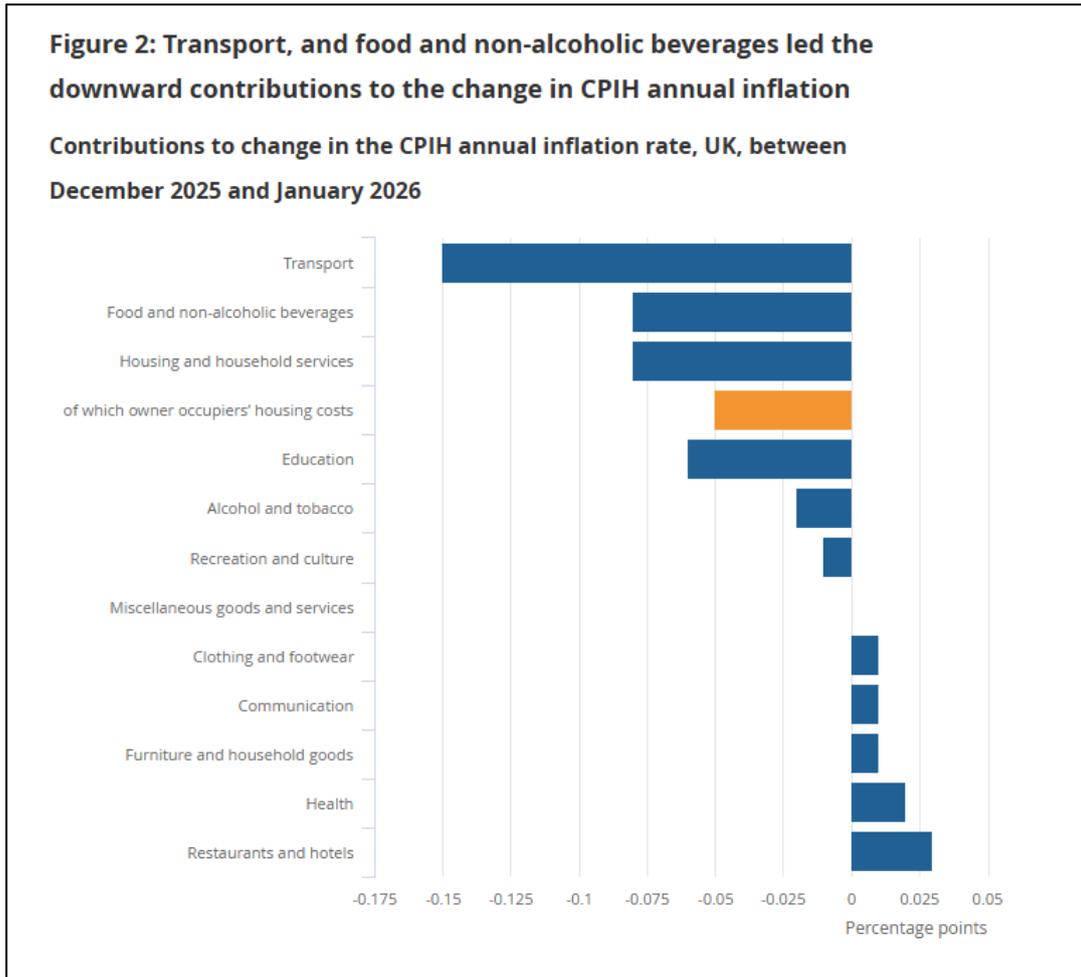
The main drivers of the annual inflation rate for CPIH and CPI are the same where they are common to both measures. However, the OOH costs component accounts for approximately 18% of the CPIH and is the main driver for differences between the CPIH and CPI inflation rates. This makes CPIH our most comprehensive measure of inflation.

## Notable Movements in Prices

**Table 2: CPIH annual and monthly inflation rates by division**  
UK, December 2024, November 2025, and December 2025

	CPIH 12-month rate (%)		CPIH 1-month rate (%)	
	November 2025	December 2025	December 2024	December 2025
<b>CPIH All items</b>	3.5	3.6	0.3	0.4
<b>Food and non-alcoholic beverages</b>	4.2	4.5	0.5	0.8
<b>Alcohol and tobacco</b>	4.0	5.2	-0.2	1.0
<b>Clothing and footwear</b>	-0.6	0.0	-0.5	0.1
<b>Housing and household services</b>	4.8	4.6	0.4	0.2
<b>of which owner occupiers' housing costs</b>	4.5	4.2	0.6	0.2
<b>Furniture and household goods</b>	-0.3	-0.6	1.5	1.2
<b>Health</b>	2.6	2.1	0.5	0.1
<b>Transport</b>	3.7	4.0	1.0	1.3
<b>Communication</b>	4.8	4.2	0.7	0.1
<b>Recreation and culture</b>	2.9	2.7	0.0	-0.2
<b>Education</b>	7.6	7.6	0.0	0.0
<b>Restaurants and hotels</b>	3.5	3.8	-0.1	0.2
<b>Miscellaneous goods and services</b>	2.1	2.2	0.2	0.3
<b>All goods</b>	2.1	2.2	0.3	0.4
<b>All services</b>	4.5	4.5	0.4	0.4
<b>CPIH exc food, energy, alcohol and tobacco (core CPIH)</b>	3.5	3.5	0.3	0.3

Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics



3.2 Figure 2 shows the contributions from the 12 divisions to the change in the annual Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) inflation rate between December 2025 and January 2026. These sum to the change in the annual rate between the latest two months, that is, the fall from 3.6% to 3.2%.

The fall in the rate into January 2026 reflected downward contributions from six divisions, partially offset by upward contributions from five divisions. The largest downward contributions were from the transport, food and non-alcoholic beverages, and housing and household services divisions.

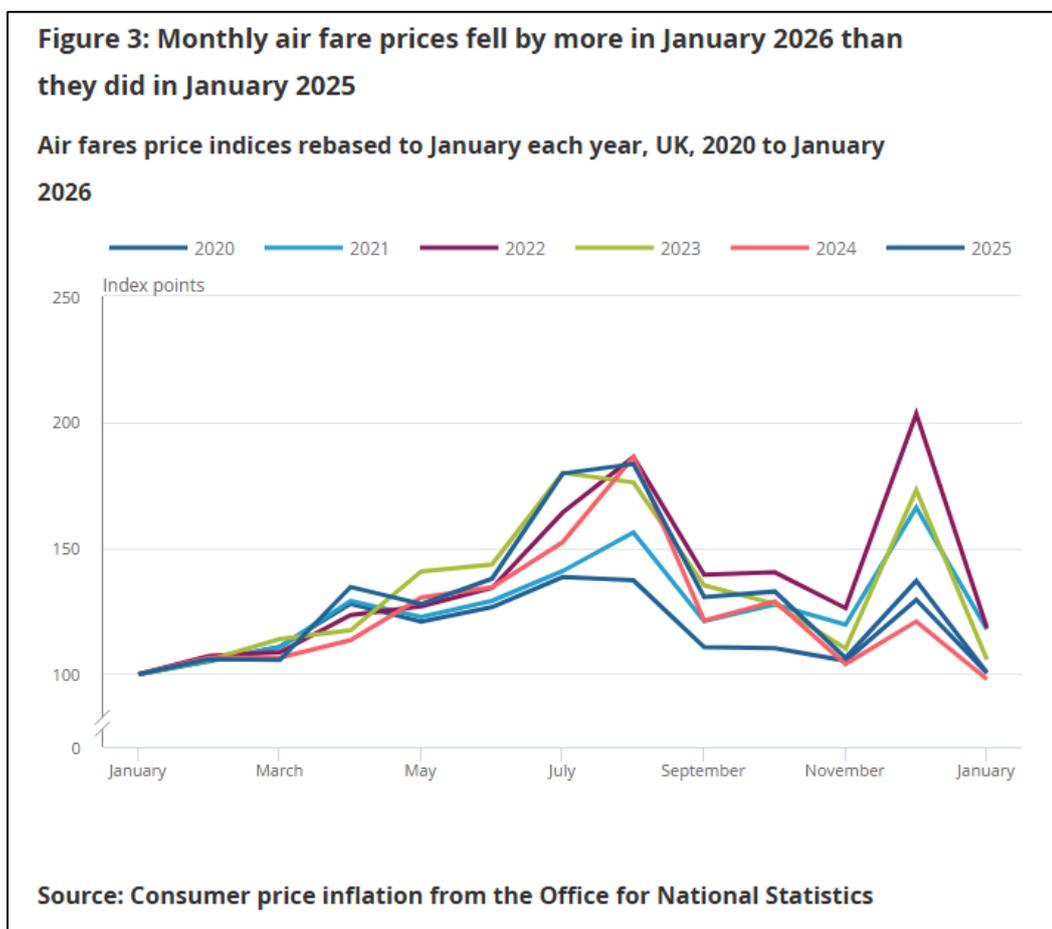
### Transport

3.3 Prices in the transport division rose overall by 2.7% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 4.0% in the 12 months to December. On a monthly basis, prices fell by 1.8% in January 2026, compared with a fall of 0.5% a year ago

The largest downward effect came from motor fuels, where the average price of petrol fell by 3.1 pence per litre between December 2025 and January 2026, compared with a rise of 0.8 pence per litre between December 2024 and January 2025. The average price stood at 133.2 pence per litre in January 2026, down from 137.1 pence per litre a year earlier.

Similarly, diesel prices fell by 3.2 pence per litre in January 2026, compared with a rise of 1.5 pence per litre in January 2025. The average price stood at 142.5 pence per litre in January 2026, up from 144.1 pence per litre a year earlier.

These movements resulted in overall motor fuel prices falling by 2.2% in the 12 months to January 2026, compared with a rise of 0.9% in the 12 months to December 2025.



3.4 The second-largest downward effect came from air fares, which tend to rise into December and fall into January (Figure 3). However, in December 2024 and January 2025, this pattern was less pronounced than in previous years. The monthly rise in December 2024 was the third-lowest December rise since monthly price collection began in 2001, and part of the reason for this lower-than-usual growth may have been because the return date for the European flights in December 2024's index was Christmas Eve, and the return date for long-haul flights was New Year's Eve. The weaker growth into December 2024 led to a smaller fall than normal into January 2025.

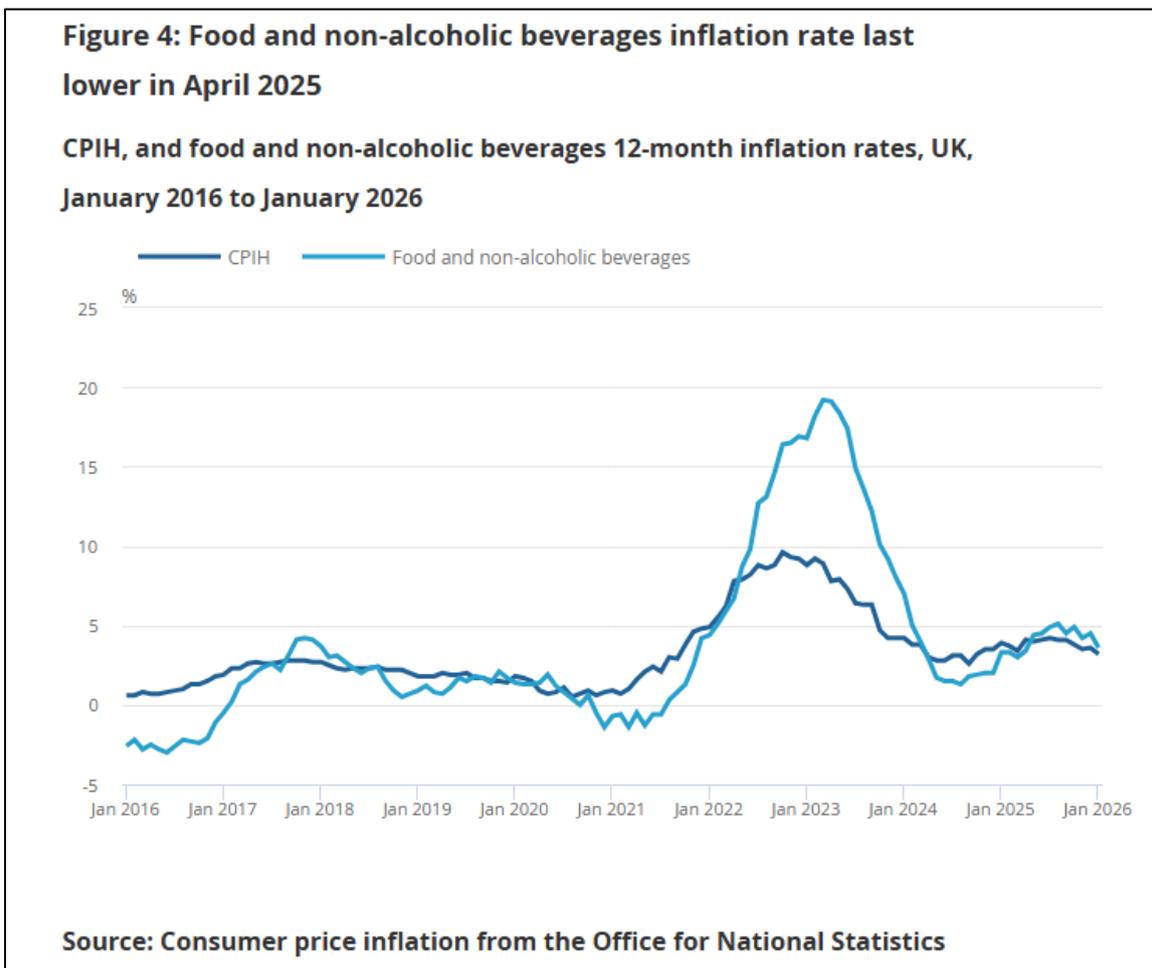
Whereas the pattern of air fares rising into December and falling into January was less pronounced last year, the index this year followed a more conventional pattern, perhaps because the return flights in December did not fall on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve. The more pronounced rise into December 2025 and fall into January 2026 led to a large upward contribution to the change in the annual rate in December 2025 and a large downward contribution in January 2026.

### Food and non-alcoholic beverages

3.5 Food and non-alcoholic beverages prices rose by 3.6% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 4.5% in the 12 months to December 2025 (Figure 4). On a monthly basis, food and non-alcoholic beverages prices fell by 0.1% in January 2026, compared with a rise of 0.9% a year ago

There were downward effects to the change in the rate from 6 of the 11 food and non-alcoholic beverages classes. These were,

- bread and cereals – down 0.04 percentage points
- meat – down 0.02 percentage points
- milk, cheese and eggs – down 0.01 percentage points
- food products not elsewhere classified – down 0.01 percentage points
- coffee, tea and cocoa – down 0.01 percentage points
- mineral waters, soft drinks and juices – down 0.01 percentage points



## Housing and household services

- 3.6 The 12-month inflation rate for housing and household services was 4.2% in January 2026, down from 4.6% in December 2025. On a monthly basis, prices rose by 0.2% in January 2026, compared with a rise of 0.5% a year ago.

The easing in the 12-month rate between December 2025 and January 2026 mainly reflected a downward effect from owner occupiers' housing (OOH) costs. These rose by 3.9% in the 12 months to January 2026, compared with a rise of 4.2% in the 12 months to December 2025. The rate has slowed for 12 consecutive months and is at its lowest since February 2023, when it was also 3.9%. Monthly OOH costs rose by 0.1% in January 2026, compared with a 0.4% increase a year ago.

The easing in the 12-month rate between December 2025 and January 2026 also reflected a downward effect from gas, where prices fell by 2.7% in the 12 months to January 2026, compared with a rise of 2.1% in December 2025. Monthly gas prices fell by 3.4%, compared with a rise of 1.3% a year ago.

There was a counteracting upward effect from electricity, where prices rose by 5.3% in the 12 months to January 2026, compared with a rise of 2.7% in December 2025. Monthly electricity prices rose by 3.7% compared with a rise of 1.2% a year ago.

This resulted from a change in the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) energy price cap in January 2026, described on the Ofgem website. Ofgem estimated that for an average household paying by direct debit for dual fuel, this equates to an annual bill of £1,758, which is a rise of £3.

## Education

- 3.7 Prices in the education division rose by 5.1% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 7.6% in the 12 months to December 2025. On a monthly basis, prices were unchanged in January 2026, compared with a rise of 2.4% a year ago.

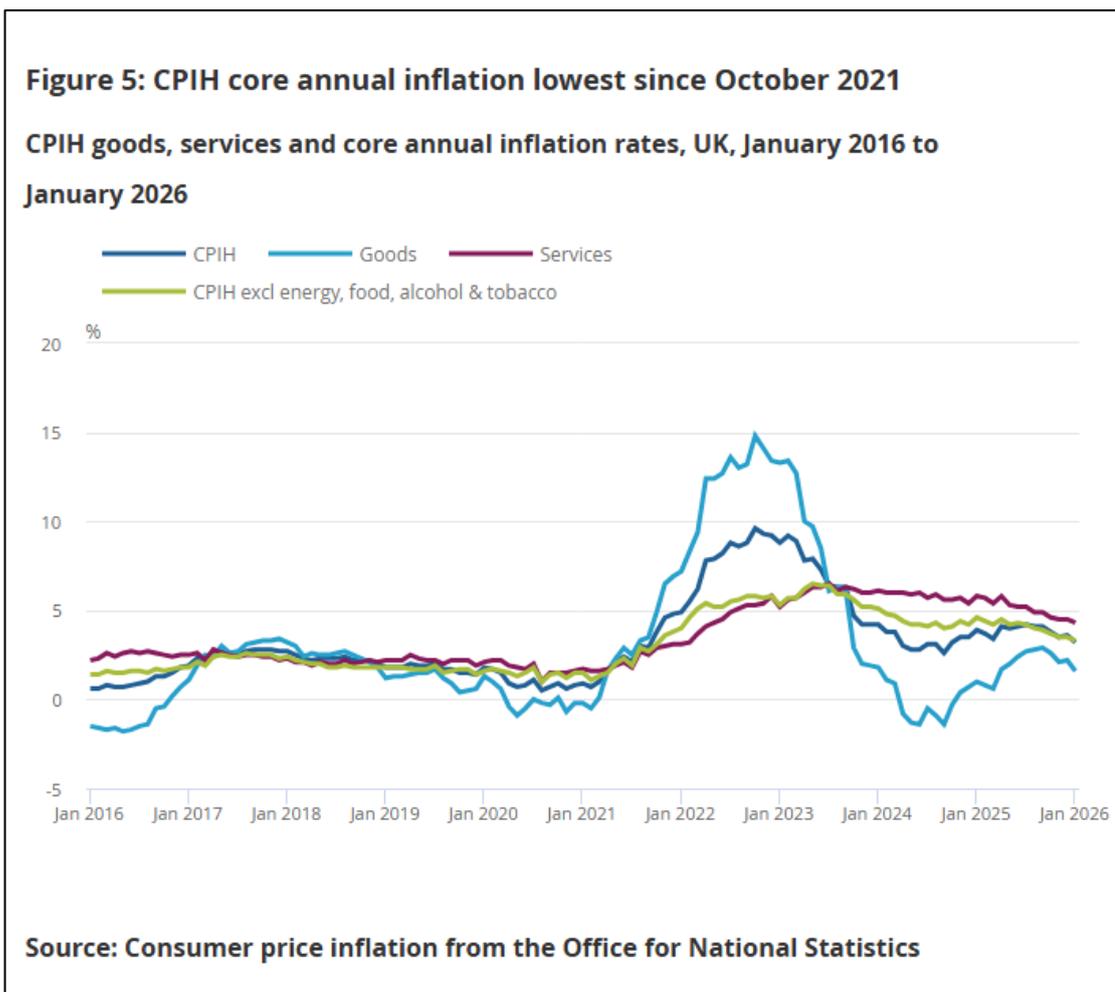
The downward contribution came entirely from private school fees, which rose by 12.7% a year ago after they became subject to Value Added Tax (VAT), and there was no change in price in January 2026.

## Restaurants and hotels

- 3.8 Prices in the restaurants and hotels division rose by 4.1% in the 12 months to January 2026, up from 3.8% in the 12 months to December 2025. On a monthly basis, prices fell by 0.7% in January 2026, compared with a fall of 1.0% a year ago.

The largest upward contribution came from the hotel item where prices are collected the night before the stay, with prices falling by 8.8% in January 2026 compared with a fall of 12.2% a year ago.

## Latest movements in CPIH inflation



3.9 Figure 5 shows the 12-month inflation rates for the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) series for all goods and all services, together with CPIH excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco (often referred to as core CPIH). The CPIH inflation rate is added for comparison.

The core CPIH annual inflation rate was 3.3% in January 2026, down from 3.5% in December 2025. This is the lowest rate since October 2021, when it was 3.1%.

The CPIH all-goods index rose by 1.6% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 2.2% in the 12 months to December 2025. The largest downward contribution to the change in the annual rate came from energy, particularly from motor fuels.

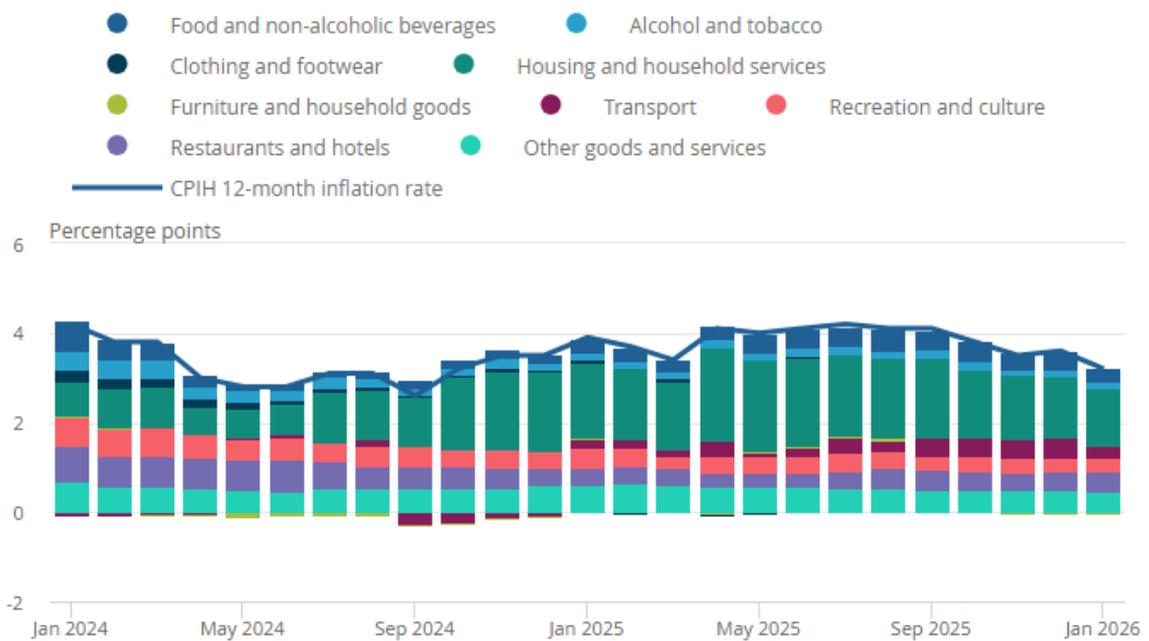
The CPIH all-services index rose by 4.3% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 4.5% in December 2025. This is the joint-lowest rate since May 2022, when it was 4.3%. The largest downward contribution to the change in the annual rate came from transport, particularly air fares.

3.10 Figure 6 shows the extent to which the distinct categories of goods and services have contributed to the overall annual CPIH inflation rate over the last two years. The contribution of each category to the annual rate depends on the price movement in that category and its weight, which is updated annually.

The largest positive contribution to the CPIH annual inflation rate came from housing and household services. This contributed 1.28 percentage points in January 2026, down from 1.37 percentage points in December 2025. The division has made the largest contribution for the last 19 months, starting from July 2024.

**Figure 6: Housing and household services made the largest contribution to the CPIH annual inflation rate for the 19th consecutive month**

**Contributions to the CPIH annual inflation rate, UK, January 2024 to January 2026**

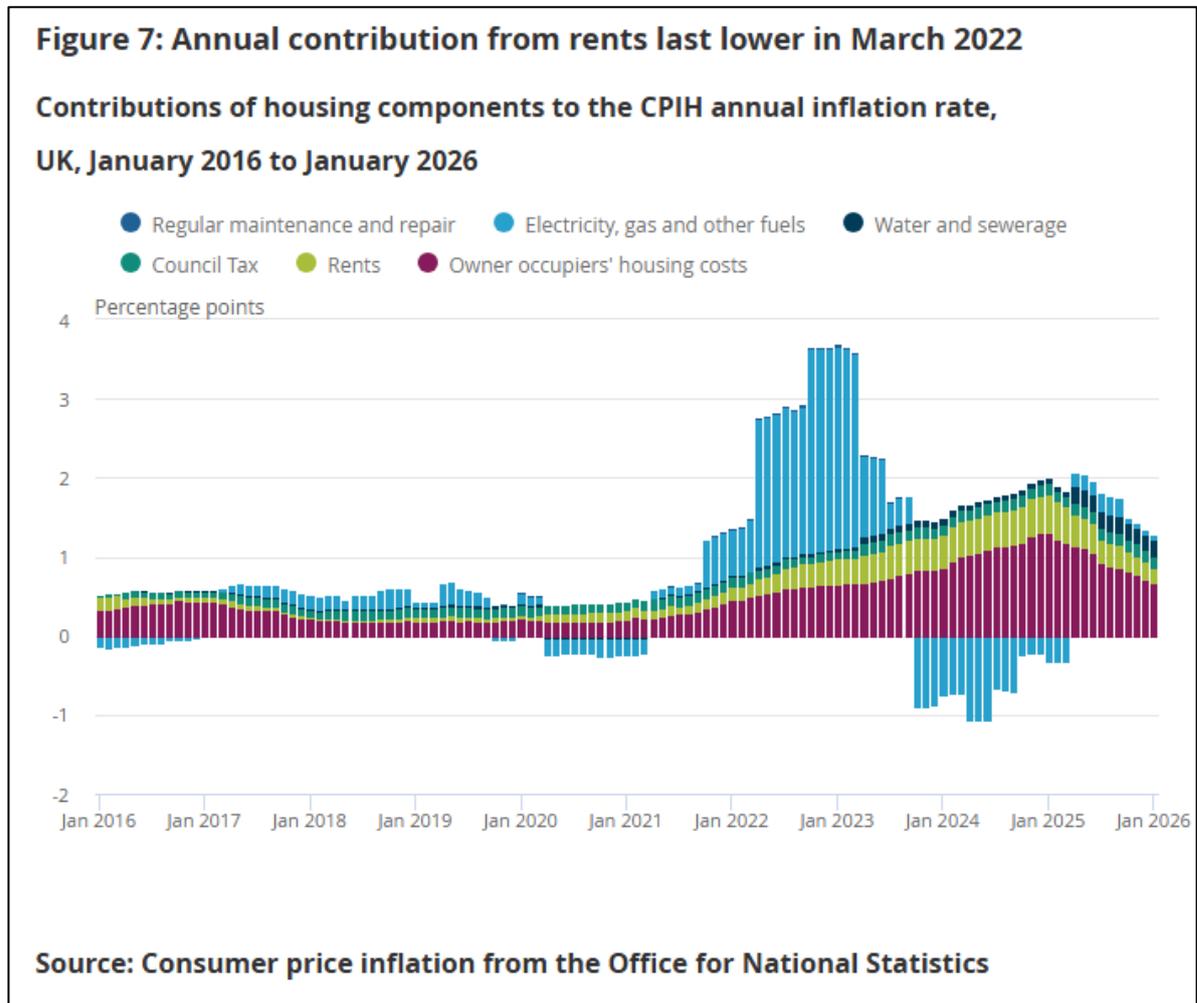


**Source: Consumer price inflation from the Office for National Statistics**

3.11 Figure 7 shows the contributions from owner occupiers' housing (OOH) costs and Council Tax to the annual CPIH inflation rate in the context of wider housing-related costs. The Consumer Prices Index (CPI) differs from the CPIH because it does not include these two components.

The annual contribution from OOH costs continued to slow and was 0.67 percentage points in January 2026. This contribution was the smallest since April 2023, having decreased for 12 consecutive months from a recent high of 1.31 percentage points in January 2025.

The annual contribution from rents also continued to slow and was 0.20 percentage points in January 2026. This contribution was last lower in March 2022, having decreased from a recent high of 0.49 percentage points in January 2025.



### Latest Movements in CPI Inflation

3.12 While the Consumer Prices Index including owner occupiers' housing costs (CPIH) is our most comprehensive measure of consumer price inflation, the Consumer Prices Index (CPI) is based on a harmonised methodology developed by Eurostat. This enables international comparisons to be drawn.

Figure 8 shows annual CPI inflation for the UK compared with the EU average and selected G7 countries. While the UK CPI is produced on a comparable basis with EU countries, the United States Harmonised Index of Consumer Prices (HICP) differs in some respects.

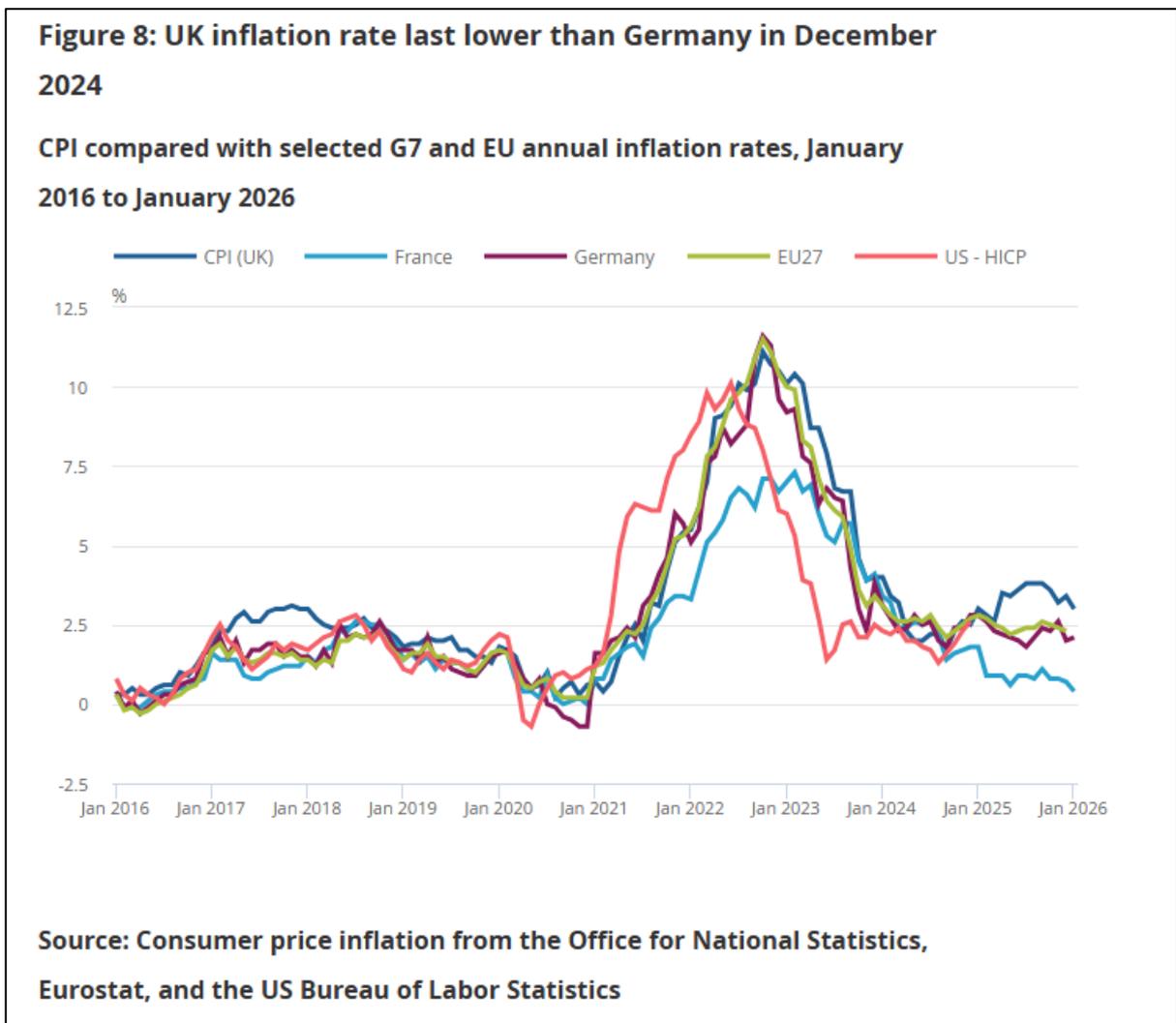
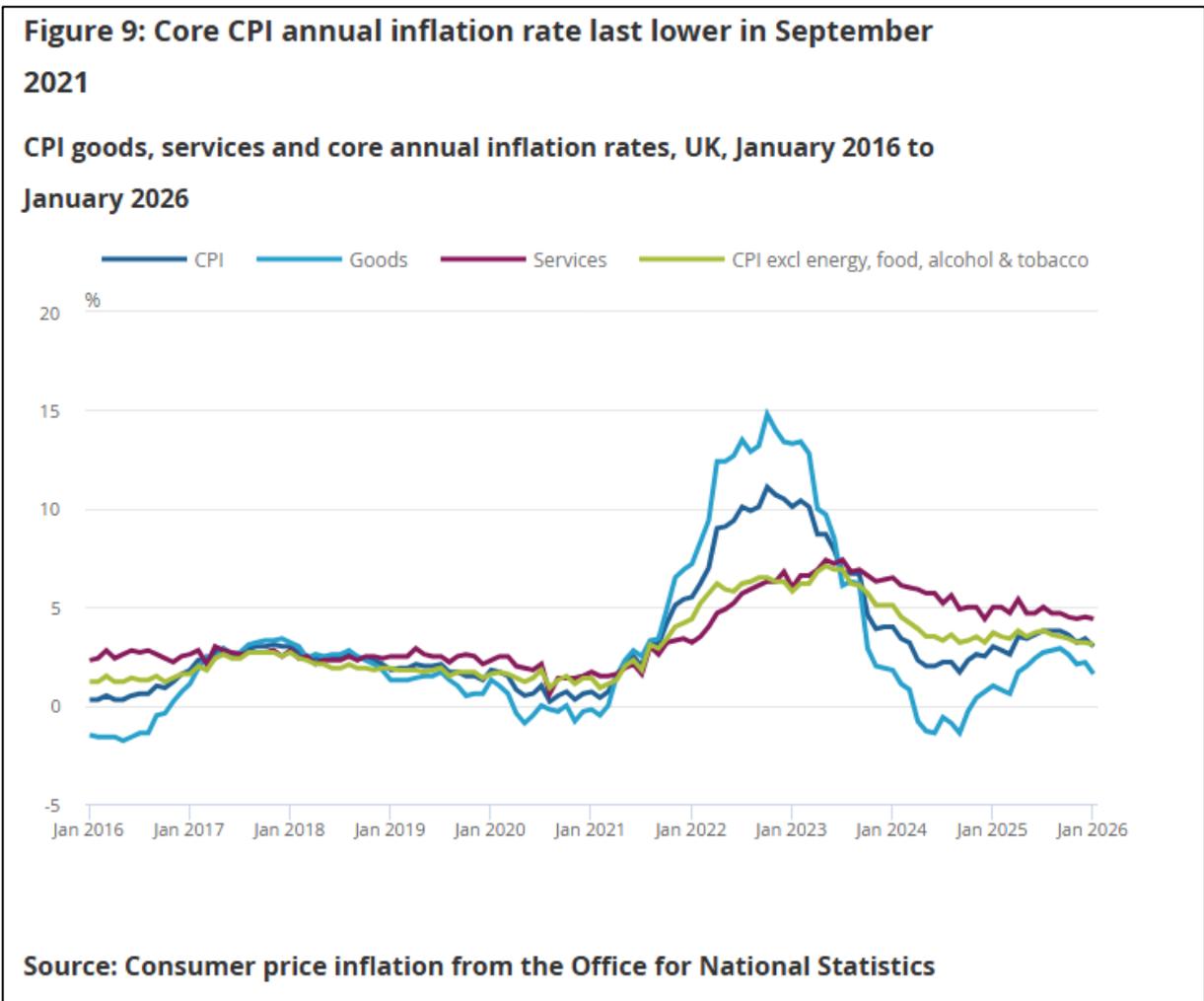


Figure 9 shows the 12-month inflation rates for the CPI all-goods and all-services series, together with CPI excluding energy, food, alcohol and tobacco (often referred to as core CPI). The headline CPI inflation rate is added for comparison. Core CPI rose by 3.1% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 3.2% in December 2025.

This is the lowest rate since September 2021, when it was 2.9%. The CPI all-goods index rose by 1.6% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 2.2% in the 12 months to December 2025.

The CPI all-services index rose by 4.4% in the 12 months to January 2026, down from 4.5% in the 12 months to December 2025.

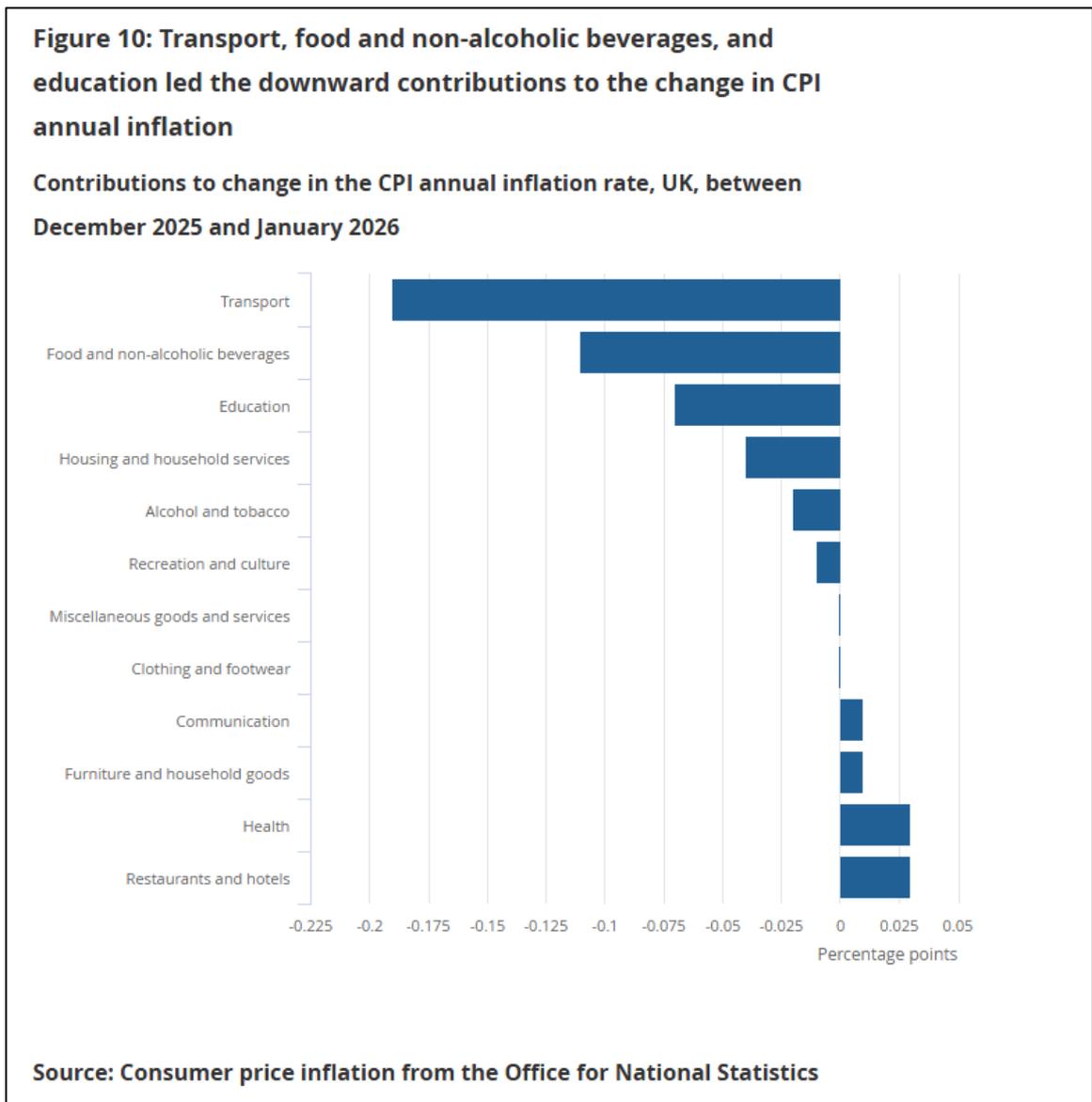
As with the all-items annual inflation rates, the drivers of CPIH and CPI goods and services inflation are the same (except for owner occupiers' housing (OOH) costs and Council Tax, which are excluded from CPI).



3.13 Figure 10 shows how each of the main groups of goods and services contributed to the change in the CPI annual inflation rate between December 2025 and January 2026.

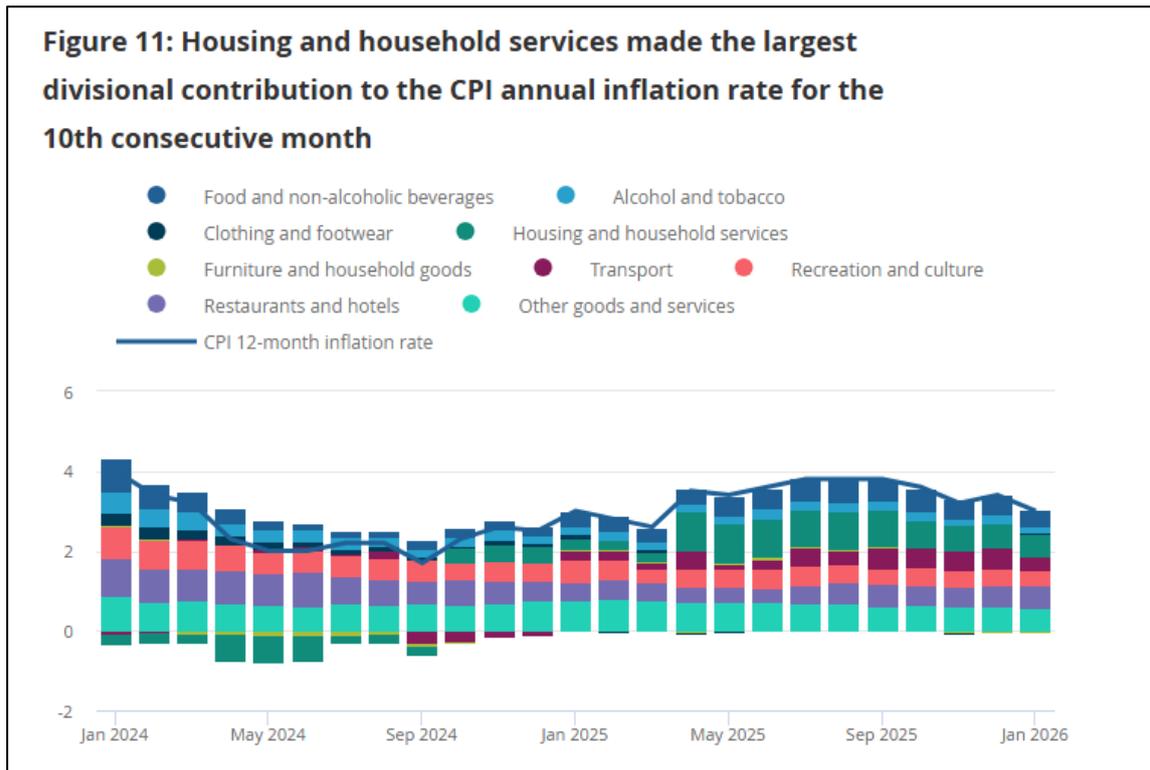
The fall in the rate into January 2026 reflected downward contributions from six divisions, partially offset by upward contributions from four divisions. The largest downward contributions came from the transport, food and non-alcoholic beverages, and education divisions.

Though the sizes of the contributions differ from CPIH, the main drivers to the change are the same where they are common to both measures.



3.14 Figure 11 shows the extent to which the distinct categories of goods and services have contributed to the overall annual CPI inflation rate over the last two years.

The CPIH includes extra housing components not included in the CPI. This can sometimes result in the largest contributions to the annual CPI and CPIH inflation rates coming from different divisions. However, the housing and household services division made the largest contribution to both measures in January 2026, with a 0.58 percentage point contribution to the CPI rate and a 1.28 percentage point contribution to the CPIH rate. OOH costs made a large upward contribution to housing and household services in the CPIH but are excluded from the CPI.



**Private rent and house prices.**

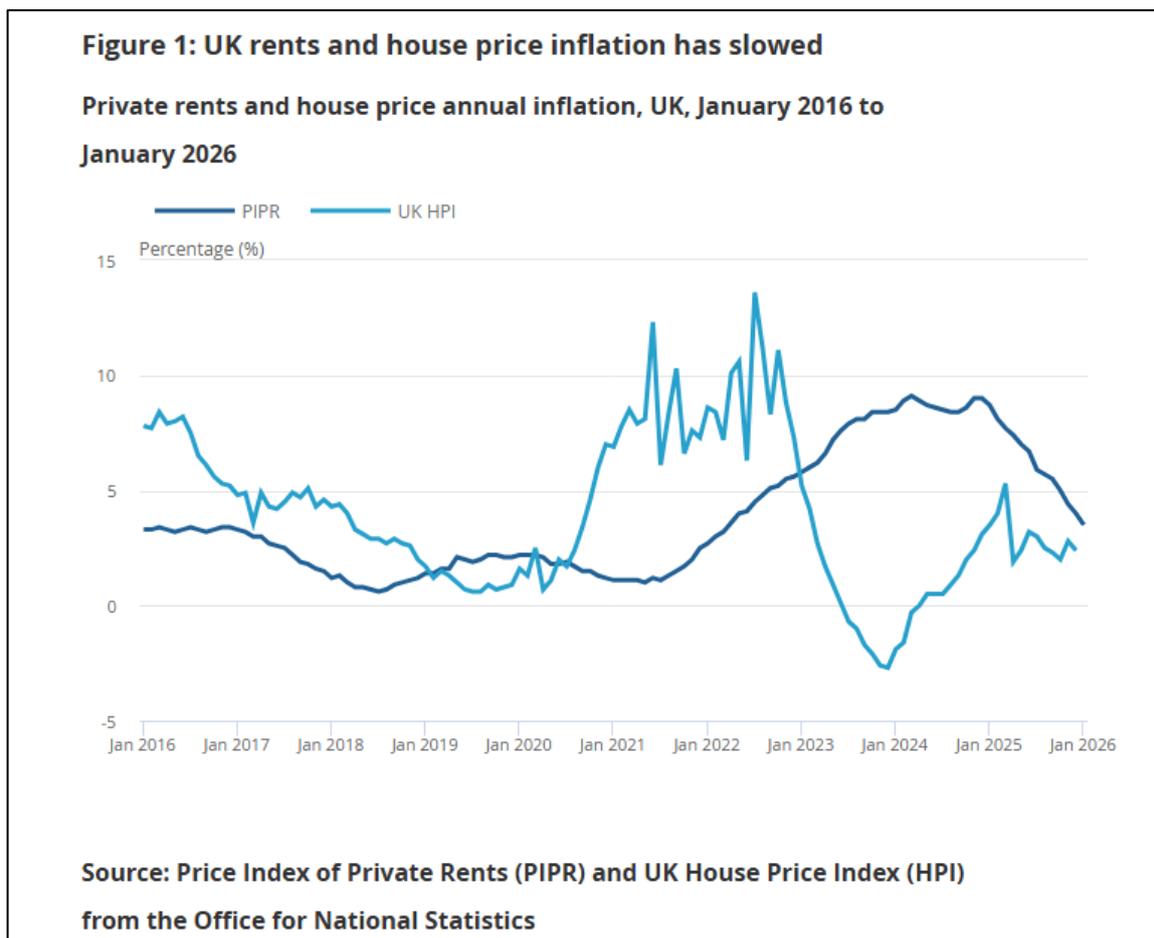
3.15 Average UK monthly private rents increased by 3.5%, to £1,367, in the 12 months to January 2026 (provisional estimate); this annual growth rate is down from 4.0% in the 12 months to December 2025.

Average rents increased to £1,423 (3.5%) in England, £826 (5.8%) in Wales, and £1,021 (2.6%) in Scotland, in the 12 months to January 2026.

In Northern Ireland, average rents increased to £875 (5.6%), in the 12 months to November 2025. In England, private rents annual inflation was highest in the North East (8.0%), and lowest in London (1.1%), in the 12 months to January 2026.

Average UK house prices increased by 2.4%, to £270,000, in the 12 months to December 2025 (provisional estimate); this annual growth rate is down from 2.8%, in the 12 months to November 2025.

Average house prices increased to £292,000 (1.7%) in England, £215,000 (5.0%) in Wales, and £191,000 (4.9%) in Scotland, in the 12 months to December 2025.



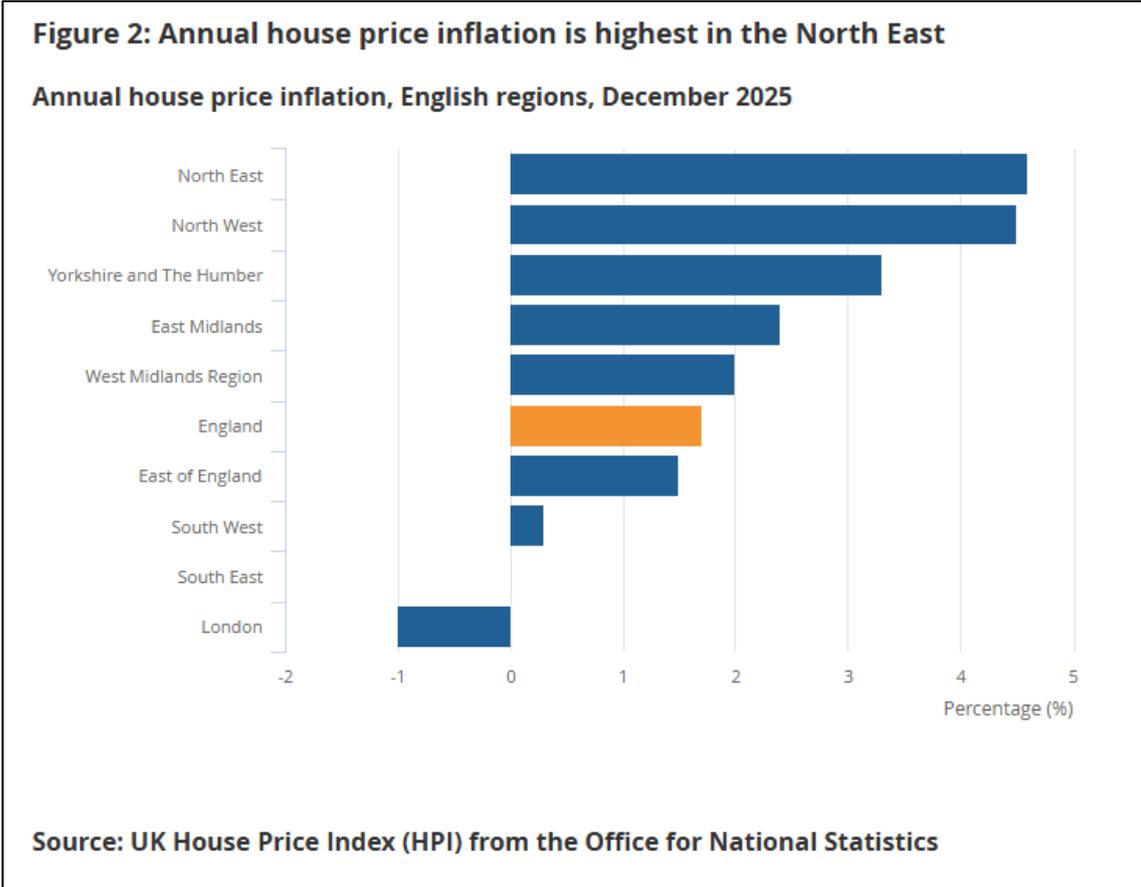
3.16 Average UK monthly private rents increased by 3.5%, in the 12 months to January 2026 (provisional estimate). This was down from 4.0% in the 12 months to December 2025 and is the lowest annual inflation rate since March 2022.

3.17 The average house price for England was £292,000 in December 2025, up 1.7% (£5,000) from a year earlier. This annual rise was lower than in the 12 months to November 2025 (2.5%).

The average house price for Wales was £215,000 in December 2025, up 5.0% (£10,000) from a year earlier. This annual rise was higher than in the 12 months to November 2025 (0.9%).

The average house price for Scotland was £191,000 in December 2025, up 4.9% (£9,000) from a year earlier. This annual rise was unchanged from the 12 months to November 2025 (4.9%).

The average house price for Northern Ireland was £196,000 in Quarter 4 (October to December) 2025, up 7.5% (£14,000) from Quarter 4 2024.



3.18 The Northeast was the English region with the highest house price inflation, at 4.6%, in the 12 months to December 2025. This was down from 7.5% in the 12 months to November 2025.

Annual house price inflation was lowest in London. Prices fell by 1.0% in the 12 months to December 2025, compared with a fall of 0.7% in the 12 months to November 2025.

Property prices in Northern Ireland (NI) continue to rise, and according to Halifax Northern Ireland remains the strongest performing UK region for house prices with average prices rising by 8.9% over the past year.<sup>25</sup>

**Private rents**

3.19 The average private rent in Great Britain was £1,367 per month in January 2026. This is £46 (3.5%) higher than 12 months ago.

Average rent for England was £1423 in January 2026, up 3.5% (£48) year-on-year. This represents a slowdown from the 3.9% annual increase in the 12 months to December 2025, and the lowest annual growth rate since March 2022.

<sup>25</sup> [Northern Ireland remains strongest performing UK region for house prices – Halifax – The Irish News](#)

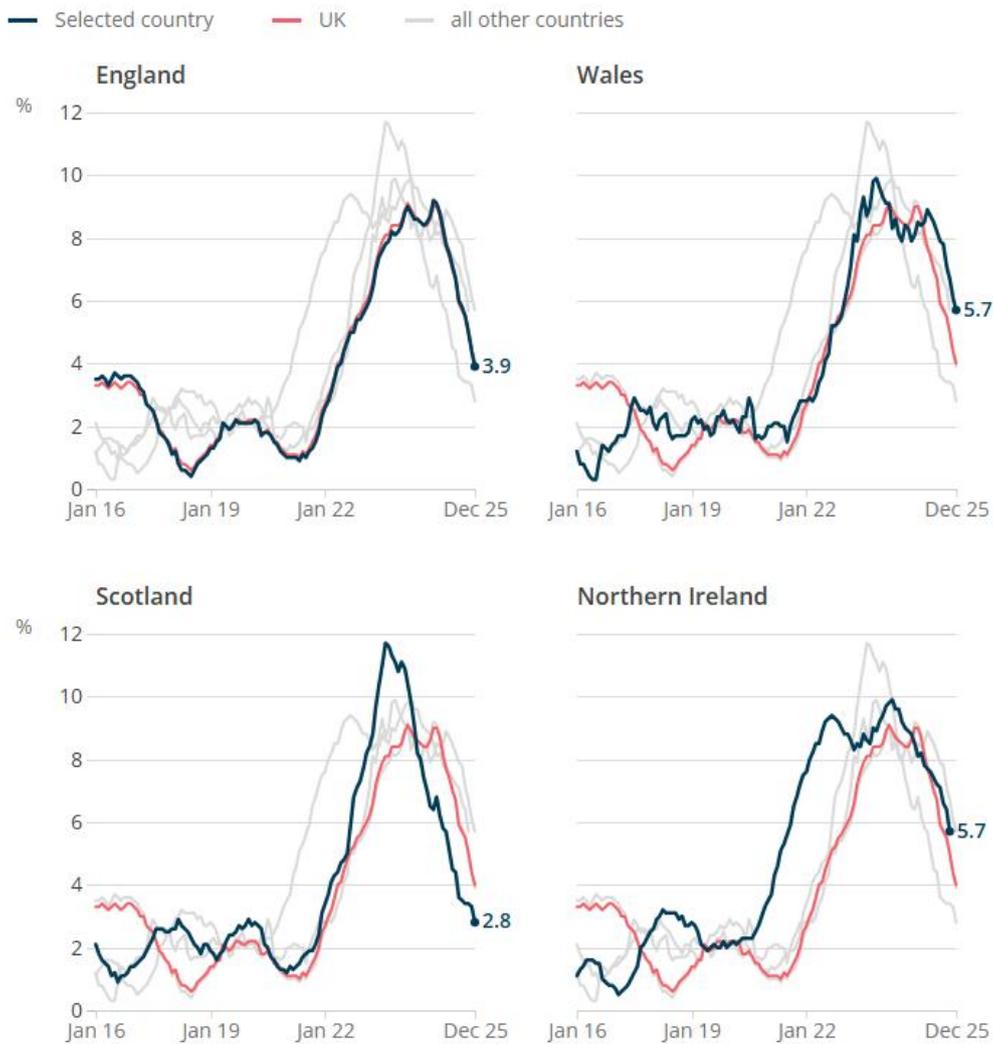
Average monthly rent for Wales was £826 in January 2026, up 5.8% (£45) from a year earlier. This annual rise was higher than in the 12 months to December 2025 (5.7%), but below the record-high annual rise of 9.9% in November 2023.

Average monthly rent for Scotland was £1,021 in January 2026, up 2.6% (£25) from a year earlier. This annual rise was lower than in the 12 months to December 2025 (2.8%) and represents the lowest annual rise for more than four years. Scotland's annual inflation rate has been slowing since the record-high annual rise of 11.7% in August 2023.

Average monthly rent in Northern Ireland was £875 in November 2025, up 5.6% (£46) from a year earlier. This annual rise was lower than in the 12 months to October 2025 (5.7%). Northern Ireland's annual inflation rate has been slowing since the record-high annual rise of 9.9% in April 2024.

**Figure 4: Rent annual inflation slowed across the UK**

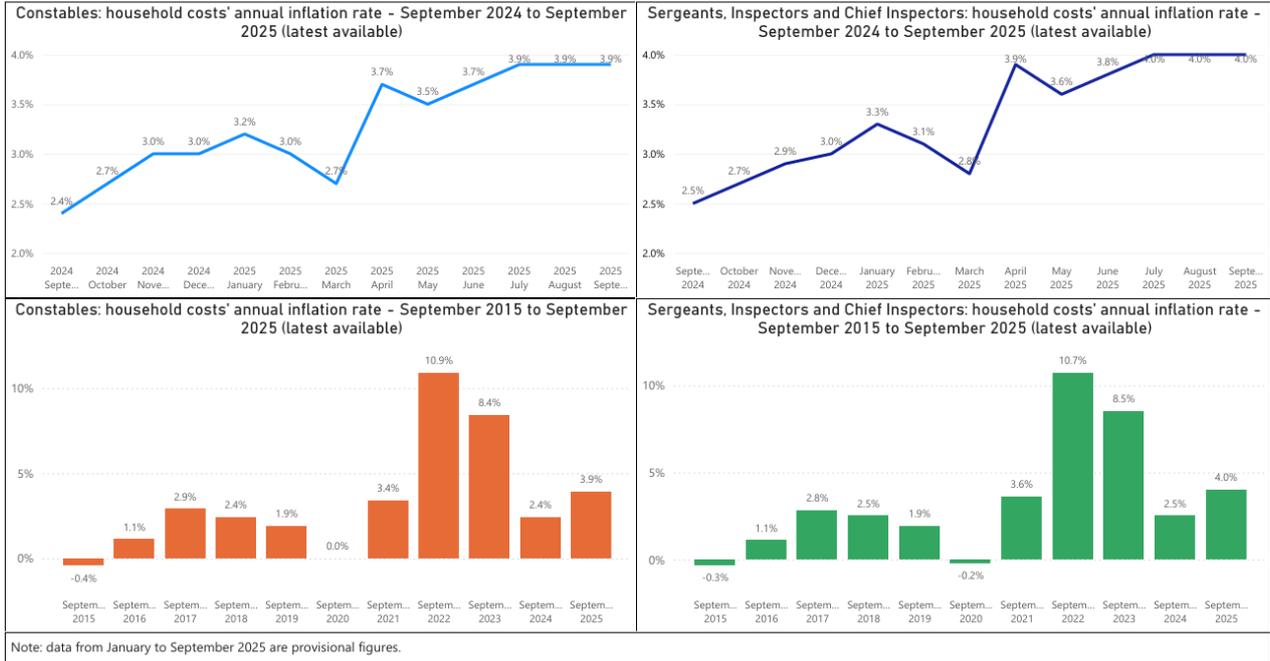
**Private rents annual inflation, across the UK, January 2016 to December 2025**



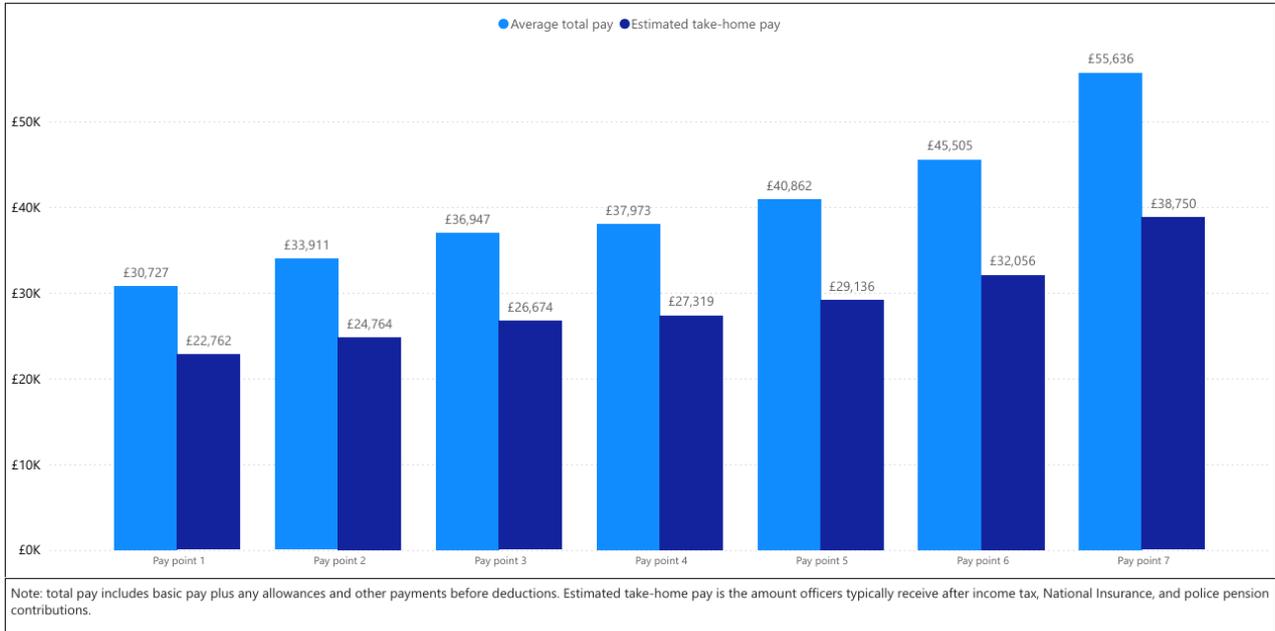
Source: Price Index of Private Rents (PIPR) from the Office for National Statistics

## Police specific economic analysis

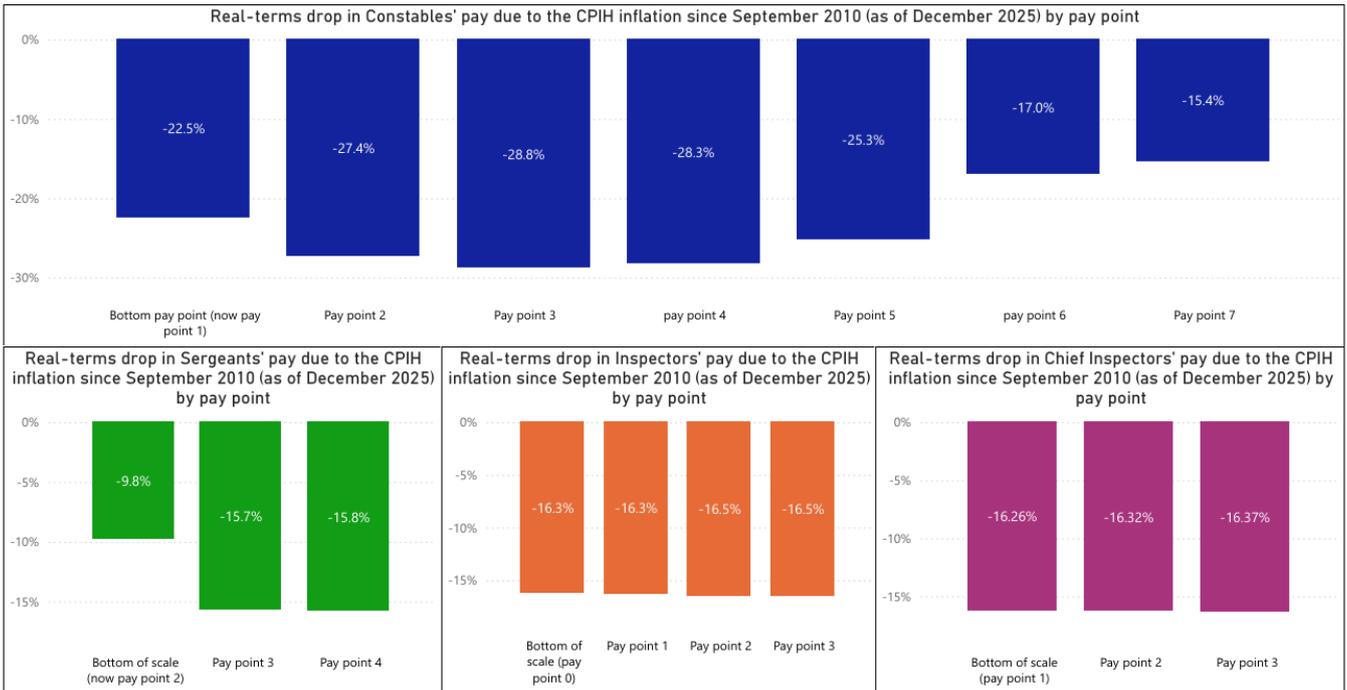
### Police Officers' estimated household costs



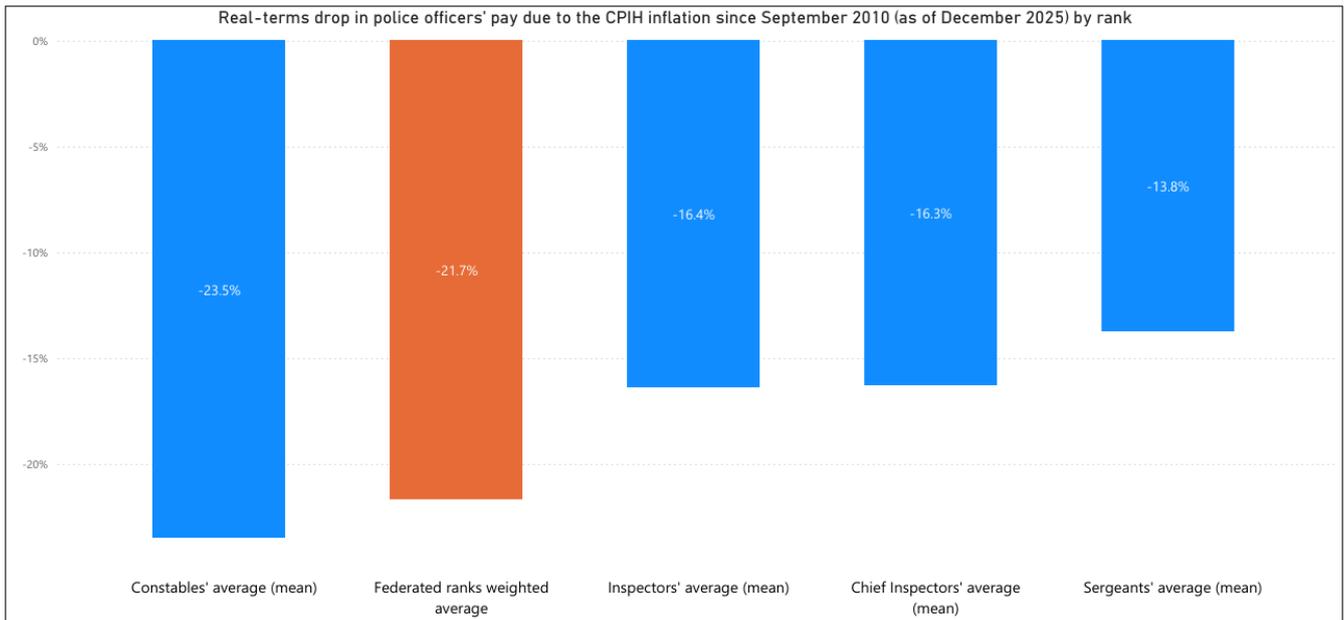
### Constable Earnings Overview: Average Total Pay and Estimated Take-Home Pay by Pay Point - Full-time officers - Pay Census 2024-25



**Real-terms drop in police officers' pay due to the CPIH inflation by rank (Federated ranks)**

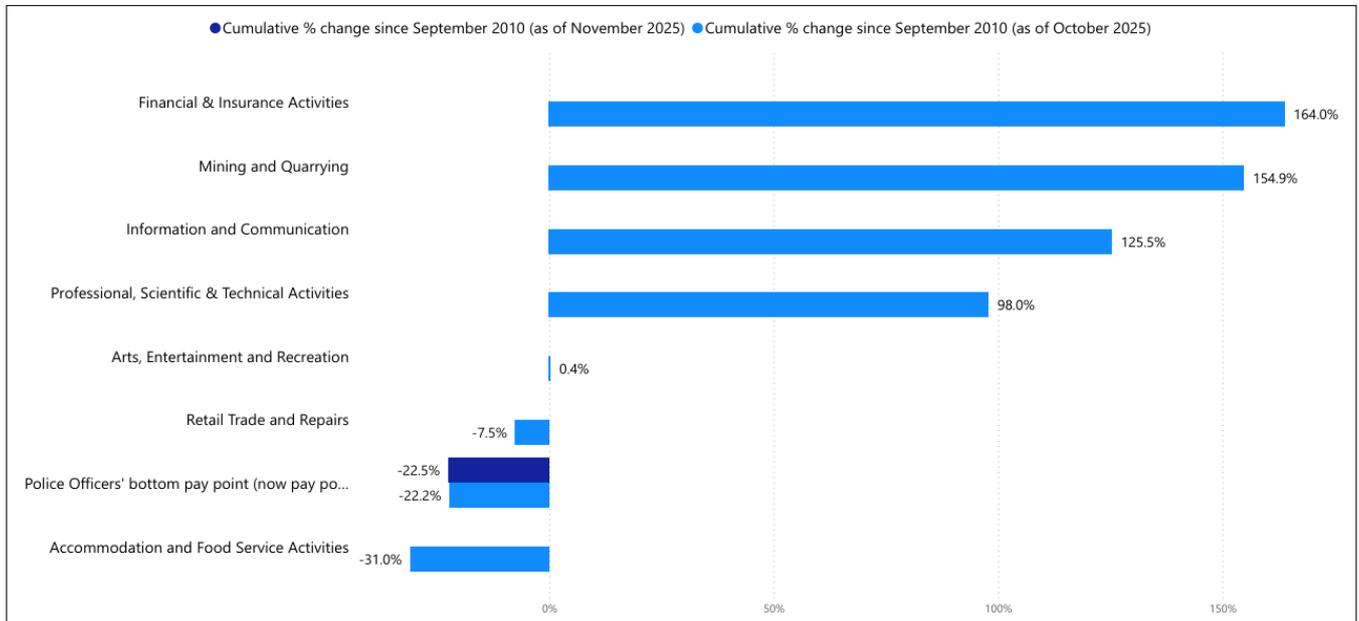


**Average of the real-terms drop in police officers' pay by rank and for the federated ranks due to the CPIH inflation**



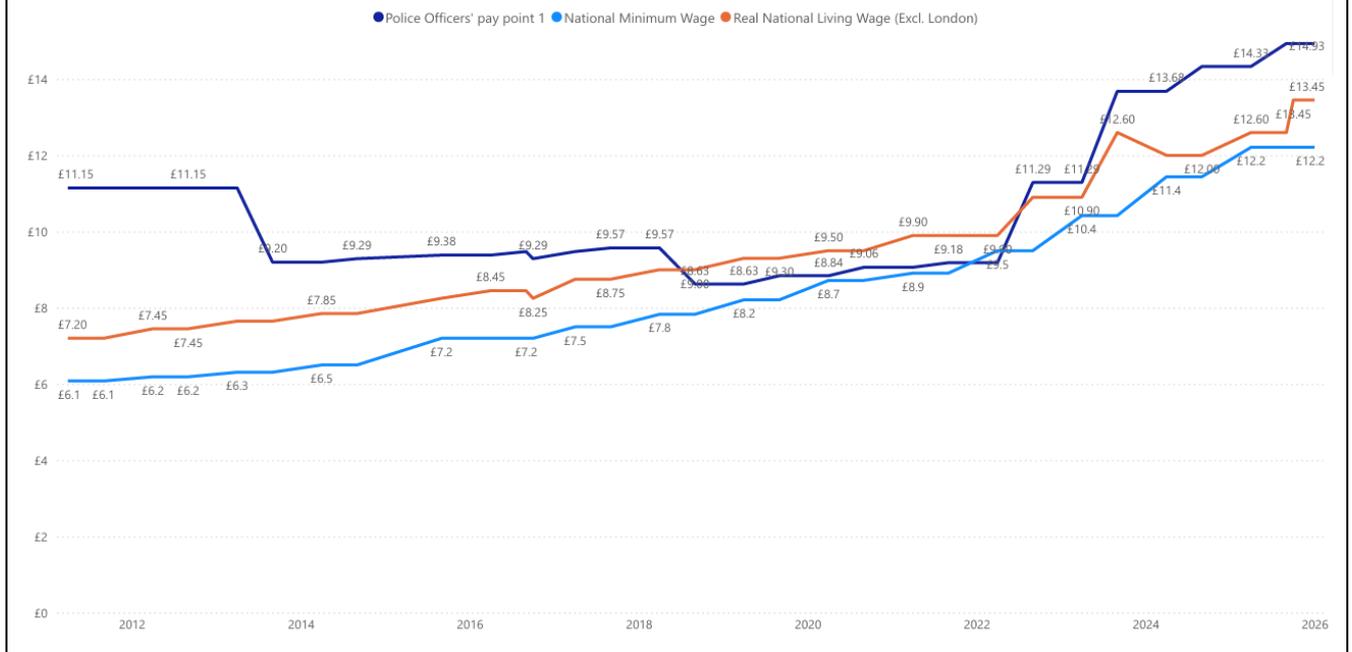
Note: each ranks' real-terms drop since 2010 average is estimated as the simple average (mean) of all the ranks' pay points real-terms drop since 2010. The federated ranks weighted average was estimated by multiplying all ranks' average real pay drop by the number of police officers per rank -taken from the Home Office Pay Census- add up the resulting figures and divide by the total number of police officers. This gave us a more accurate figure for the federated ranks' average real pay decline.

**Real-terms change (increase or decrease) by industry pay due to the CPIH inflation since September 2010**

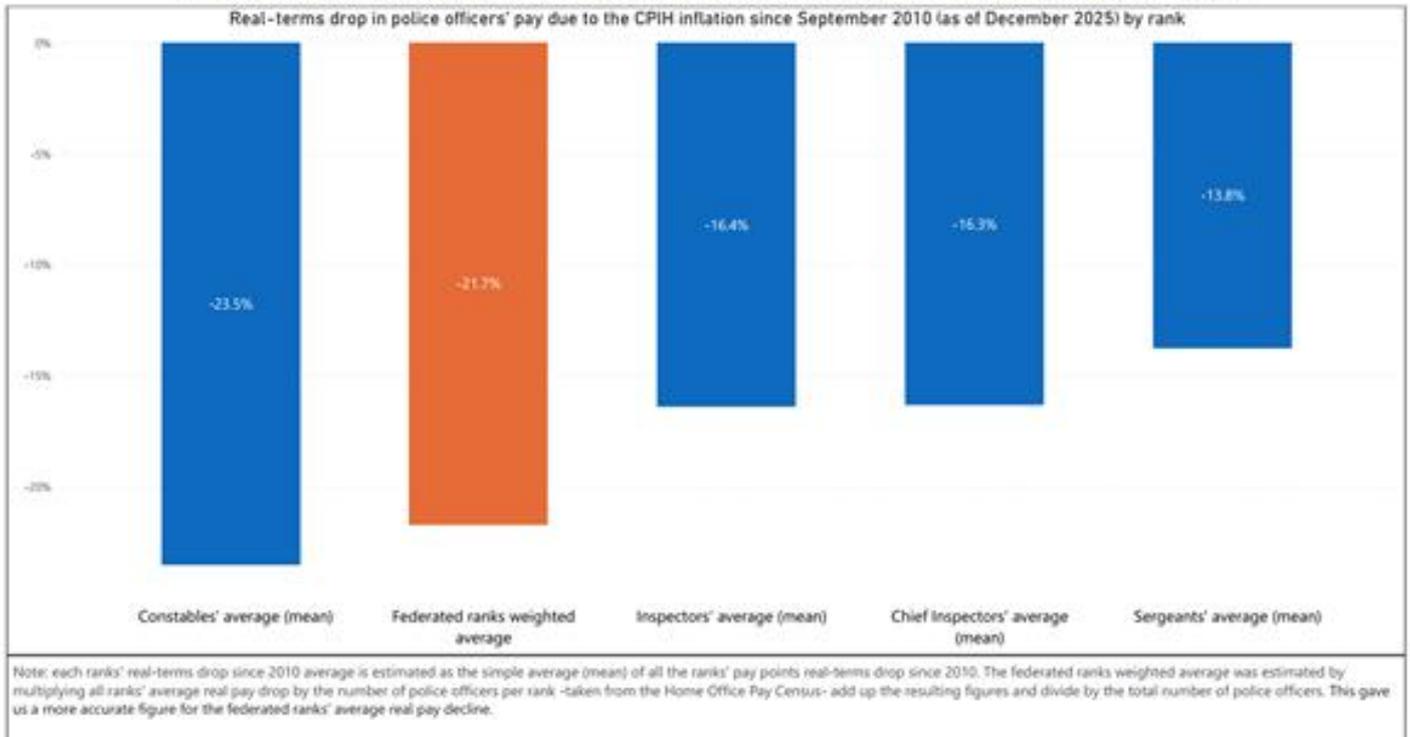


**Constables' minimum pay - in comparison to national minimum pay indicators**

Constables' minimum pay in comparison to the National Living Wage and the Real National Living Wage- hourly rate of pay



**Average real-terms decline in police officers' pay, by rank and for federated ranks (CPIH-adjusted)**



Economic Dashboard Report December 2025 produced by the Police Federation of England and Wales

## 4 POLICE PAY

- 4.1 To fully contextualise the evidence on police pay, it is essential to recognise that officers in Northern Ireland are now experiencing the consequences of a *ninth consecutive delay* in the implementation of Pay Review Body recommendations. Previous evidence has detailed the harmful impact these repeated delays have had on morale within the PSNI, as well as the significant financial pressures placed upon serving officers during a period of acute cost-of-living concern. However, it is equally important to acknowledge the cumulative effect of year-on-year delays on officer welfare and wellbeing. This ongoing uncertainty remains a major concern for the PFNI and continues to be a profound source of frustration, anger, and disillusionment among our members.
- 4.2 Debate surrounding police pay has become increasingly strained in recent years. It is widely accepted—without the need for further evidential reinforcement—that the value of police pay has been eroded continuously since 2011. This has been the result of three pay freezes, five 1% pay caps, and preceding periods of pay restraint. Irrespective of the inflation metric applied, the real terms reduction in police officer pay over the past decade is indisputable.
- 4.3 This sustained erosion of police pay over more than a decade has materially devalued the unique, complex, and demanding work carried out by officers. While the 2025/26 pay increase was both necessary and welcomed, it merely offset the inflationary pressures of the previous year. Real terms pay has declined significantly across all ranks since September 2010, with current evidence demonstrating that officers are now *21.7% worse off* than they were at the outset of austerity measures. The position is more acute with the rank of Constable, where we see our largest attrition rates, and where pay is currently worth 23.5% less in real terms compared to 2010.
- 4.4 Since 2010 there has been a heightened requirement for the skills and abilities needed to effectively undertake the office of Constable. What now exists is a scenario where there is more demand and heightened risk that is combined with almost a quarter reduction in pay. The PRRB must provide in its recommendation a pay increase that recognises this position.
- 4.5 PFNI strongly contends that the Government cannot afford *not* to meet the current recommendations. Failure to deliver immediate and well-planned improvements will result in detrimental consequences for both officers and wider society. Government has consistently cited “affordability” as the basis for below-optimal pay outcomes; however, affordability is ultimately a political choice. The future of policing must be prioritised, and appropriate funding—to ensure fair and sustainable pay for officers—must be secured. This requires not aspiration but determined political will.
- 4.6 The National Police Chiefs’ Council (NPCC) has submitted evidence to the PRRB to consider in setting the pay uplift for policing from September 2026. This sets out the case for a fair and affordable pay uplift of 3.5%, reflecting the rising complexity and demands of modern policing. National Police Chiefs’ Council Lead for Pay and Conditions, Deputy Chief Officer Philip Wells, said: *‘Policing operates under a national pay structure, where based on recommendations by the pay review bodies, government determines the national pay award. This is the only recourse for policing given officers cannot strike. Our submission recognises uncertainty in inflation forecasts, which may shift as we approach the PRRB’s decision making window. However, full funding is vital to protect frontline services,*

*including neighbourhood policing commitments within the Government’s manifesto, and to support the wider reform programme set out in the recent white paper.*

*We are calling for a settlement that keeps pace with the cost of living, recognises the unique demands of policing, and properly rewards officers for the increasingly complex work and additional hours they commit to keeping the public safe. It must ensure policing keeps pace with wider earnings trends to ensure officers are fully supported and motivated.’*

4.7 Police Officers work longer and far less predictable hours than most other professions. Even when compared to other public safety/emergency roles, this proves to be true, as the demands on police officers stand out to be uniquely unpredictable, with a high prevalence of cancelled rest days, irregular hours, and mandatory attendance at short notice. The demands of working hours for the Inspecting ranks is particularly acute, which will be outlined later in this submission.

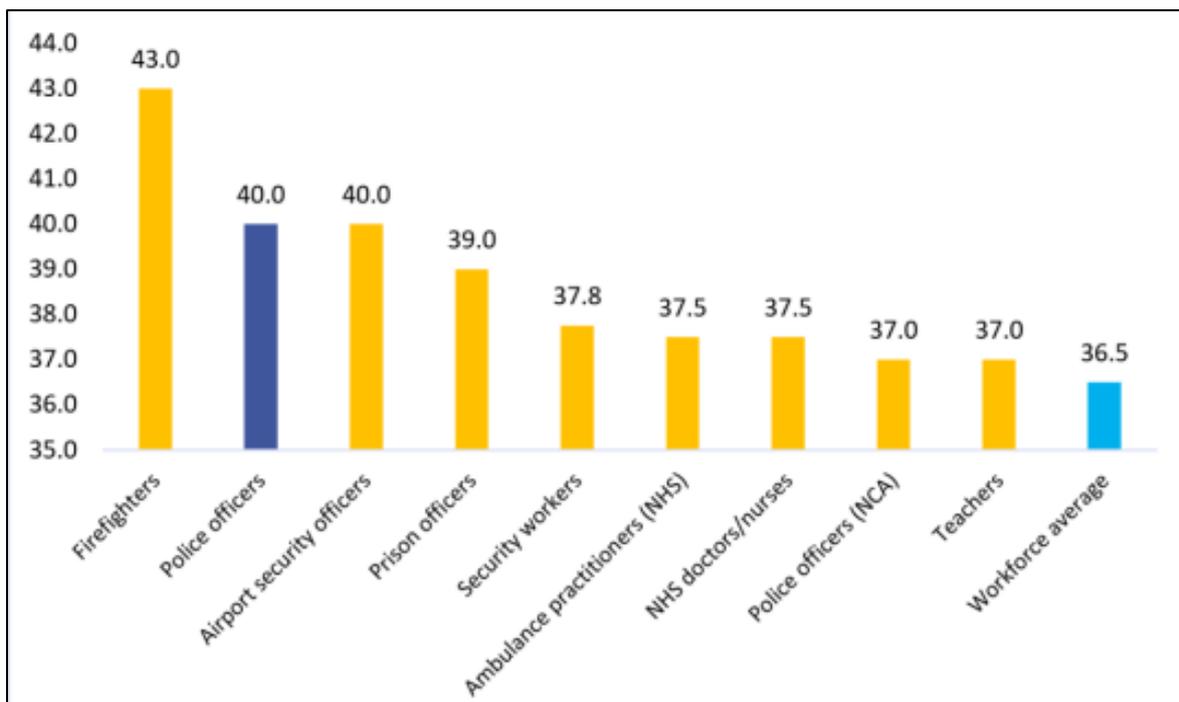
4.8 Evidence from the Office of National Statistics shows that officers have longer contracted working hours than average full-time workers. Although this is important to note in considering remuneration, in reality it is the unpredictability of working demands and the restrictions placed on the personal lives of officers that should drive a higher level of compensation.

### Comparison of Professions – Working Hours and Unsocial Hours

Profession	Typical Weekly Hours	Unsocial Hours & Predictability	Comment
<b>Police officers</b>	40+ (contracted 40; many exceed 48)	Very high: nights, weekends, public holidays; rest days frequently cancelled	24/7 cover – work patterns uniquely unpredictable
<b>Police officers (National Crime Agency)</b>	37+ (contracted 37; often exceeded during operations)	Flexible: evenings, weekends, nights, on-call duties	24/7 cover – national crime work requires irregular and urgent deployments
<b>Prison officers</b>	39+ (contracted 39; extended duties common)	Rotating shifts incl. nights/weekends; understaffing often extends duties	24/7 cover – custodial and public safety role
<b>Ambulance practitioners (NHS)</b>	37.5+ (contracted 37.5; frequently extended to 12-hour shifts)	Very high: frequent nights/weekends, mandatory overtime at peak demand	24/7 cover – comparable emergency response pressures
<b>Firefighters</b>	43 (contracted 43; standardised rota)	2-2-4 shift pattern (two days, two nights, four days off); predictable but includes nights/weekends	24/7 cover but structured
<b>Airport security officers</b>	40+ (contracted 40; shifts may extend)	Early mornings, late nights, weekends, and public holidays; roster published in advance	24/7 cover – unsocial hours required but scheduling predictable
<b>Security workers</b>	37.5–38+ (contracted; often extended to 12-hour shifts)	Shift-based; many posts require nights/weekends	Predictability varies; unsocial hours common in guarding roles
<b>NHS doctors/nurses</b>	37.5+ (contracted 37.5; many exceed 48)	Rota-based unsocial hours and long shifts; demanding but scheduled in advance	Intense workload but relatively predictable
<b>Teachers</b>	37+ (contracted 37; plus unpaid work)	Term-time intensity; unpaid prep/marking often evenings/weekends, but calendar predictable	Long hours but structured
<b>Workforce average</b>	36.5 (contracted 36.5)	Mostly daytime, Monday–Friday work	Few unsocial hours

### Contracted weekly hours across professions

<sup>26</sup>



4.9 There is undoubtedly a link to both the growing trend in violence and unrest in society and also the amount of work being given to policing from other sectors, that we are seeing an increase of exposure to harm through physical injury and trauma. This increased risk has been progressively worsening in recent years, but the impact has been resolutely ignored and written off as a cost of doing ‘the job’.

4.10 In our report to the PRRB last year, we detailed the trends of assaults on police officers, and how it demonstrated that policing was an increasingly dangerous profession. In June 2025, in response to the unacceptably high levels of assaults/attacks on police, the Police Federation for Northern Ireland launched the **Let Them Protect** campaign to highlight the escalating number of assaults on police officers and to push for stronger sentencing and greater public support for frontline policing:

At campaign launch, there were 9 assaults on police officers every single day in Northern Ireland. The multimedia campaign was jointly supported by the PSNI, the Department of Justice and the Northern Ireland Policing Board.

The campaign was created to raise awareness of the growing frequency of attacks on PSNI officers. Highlighting the personal, operational, and service-wide impact of assaults and push for tougher sentencing for offenders and legislative reform.

The PFNI ‘Let Them Protect’ campaign stressed that assaults on officers reduce police availability for the community and that Tasers offer a safer, less-lethal alternative compared with firearms, batons, or PAVA spray. Other police services, including An Garda Síochána, have already expanded Taser access in response to rising attacks.

<sup>26</sup> Ferrer, R., & Ip, A. (2025, November). Police officers’ working hours: Comparison with other professions and UK workforce. [Police workforce England and Wales statistics - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/workforce-england-and-wales-statistics)

The number of assaults on officers reaching a five-year high in February 2023. Currently, the daily average assault on police offences for the latest 12-month period (February 2025 to January 2026) is 7, a total of 2,624 offences. The figure for the same period in the previous year (February 2024 to January 2026) was 8, a total of 2,975 offences. This figure remains unacceptably high and this issue remains a priority for PFNI and our stakeholders.

Official crime statistics recorded a total of 2,810 assaults for the period 2024/25 - assault with injury on a Constable was 881 incidents, a decrease of 9.9% on the year 2023/24. Assault without injury on a Constable was 1,929 incidents, a decrease of 18.5% on the year 2023/24.

4.11 Over recent years, society has spoken with more confidence and openly about the impacts of mental health and trauma. For policing, the exposure to trauma is frequent, and the impacts are harsh.

The depth of the trauma linked to policing has been researched in several independent studies. The extensive study by Cambridge University indicates that 90 percent of officer experience trauma, with it leading to PTSD.<sup>27</sup>

A further study by King’s College London examined the relationship between occupational exposure to traumatic events and mental health outcomes with 40,299 UK police officers and found that recent exposure to traumatic incidents was strongly associated with adverse mental health outcomes. Officers who reported recent trauma exposure being six times more likely to screen positive for probable PTSD compared to those not exposed to traumatic events.<sup>28</sup>

Consistent with findings from UK police research, a large prospective cohort study of Danish police officers further demonstrates a clear exposure-response relationship between traumatic incident exposure and PTSD symptoms. Figure 1 in Hansen et al.’s study illustrates increasing mean PTSD symptom level across groups with rising cumulative exposure to critical incidents (see adapted illustration below). Although conducted in Denmark, the occupational demands and trauma profiles are comparable to those in the UK, making the observed pattern of symptom escalation relevant for understanding referral and identification of PTSD within UK populations.<sup>29</sup>

4.12 Modern policing has shifted into a role defined by excessive working hours, unpredictable schedules, and cancelled rest days, driven by increasing demand, staffing shortages, and mandatory overtime. Research shows that long shifts and irregular hours significantly degrade officers’ physical and mental wellbeing, contributing to chronic fatigue, impaired decision-making, and higher health risks. Officers report that rotating and extended shifts leave little time for recovery or personal life, creating a profession “running on empty.” These pressures are compounded by organisational cultures that often do not support adequate rest or wellness breaks, intensifying burnout and psychological distress.

<sup>27</sup> [Probable PTSD, depression and anxiety in 40,299 UK police officers and staff: Prevalence, risk factors and associations with blood pressure | PLOS One](#)

<sup>28</sup> [Probable PTSD, depression and anxiety in 40,299 UK police officers and staff: Prevalence, risk factors and associations with blood pressure | PLOS One](#)

<sup>29</sup> [Exposure to critical incidents at work and development of posttraumatic stress among police officers a 2-year prospective cohort study.pdf](#)

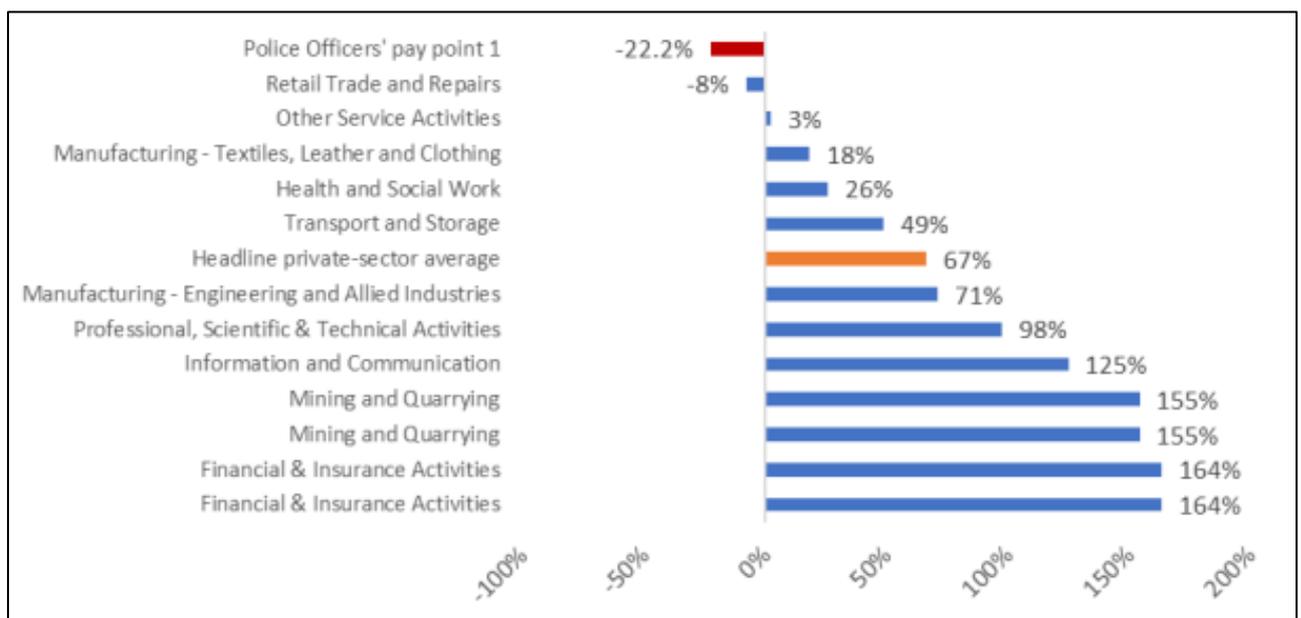
At the same time, officers face unprecedented exposure to trauma, with evidence showing they experience hundreds of critical incidents across their careers, far beyond that of the general population. This repeated exposure elevates the risk of PTSD and complex PTSD, with studies showing significantly higher prevalence among police than the general public. Despite this heavy and repeated exposure to trauma—which significantly increases the risk of PTSD and complex PTSD—officers have seen the real terms value of their pay eroded due to long-term below inflation pay settlements, undermining the original intent of offering a pay premium that recognised the unique physical and psychological burdens of policing.

Parallel to these internal pressures, officers are navigating heightened public expectations and greater scrutiny, with communities demanding more transparency, accountability, and professionalism while also expecting officers to handle increasingly complex social issues. This combination of rising pressures, trauma burden, and public oversight creates a role that is more demanding and scrutinised than ever before, contributing to burnout, retention problems, and declining morale across the profession.

4.13 Real Public sector pay has, in general, not kept pace with private sector earnings. For policing, this has been more acute. By not having the ability to strike, police officers have continued to fare worse than other public sector colleagues.

Sectors that attract the skills of police officers in the private sector have seen significant pay increases since 2010. This is in comparison to the 22% drop in police officer pay. As the private sector has continued to attract skilled workers, headline private sector industry pay that utilise the skills and experience of officers have seen average wage increases of 67%. This figure is from September 2010 to November 2025 and is relative to inflation, the data is provided by the Office of National Statistics.

**Great Britain: headline private-sector industry pay: real-terms change relative to CPIH inflation (since September 2010) as of November 2025<sup>30</sup>**



<sup>30</sup> PFEW evidence submission document submitted to PRRB 26-27

4.14 The proposed reforms affecting policing structures in England and Wales will not directly apply in Northern Ireland, but the scale and pace of change across the wider UK policing landscape will still create an intensive period of planning, consultation, and debate. For the PSNI, this environment adds further pressure to maintain public confidence while navigating its own unique operational, political, and community-based challenges. As large-scale reforms unfold elsewhere, the reality is that many of the day-to-day issues that matter most to officers in Northern Ireland—such as working conditions, wellbeing, and pay—may see little immediate improvement.

This risks deepening a situation in which officers feel their concerns are overlooked and their pay continues to erode in real terms, intensifying existing retention and recruitment pressures already felt acutely in the PSNI. One potential mitigation the PRRB could offer is a multi-year pay award, providing stability and reassurance while wider policing reforms progress. Such a multi-year settlement would allow the PSNI, the Department of Justice, and staff associations to focus on developing a modernised, fit for purpose pay and reward framework without the annual disruption of short term pay negotiations that fail to address structural shortcomings.

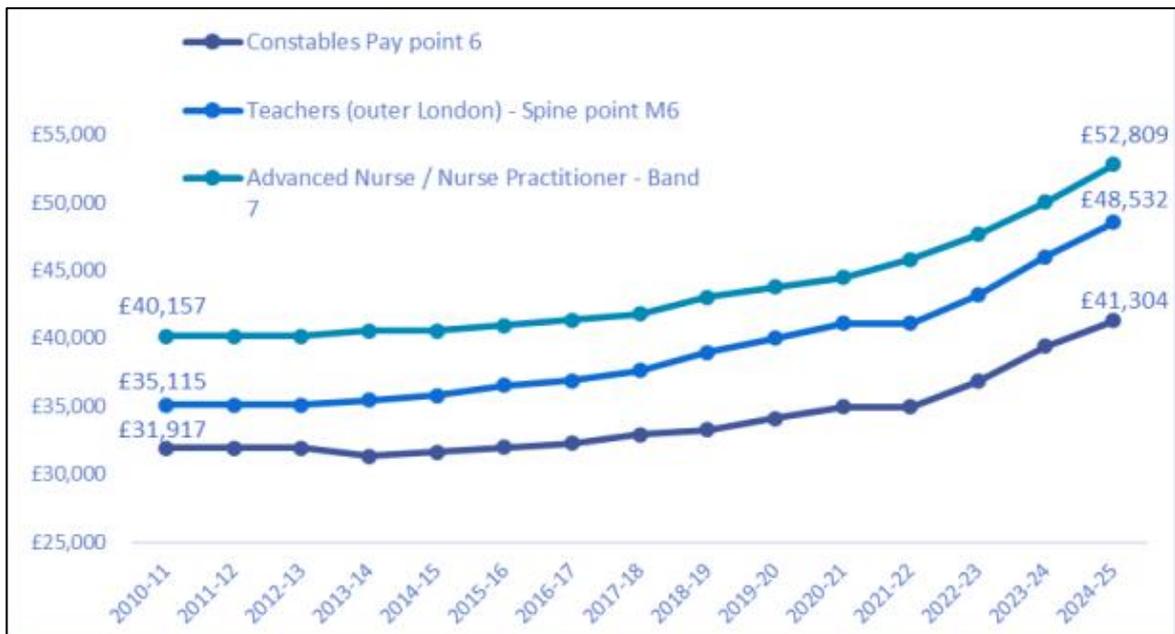
However, this approach should only be pursued if a multi-year award delivers genuine real terms pay improvement, reversing some of the long term pay degradation experienced since austerity. If this condition is met, it would signal a meaningful commitment by government to support officers' pay and working conditions in Northern Ireland. A multi-year settlement would also offer the added benefit of allowing the PSNI and the Policing Board to plan budgets with greater certainty—an important advantage during periods of reform, fiscal constraint, and organisational change.

4.15 Public Sector roles that have the right to strike have fared better with pay increases.

It is the view of the PFNI that the inability of a police officer to take industrial action has meant that police officers have taken the brunt of austerity measures. Whilst public sector pay has been falling out of step, police officers have fallen behind more significantly than public sector colleagues.

Previously, an experienced police officer's pay was benchmarked to other critical public sector roles, namely experienced teachers, and nurses. As can be seen from the chart below, Constables are now making significantly less than those professions.

Police Constable’s pay point 6 and comparable roles’ pay scales -- 2010/11 to 2024/25<sup>31</sup>



4.17 Policing in Northern Ireland continues to operate under uniquely complex and demanding conditions, characterised by heightened security pressures, community specific challenges, and an operational environment that consistently places extraordinary demands on officers. Against this backdrop, PSNI faces ongoing difficulties in recruitment and retention—difficulties which have been exacerbated by long-term pay degradation relative to other public sector professions. Although officers received a 4.2% consolidated pay increase in January 2026, this uplift remains below recent inflation levels, meaning police pay continues to lose value in real terms.

When compared with other public sector professions in Northern Ireland, the relative decline in police remuneration becomes increasingly evident. Teachers received significant uplifts effective January 2026, resulting in midcareer and upper scale teachers earning between £40,700 and £50,876, with senior leadership roles rising well above that. In contrast, PSNI constables reach pay points between £31,164 and £50,256, even at the highest levels, and this is only partially offset by the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance. The trajectory of teacher pay reform now places many experienced teachers ahead of their policing counterparts in terms of earnings, despite the higher psychological and physical demands placed on police officers.

A similar pattern is evident within the health sector. The Agenda for Change 2025/26 pay award, implemented in February 2026, has increased pay across nursing bands, resulting in Band 5 nurses earning £31,049–£37,796, Band 6 nurses earning £38,682–£46,580, and Band 7 nurses reaching £47,810–£54,710. These scales demonstrate that many experienced nurses now earn at, or above, the pay levels available to PSNI constables. Given the scale of recent investment across health and education workforces, the relative

<sup>31</sup> PFEW evidence submission document submitted to PRRB 26-27

competitiveness of policing as a career option has significantly weakened—limiting recruitment potential and accelerating retention challenges.

This widening pay disparity comes at a time when operational pressures on PSNI officers continue to intensify. Officers frequently work extended hours and face persistent resource constraints, all while experiencing significantly higher rates of exposure to traumatic incidents than the general population. Such conditions demand a pay framework that recognises the cumulative psychological toll of the role and supports long-term retention. Current pay settlements, however, have not delivered the real terms improvement required to stabilise the workforce and maintain operational resilience.

Given these realities, a multiyear pay settlement—if it provides genuine real terms increases—would offer a critical stabilising mechanism. It would give officers confidence in future financial security, provide a structured pathway for restoring pay competitiveness, and enable the PSNI and the Northern Ireland Executive to plan more effectively during a period of financial and operational uncertainty. Such an approach would also align policing more closely with other public sector pay transformations already underway, particularly in teaching, where multiyear adjustments have facilitated meaningful pay progression.

The PRRB therefore has a pivotal opportunity to support the sustainability of policing in Northern Ireland. A multiyear award that actively addresses longstanding real terms pay erosion would represent a clear commitment to valuing the frontline service of officers, ensuring that policing remains a viable and competitive profession, and safeguarding public safety through a stable and motivated workforce.

The latest research continues to demonstrate that Policing remains the most stressful job in the UK.

### Top 10 Most Stressful Jobs in the UK (2026 Rankings)

1. **Police Officers (Sergeant and below):** Consistently ranked top, with roughly 6.5% of officers reporting work-related mental health issues (242% higher than the national average).
2. **Social Workers:** High-pressure roles managing intense caseloads and life-altering decisions, with 6.1% reporting job-related mental health struggles.
3. **Welfare and Housing Associate Professionals:** Dealing with vulnerable populations, tight budgets, and bureaucratic pressures.
4. **Community Nurses:** Dealing with the emotional and physical demands of home care, with 4.7% reporting high stress.
5. **Other Nursing Professionals:** Including staff nurses and matrons, facing long shifts and burnout.
6. **Higher Education Teaching Professionals:** University lecturers and professors dealing with research pressures, student support, and funding.
7. **Primary Education Teaching Professionals:** Facing high pressure from inspections, marking, and student needs.
8. **Secondary Education Teaching Professionals:** Dealing with intense curriculum demands, exam results, and classroom management.
9. **Human Resource Managers and Directors:** Managing employee well-being, grievances, and corporate restructuring.

**10. National Government Administrative Occupations:** Civil servants experiencing high pressure, often leading to burnout.<sup>32</sup>

A comparison across sectors therefore demonstrates that while entry-level police pay remains superficially competitive, the careerlong pay trajectory of a police officer now lags behind both teaching and nursing, two sectors that have benefited from more substantial and sustained pay interventions. This has created a widening competitiveness gap that undermines recruitment, retention and the long-term viability of policing as a profession in Northern Ireland.

Given the scale of danger, the complexity of the operational environment, and the profound psychological burden inherent in modern policing, it is neither fair nor sustainable for police officers to continue slipping further behind the rest of the public sector. Officers consistently report that their pay no longer reflects the demands of the role—demands which include disproportionate exposure to trauma, elevated risks to personal safety, and long-term impacts on mental health. These concerns are supported by a growing body of evidence demonstrating the cumulative psychological costs of policing, the significantly higher rate of traumatic exposures compared with other professions, and the long-term effects these have on wellbeing and performance.

If policing is allowed to become the “service of last resort,” continually absorbing below inflation awards while other sectors recover lost ground, the consequences will be severe. Recruitment pipelines will weaken further, experienced officers will continue to leave, and the overall resilience of the service will erode. A profession that bears the highest levels of risk, responsibility and scrutiny cannot continue to be the easiest target for suboptimal pay settlements.

Closing this widening pay gap requires a negotiating mechanism that genuinely works, supported by a multiyear pay strategy that restores real terms value and reflects the true nature of policing risk—including the psychological dimensions that have historically been overlooked. Pay must properly account for the trauma exposure, operational pressures, and unique burdens officers carry. Only then will Northern Ireland have a policing workforce that feels valued, supported, and secure enough to deliver the high-quality service the public rightly expects.

In February 2026, the Independent Remuneration Board proposed a 26.8% salary increase for Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs), raising their annual pay from £53,000 to £67,200 from 1 April 2026. This represents a £14,000 uplift, justified by the Board as necessary to reflect the ‘complexity and importance’ of MLA roles and to bring salaries closer in line with devolved counterparts in Scotland and Wales. While framed as an independent, evidence based adjustment, the scale of this proposed increase has generated significant public and cross sector concern—particularly as the rise is nearly ten times greater than recent settlements for key public sector workers.

For comparison, police officers in Northern Ireland received a 4.2% pay award applied in January 2026, a settlement that remains well below recent levels of inflation and continues the long-term trend of real terms pay erosion in policing. Nursing staff—another vital frontline profession—are expected to receive only 3.3% in 2026/27, subject to funding approval. From the perspective of police officers, who operate in a high risk

<sup>32</sup> [Top 10 Most Stressful Jobs in The UK - Proactive Personnel](#)

environment with growing workloads and increasing trauma exposure, this disparity sends a powerful and worrying signal regarding the valuation of policing versus political roles.

The proposed MLA increase also arrives at a time when the Police Service of Northern Ireland continues to face critical challenges in its budget, recruitment, retention, morale and operational capacity. Officers are working under intense pressures: long shifts, resource shortages, unprecedented public scrutiny, and significantly higher rates of trauma exposure than the general population. Yet despite this, their pay awards have been modest and consistently below the increases seen in other parts of the public sector. The stark contrast between a 27% uplift for political representatives and ongoing below inflation settlements for police officers' risks deepening the perception that policing is not valued proportionately to the risk, responsibility, and sacrifice involved.

Public criticism of the MLA proposal has highlighted this imbalance. First Minister Michelle O'Neill publicly described the 27% increase as "excessive," noting that MLAs should be benchmarked against wider public sector standards rather than isolated comparator groups that inflate expectations. Unions—including the Royal College of Nursing and the Police Federation of Northern Ireland—have also expressed concern about the optics and fairness of awarding political officeholders a dramatic pay rise at a time when frontline workers face pay restraint and ongoing cost of living pressures.

For policing specifically, the message is impossible to ignore. Officers—who confront danger, violence, trauma, and increasing public expectations daily—see their pay continue to decline in real terms. Meanwhile, those responsible for the legislative and oversight framework surrounding policing stand to receive a pay rise on a scale unprecedented in the current economic climate. This reinforces the sense that policing has become the "service of last resort" when pay awards are made, consistently absorbing sub-optimal settlements while other groups see more decisive uplifts.

The PRRB should take account of this wider pay environment. If political representatives are set to receive a near 30% increase to ensure their roles remain attractive and appropriately valued, then it is both logical and necessary that police officers—whose roles involve substantially higher personal risk and psychological burden—should not be left further behind. Pay reform in policing must reflect risk, trauma exposure, and the cumulative pressures unique to the profession. Failure to do so risks widening the recruitment crisis, accelerating officer departures, and diminishing public safety.

In this context, closing the pay gap is not simply an issue of fairness—it is a matter of operational necessity, workforce sustainability, and recognising the extraordinary demands placed upon those who protect the people of Northern Ireland every day.

## Police Allowances

- 4.18 Following a recommendation by the PRRB, an ‘independent’ review of PSNI allowances was carried out by an external consultancy between October and December 2021. This review considered the following five allowances: the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA), the Competency Related Threshold Payment (CRTP), On-Call allowance, Dog Handlers’ allowance and Motor Vehicle allowance.
- 4.19 The PFNI remain of the view that PSNI officers’ pay, terms and conditions are already considered as part of an independent review process, through which the Police Remuneration Review Body review evidence submitted by stakeholders and make informed recommendations based on such. The inclusion of a secondary ‘review’ by a consultancy body remains perplexing. We believe that it is the role of the PRRB to gather evidence, review that evidence and come to informed decisions based on the evidence presented.
- 4.20 Nevertheless, the PFNI reluctantly participated in this ‘review’ in October 2021. During our sole engagement with the reviewer the PFNI were asked to provide clarity around the practicalities and purpose of each of the five allowances, rather than any attempt to understand the integral importance of each allowance to the officers in receipt, as well as to the service. For example, there was little in the way of discussion about the emotional value attached to the NITA, nor the historical importance of this payment as a vital recognition of the extraordinary environment in which police officers continue to operate, relative to their counterparts across the UK. The PFNI believe that it is difficult for bodies/groups who are not closely involved in policing, to truly appreciate the impact of having to check under your car each morning for a bomb, or to hide your occupation from family and friends. This is made even more difficult when there is no consideration given to, nor evidence sought about, such complex and unnatural actions. In short, the consultancy did not explore or seek evidence about these lived realities.
- 4.21 Overall, officers are being let down in relation to allowances. Allowances have been left to stagnate, some for over a decade, to the point they are no longer fit for purpose. Significant increases are desperately needed. Nationally, PFNI maintain a watching brief on the work of the Police Consultative Forum (PCF) and the National Rewards Team (NRT) as colleagues in Police Federation England and Wales (PFEW) submit proposals to the respective groups, including a proposal that the PCF commence a rolling programme for a review of allowances.

As outlined in our evidence submission last year, PFNI seeks changes to existing allowances and makes recommendations on the creation of a number of new allowances and payments, which we believe will help improve officer morale, motivation and wellbeing and help incentivise PSNI to address underlying problems of poor workforce planning.

In September 2022, colleagues in the PFEW proposed that the Police Consultative Forum commence a rolling programme for a review of allowances. In January 2024, the PCF agreed a priority order for the structured review of all allowances. Since 2017, the staff associations have sought agreement that all allowances be reckonable for pension purposes.

The hope was that a full review and detailed discussion would take place at PCF on each allowance being considered for that year. However, this has not proved possible.

PFEW remain concerned that the NPCC, as with other items PFEW raise at PCF, simply see the PCF as a place to report NPCC positions with a view to then asking the PRRB to make a decision on each allowance as it arises. The result of this approach is that the staff associations therefore find themselves in the disappointing position of also looking to the PRRB for a recommendation on the allowances on the PCF agenda this year.

Given the above, PFNI seek an increase either in line with inflation or the corresponding pay award, for all allowances set at a flat rate where there is no uprating mechanism in place. Given that nationally the NPCC are reluctant to put in place annual uprating mechanisms for any allowances that haven't previously had this agreed and implemented, we request that the PRRB recommend this as a basic measure against continual reduction on the real terms value of these allowances.

### **Northern Ireland Transition Allowance (NITA)**

4.22 The Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) is a taxable non-pensionable allowance received by all police officers. Its current value is £4,283 per annum. It is a payment unique to PSNI police officers, in recognition of the fact that in Northern Ireland, police officers and their families must live with the constant threat of a terrorist attack and the other adverse effects of the political context.

The increase in NITA recommended in the 2025 report, in line with the pay award, is a welcome acknowledgment of the ongoing importance of this payment. It also recognises the challenging and unique circumstances under which policing in Northern Ireland continues to operate. This signal of support is greatly appreciated by our members.

4.23 On 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Brandon Lewis announced that the Northern Ireland-related Terrorism threat level in Northern Ireland was being lowered from 'Severe' to 'Substantial'. 'Substantial' means that a terrorist attack is likely and might well occur without further warning. This was the first time that the threat in Northern Ireland had changed in 12 years.

On 28 March 2023 NI Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris announced MI5 has increased the threat to Northern Ireland from Northern Ireland Related Terrorism from 'SUBSTANTIAL' (an attack is likely) to 'SEVERE' (an attack is highly likely). *"In recent months, we have seen an increase in levels of activity relating to Northern Ireland Related Terrorism, which has targeted police officers serving their communities and put at risk the lives of children and other members of the public. These attacks have no support, as demonstrated by the reaction to the abhorrent attempted murder of DCI Caldwell."*<sup>33</sup>

On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2024 the terrorism threat level in Northern Ireland was reduced from severe to substantial. It means an attack is likely, as opposed to highly likely, with the decision to change the threat level taken by MI5.

NI Secretary Chris Heaton-Harris announced the decision and said it was a *"comprehensive and rigorous process"*. He said it was based on *the "very latest intelligence and analysis of factors which drive the threat"*. "The fact that the threat level is being lowered is testament

<sup>33</sup> [Northern Ireland-related Terrorism threat level raised - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/northern-ireland-related-terrorism-threat-level-raised)

to the tremendous efforts of the Police Service of Northern Ireland and MI5 to tackle Northern Ireland related terrorism."<sup>34</sup>

### Northern Irish Related Terrorism in Northern Ireland Threat Level

Date	Threat Level
6 March 2024	Substantial
28 March 2023	Severe
22 March 2022	Substantial
23 July 2019	Severe

The current official assessed threat level for Northern Ireland-related terrorism in Northern Ireland is Substantial. This classification indicates that a terrorist attack against the region is likely. The ‘Substantial’ rating represents an enduring security challenge, meaning an incident remains a strong possibility. This level reflects the continued intent and capability of active dissident republican organisations.

Recent events have demonstrated that violent dissident republicans still pose a deadly threat to PSNI officers as they provide a policing service to the community. This continuance of Violent Dissident Republican activity adds an additional layer of worry and challenge to PSNI officers both on and off duty, more so following the data breach which continues to have an impact on officers and their families.

The attempted murder of Detective Chief Inspector John Caldwell on 22 February 2023 was a stark reminder of the threat still faced by PSNI officers.

The following incidents also took place during this period:

- 08 April – Police conducted four Schedule 5 Terrorism Act searches in Strabane, in response to the reported show of strength by the Republican Defence Association. A number of mobile phones, camouflage clothing and a suspected imitation firearm were recovered.
- 21 April – There was an outbreak of disorder with police coming under attack of petrol bombs, fireworks and masonry, following the Easter Commemorative Parade in the Creggan area of Londonderry. The parade, notified to the Parades Commission and organised on behalf of Saoradh/new IRA, was headed by approximately 50 persons in paramilitary clothing. Two subsequent S41 Terrorism Act arrests were made in relation to membership and support of a proscribed organisation and carrying an article, namely uniform, arousing suspicion of being a member/supporter of a proscribed organisation.
- 27 May – a 34 year old and a 31 year old male were arrested for possession of firearms with intent to cause fear and violence following a vehicle stop/search in Lurgan. Six imitation firearms were recovered in the vehicle, and both were later released on police bail

<sup>34</sup> [Northern Ireland-related Terrorism Threat Level - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

- 10 June – police responded to a call in the Strabane after the partner of a police officer identified that a pipe bomb type device had been located on a car at her address. This device turned out to be a hoax.
- 29 August – A pipe bomb type IED was located in the Gardenmore Walk area of Belfast and was disrupted by ATO
- 2 September - footage was circulated online of armed and masked males firing shots at funeral which took place in Belfast
- 19 September - Information was received indicating that a device had been thrown at police in the Culmore Park area of Omagh and a suspect device was later located by officers attending the area. The device turned out to be an elaborate hoax and no explosives were present.
- 5 October – a pipe bomb type IED was located at the Sinn Fein Office in Monaghan Street, Newry. This device was viable and was dismantled by ATO
- 4 November – information was received that a device had been placed at an address in west Belfast and that the occupants had to leave. ATO subsequently attended and located a pipe bomb type IED.
- 28 November – A viable pipe bomb was located at an address in Dunmurry
- 7 December - a pipe bomb type IED was located in the Ardoyne area of Belfast
- 8 December – a second pipe bomb type IED was located in the Ardoyne area of Belfast.

4.24 The above incidents taken in isolation do not fully reflect paramilitary influence on communities and hence the operational policing environment. The Independent Reporting Commission (IRC) in its eight report summarises paramilitary activity in 2024/2025 and demonstrates paramilitary groups remained a persistent and active threat to police operations.

Police are often viewed through a lens of fear or suspicion in areas where paramilitaries dominate, reducing community willingness to engage or provide information. Community members may refrain from reporting crimes or cooperating with investigations out of fear of retaliation, undermining the PSNI's ability to operate effectively.

As a result, PSNI must allocate substantial resources to tackling sophisticated criminal networks instead of focusing on community focused policing. The persistence of organised crime prolongs cycles of harm in affected areas, requiring repeated police interventions rather than long-term stabilisation.

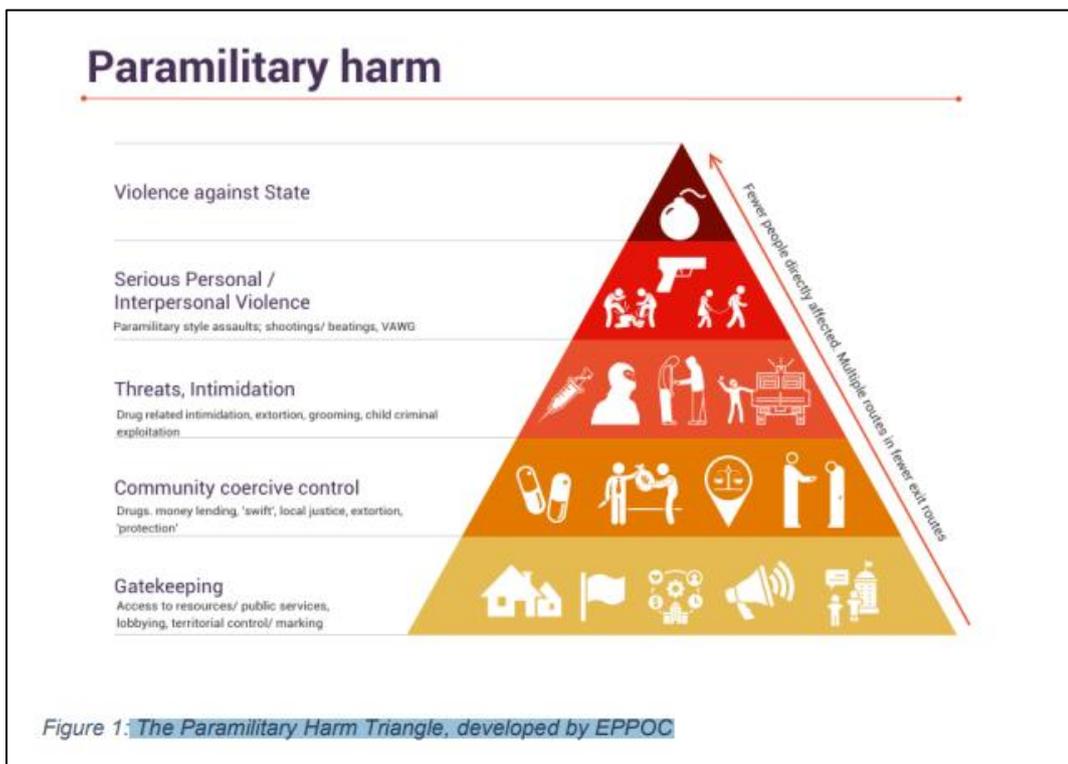
PSNI officers must respond to increasingly diverse types of violence linked to paramilitary influence. This presents significant channels for policing as genuine community policing becomes difficult where paramilitaries overshadow civil authority. Officers face barriers to

building trust, delivering problem-solving policing, and working openly within communities dominated by coercive power. There remains a clear and continued need for long-term, resource intensive policing strategies. The current budget, resourcing and retention issues faced by PSNI makes this more challenging.

A number of high-profile paramilitary-linked incidents were noted by the IRC in the reporting period, including very severe forms of violence, as well as incidents connected to the illegal drugs trade, feuds within and between groups, and riots connected to racism and anti-immigration sentiment. While some criminal acts were explicitly paramilitary, others were more difficult to define, such as where a paramilitary dimension was suspected but where the PSNI did not publicly attribute responsibility to paramilitary leaders.

Paramilitarism today involves a diverse and complicated mix of individuals and groups. This complexity makes accurate measurement difficult due to fluid relationships between people and organisations, community-level coercive control, and the self-appointed role of paramilitary groups as enforcers of their own justice systems. Their use of violence further contributes to underreporting. Many individuals choose not to report crimes because of fear, distrust of police, or a belief that the criminal justice system will not adequately address their concerns.

Further, there is no single definition of ‘paramilitary activity’. In some communities activity that could be considered under the umbrella is not viewed as such, because it is normalised, or it is not at a level of criminality that offers clear routes for reporting and measurement.



The bottom sections of the paramilitary harm triangle identify some of the unseen and unreported harms that impact peoples’ lives, but which are not easily captured in official statistics.

The ICR report provides an overview of the most recent security statistics relating to paramilitary linked criminality in Northern Ireland. While headline figures indicate reductions in paramilitary related violence, the continued presence of paramilitary structures, influence, and infrastructure presents ongoing risks to community safety, confidence in policing, and wider societal resilience.

The purpose of the report is to summarise current trends, highlight the changing nature of paramilitary activity, and provide context for the PRRB’s understanding of the operational environment facing policing in Northern Ireland.

The 2024/25 financial year represents a significant milestone:

- No security related deaths were recorded, the first such year since records began in 1969.
- Assaults and shootings linked to paramilitarism fell to their lowest levels in 41 years and 17 years respectively.

These indicators reflect continuing improvements in public safety and the long-term reduction in lethal violence associated with paramilitary groups.

During the reporting period:

- There were five bombing incidents, a substantial decrease when compared with 52 incidents in 2015/16, representing a tenfold reduction.

This reduction suggests a sustained decline in the operational capability and intent of groups to deploy explosives.

- In 2024/25, there were 24 casualties of paramilitary style assaults.
- This represents a significant decrease from 58 casualties in 2015/16.
- Consistent with trends over the past decade, loyalist groupings accounted for the majority of these assaults, with 18 casualties, compared with six attributed to republican groups.
- There were eight casualties of paramilitary style shootings during the reporting period, a reduction of six compared with 2015/16.
- Of these, seven were attributed to loyalist groups, and one to republican groups.

Paramilitary style shootings—historically referred to as “punishment shootings”—typically involve shooting victims in the knees, elbows, ankles, feet, or thighs. These attacks traditionally occur in urban areas, particularly Belfast. Notably, no paramilitary style shootings have occurred in Belfast since September 2023, marking an important geographic shift in incident patterns.

In 2024, the use of anti-terrorism detention powers continued a downward trend:

- 68 individuals were detained under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, a decrease compared with 2023
- 10 individuals were subsequently charged, with 28 charges brought in total.  
Among the charges brought:
  - Seven were for firearms offences
  - Six for explosives offences
  - Five for preparation of terrorist acts

In addition:

- Five individuals were charged with six offences under the Terrorism Act 2000:
  - Three for membership of a proscribed organisation
  - One for directing a terrorist organisation
  - One for possession for terrorist purposes
  - One for collection of information
- A further five individuals were charged under the Terrorism Act 2006 for offences relating to preparation of terrorist acts
- All prosecutions remain pending

These figures demonstrate continued operational focus on paramilitary related terrorism and the criminal justice system's ongoing efforts to disrupt the activities of both loyalist and republican groups.

The 2024/25 reporting period saw some of the most positive security indicators in more than five decades, including the first year on record with no security related deaths. Levels of paramilitary style assaults, shootings, and bombing incidents have declined sharply compared with 2015/16.

However, the persistence of loyalist and republican paramilitary structures continues to facilitate violence, coercive control, and criminality. While overt violence is decreasing, the influence of these groups within communities remains a significant policing and societal challenge. The operational environment therefore continues to demand sustained focus, specialist capability, and community centred policing approaches.<sup>35</sup>

4.26 The Police Recorded Security Situation Statistics from 1 March 2025 to 28 February 2026 show the following incidents took place:

<sup>35</sup> [HC 1519 – Independent Reporting Commission Eighth Report](#)

- there were no security related deaths, as was the case during the previous 12 months. The last such death occurred in January 2024.
- there were fewer shooting incidents and paramilitary style attacks than during the previous 12 months but more bombings incidents.
- there were 16 bombing incidents, compared to 5 during the previous 12 months and 9 shooting incidents, compared to 18.
- there were 18 casualties of paramilitary style assaults, compared to 23 during the previous 12 months. The greatest number of assaults occurred in Belfast (8). All 18 casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- there were 2 casualties of paramilitary style shootings, compared to 7 during the previous 12 months. Belfast and Ards and North Down each experienced one such attack. Both casualties were aged 18 years or older.
- there were 6 firearms found during the past 12 months, compared to 11 during the previous 12 months
- there were 1.25kg of explosives found during the past 12 months compared to 0.30kg during the previous 12 months.
- there were 534 rounds of ammunition found during the past 12 months compared to 183 rounds found in the previous 12 months.
- there were 18 security related arrests under Section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000, compared to 60 during the previous 12 months.
- 6 persons were subsequently charged, compared to 8 during the previous 12 months

4.27 In February 2025 two men appeared in court charged with possession on information in relation to the data breach in 2023. The charges of collecting information likely to be of use to terrorists related to possession of two spreadsheets containing details of serving police officers found on mobile phones. Additionally, screenshots of the spreadsheet which captured specific areas of the spreadsheet were discovered on the phones. This case clearly demonstrates that as a direct result of the data breach, the details of police officers are in the hands of Violent Dissident republicans and the risk/threat to officer because of the data breach are relevant and on-going.<sup>36</sup> This case remains active with a future Crown Court trial at a date to be confirmed.

4.28 It remains our firm position—consistent with our previous submissions and fully aligned with the criteria set out in the Baker Report—that the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) should continue to be uplifted in line with the annual pay award. NITA is a fundamental component of the overall reward package for police officers in Northern Ireland and is specifically intended to recognise the exceptional and ongoing circumstances

<sup>36</sup> [Two men in court over major PSNI data breach | Belfast Live](#)

in which officers are required to serve. Ensuring that NITA is updated accordingly is essential to maintaining both the integrity and the intended purpose of this allowance

### **Dog Handler's Allowance**

4.29 The value of the Dog Handlers' Allowance has historically been updated in line with the pay award, meaning that it has been subject to the same decade long period of restraint as pay, thus reducing its value over time. It has been, and remains, our position that such is the importance of this payment that it should be protected from inflationary pressures to ensure its value is not eroded to such a point whereby the cost of keeping and caring for a police dog becomes financially burdensome. This is particularly important in the current economic climate, where the cost of living has increased substantially, as previously evidenced.

The only alternative solution to the payment of the Dog Handler's Allowance is for police dogs to be homed and cared for solely within police kennels. However, this has obvious negative cost implications as well as inevitably increasing the call out time for operations requiring a police dog.

It is therefore the recommendation of the PFNI that the historical link between the pay award and the Dog Handlers' Allowance is maintained, albeit with a provision for protection against the cost of living in circumstances where no pay award (or a pay award significantly below inflation) is recommended.

### **Competency Related Threshold Payment (CRTP)**

4.30 In our eleventh submission to the PRRB the PFNI clearly articulated our position on the Competency Related Threshold Payment (CRTP) which has been the subject of debate over the last number of pay review rounds. Our position on this payment remains in line with that provided in 2024/25, namely that whilst we would much prefer to retain this important allowance, we reluctantly accept in principle the position of the PRRB regarding its implications for retention and its impact on maintaining pay parity with England and Wales.

In line with the requirements of pay parity, the PFNI maintains that the removal of the CRTP must be accompanied by the immediate introduction of the corresponding replacement allowance currently available in England and Wales—specifically, the Unsocial Hours Allowance. Introducing this allowance simultaneously will preserve parity in pay and minimise financial detriment for the greatest number of officers within the PSNI.

The Unsocial Hours Allowance provides compensation to officers, irrespective of length of service, for each full hour worked between 8pm and 6am. This allowance should be paid at 10% of the member's hourly rate of pay.

In formulating our proposals for the phasing out of the CRTP and the implementation of the Unsocial Hours Allowance, we have been mindful of the approach adopted in England and Wales. It is our firm position that the PSNI's process must replicate, in full, the process

used there. This is essential to uphold the principle of pay parity and to ensure fairness, consistency, and transparency in the process.

To support this position, we include below the list of Home Office Circulars covering the abolition of the CRTP and the introduction of the Unsocial Hours Allowance in England and Wales:

**HOC 006/2012** – set out the Home Secretary’s decision on the PAT’s recommendations arising out of Winsor part 1:

- Rec 29 – retain CRTP for those already in receipt & introduce a 2-year freeze on new applications
- Rec 2 – introduce unsocial hours allowance

**HOC 010/2012** – published amended determinations to implement the decisions set out in HOC 006/2012 above.

**HOC 001/2013** – publicised the Home Secretary’s decision to phase out CRTP over a three-year period between April 2013 – April 2016 arising out of the PAT’s recommendation on Winsor part 2, rec 83

**HOC 007/2013** – publishes the amended determinations to implement the decision set out in HOC 001/2013 to phase out/abolish CRTP.

The PFNI’s proposal for the removal of the CRTP are set out as follows: Payments are to be phased out over three years from April 2027 to April 2030.

CRTP phased reduction schedule:

- from 1 April 2027 £900 per annum
- from 1 April 2028 £600 per annum
- from 1 April 2029 £300 per annum
- from 1 April 2030 £0.00

For the avoidance of doubt, during this transition, a re-application by an officer who was in receipt of CRTP prior to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2027 should not be treated as a new application.

To uphold pay parity, fairness, and an equitable transition, the PFNI asserts that the Unsocial Hours Allowance must be payable immediately to any officer for whom the CRTP will no longer be open to application.

**It is important to note that the CRTP and the Unsocial Hours Allowance are entirely separate provisions. Therefore, officers who meet the respective criteria should be entitled to receive both allowances concurrently during the transition period.**

Given the recurring delays in accepting and implementing PRRB recommendations the PFNI considers, if applicable, any payments should be calculated from the date on which the PRRB recommendations are formally ratified in Northern Ireland.

In addition, consideration must be given to additional allowances payable in England and Wales. Many officers are required to undertake a national exam or training course and must complete continuing professional development to maintain their qualification and accreditation. We note PFEW colleagues have requested consideration of providing a detective allowance to promote recruitment and retention in detective roles.

We are concerned about the reduction in pay for those choosing such specialist roles, which would include a detective career pathway among others. An example of this is the unsocial hours payment which would be more widely received by uniformed officers. This is a financial consideration when deciding to undertake a career pathway into any specialist role and one which doesn't fully acknowledge the additional study and accreditation required to attain and maintain accreditation in such a role.

The PFNI will not countenance any situation in which CRTP is removed from our members and the appropriate replacement allowance is not implemented.

### **Recommendation 1**

The 2025/26 pay increase was insufficient to cover the inflationary reduction in real pay that has taken place in previous years. Unfortunately, the position of police pay is worse than this time last year, which is an unacceptable situation. Police Federation research shows that overall, federated ranks are 21.7% worse off compared to 2010. The Police Federation of England and Wales have made the following recommendation - the annual pay award for 2026/27 should be at least 7% and remain at 7% for the following three years.

PFNI are aware that the NPCC have recommended a pay award uplift recommendation of 3.5%, highlighting any pay award above 2.5% must be fully funded. PSA recommended a pay award of at least CPI plus 1%. The Scottish Police Federation agreed a minimum 3.5% uplift for 2026/2027 last year as part of a two year pay deal.

PFNI seeks immediate action to compensate for the current pay degradation and a clearly defined timeline to restore police pay. This should include substantially above inflation pay increases for the next number of years.

This should be in the form of an equal percentage rise across all ranks, reflecting pay parity with England and Wales colleagues, with similar application to the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance (NITA) and the Dog Handler's Allowance.

Given the persistent, year on- year delays in delivering the PSNI pay award, it is our position that an interest payment should be considered to address the financial loss- and uncertainty officers experience as a result.

## Unsociable Hours Allowance

This allowance is currently in place in England and Wales and is being considered for introduction in PSNI. Police officers from Constable to Chief Inspector receive an Unsocial Hours Allowance for each full hour worked between 8 pm and 6 am, reflecting compensation for duty during less desirable times. The allowance is set nationally under Police Regulations and is paid at a rate of 10% of the officer's basic hourly pay, calculated from their annual salary using a fixed formula. This rate applies equally to rostered duty and overtime, as the 10% uplift is always based on the basic hourly rate, not an enhanced overtime rate. The allowance is not pensionable, and officers only qualify when a full hour is worked within the designated night-time period.

### Recommendation 2

The introduction of Unsociable Hours Allowance should CRTP be phased out. In conjunction with colleagues from PFEW, the PFNI seeks an increase to the percentage rate of the unsocial hours allowance for every full hour worked between 8pm and 6am on a Friday, Saturday and Sunday from 10% to 20% and for the allowance to be reckonable for pension purposes.

### On call

4.31 Police regulations set out 'on-call' as a pre-determined requirement for a police officer to be available to attend or undertake duty, if called upon outside of their normal working hours. An occasion of 'on-call' is defined as a period of hours determined as the force 'day' by the Chief Constable. An officer who is on call is essentially off duty, but needs to be ready for duty, and thereby certain constraints are placed on them, in that they must be:

- Contactable by telephone or mobile telephone.
- Available to return to duty within a reasonable period.
- Able to obtain access to appropriate transport.
- Fit for duty (this includes not having consumed alcohol, being mentally or physically exhausted from previous extended shifts or any other personal circumstances that may affect decision making).

There is no lawful requirement to be on-call, and officers do so purely on a voluntary basis. On call is utilised by PSNI to cover high risk areas of policing outside office hours. On call can be seen as an efficiency saving and an effective way to maintain capabilities. There must be recognition of the high level of on call within certain roles, and the need to balance this against officer wellbeing. The current allowance does not fully reflect the restrictions placed on officers who perform this duty – restricted freedoms with the ability to respond to various high-risk issues. This may necessitate ensuring alternative caring arrangements are in place etc.

PFNI also note the following from the PSA/SANI submission to PRRB *‘we request that the PRRB recommends to the Home Secretary that the 24-hour on call for our members be increased to £60 (which after income tax at higher rate of 40% would amount to £36 net per 24hr period of on call) as we asked for in 2025. In addition, that the £60 payment should become reckonable for pensionable purposes, which has already been agreed for our colleagues in Scotland.’*

PFNI note that in 2022 Police Scotland negotiated that the payment for on call becomes reckonable for pensionable purposes.

### **Recommendation 3**

An increase to On-Call Allowance from £35 to £45 as a minimum, the payment to be reckonable for pension purposes and uplifted in line with the annual pay award to reflect the impact performing this duty and the adverse impact this continues to have on the work life balance of police officers.

### **Annual Leave and other leave**

4.32 Annual leave plays a vital role in supporting employee wellbeing, resilience, and long-term effectiveness. Regular rest periods reduce stress, prevent burnout, and protect both physical and mental health. Time away from work helps employees reset, maintain a healthy work–life balance, and return with improved focus, creativity, and motivation. These benefits contribute directly to higher levels of job satisfaction and engagement, strengthening the overall morale of the workforce. For officers working in demanding and high-pressure environments, structured and protected periods of leave are essential to sustaining their wellbeing, performance, and capacity to serve the public effectively.

The benefits extend equally to employers. A workforce that regularly takes annual leave is more productive, has fewer instances of sickness absence, and is better equipped to handle operational pressures. By ensuring employees can take restorative breaks, employers promote a healthier, more stable working environment that reduces long term costs associated with stress, fatigue, and turnover. Supporting regular leave also enhances organisational morale, strengthens trust between staff and leadership, and contributes to a more sustainable and effective policing service. In this way, annual leave is not only a statutory entitlement but a critical component of workforce readiness, organisational resilience, and high-quality public service delivery.

PFNI welcomed the recent recommendations from the PRRB for much needed improvements to officers’ annual leave entitlements. However, it’s our view that further improvements are still required to provide necessary rest and recuperation given the unique demands and challenges of working as a police officer.

Our members are still worse off in terms of annual leave compared to officers in Scotland and to other public sector workers. In the NHS, an employee with more than 10 years’

service is entitled to 41 days (annual leave plus public holidays). It's not easy to make a direct comparison given officers in Scotland have only two public holidays recognised by Police Scotland (Christmas Day and New Year's Day) and the remaining days are rolled into the overall annual leave entitlement.

However, even with these differences considered, it remains the case that officers in Scotland receive more days in total (annual leave plus public holidays) at every stage except for those with less than 2 years' service and less than 9 years' service.

The maximum entitlement in Scotland of 39 days (plus 2 public holidays = 41) equates to three more days than PSNI, where officers receive 30 days of annual leave plus 8 public holidays.

Recent changes to pensions have highlighted there is currently no increase in entitlement after 20 years' service, reducing to 10 years. Many police officers will in future be required to work significantly past the 30 years' service mark. For example, an 18-year-old joining the PSNI would have to work for 42 years to attain a full unreduced pension (or a minimum of 37 years for an actuarially reduced pension).

A long service leave entitlement would provide a way of motivating and retaining experienced officers in the police service, in a way that can't be done through annual leave entitlements. The intention behind the scheme is to recognise the experience and loyalty of those who stay in the service longer term. It would provide officers with a necessary break and opportunity to decompress, very much needed given the unique stresses and strains of the job. We agree (with the PRRB) that it could be a useful retention tool.

PFNI recommend a one-off period of 6 weeks' leave to be granted at the point an officer reaches 10 years' service. This would provide officers with a complete break from service for a relatively short period of time.

We are sighted on PFEW's work in relation to other types of leave and note their campaign entitles 'Charter for Change'. PFNI are fully supportive of the campaign and believe it will provide a blueprint for a modern, compassionate police service. We endorse the proposal that all officers should be entitled to family related leave from day one, on full pay, because no officer should have to earn the right to care for their child or grieve for their partner.

We are also supportive of their recommendation in relation to Recuperative Leave. This would be a period of up to three days paid recuperative leave following an injury on duty or exposure to a traumatic event.

#### Recommendation 4

An increase in annual leave entitlements for federated ranks as follows:

- An uplift in annual leave entitlement to align with colleagues in Police Scotland.
- Reduce the time taken to reach the top of the scale from 20 years to 5 years, so that 30 days (maximum entitlement) would be reached after 5 years.
- An option for officers to buy up to 5 days of annual leave at the start of annual leave year.
- Introduce a period of 'Long Service Leave' (LSL) for officers. This would be a one-off period of 6 weeks' long service leave for federated ranks officers who have served for 10 or more years. This would be separate, and additional to, the annual leave (& public holidays) entitlement.

#### Inspecting Ranks

4.33 Long working hours have always been a feature of police work, creating growing concerns about the impact of excessive and unpredictable hours of work on the health of individual Inspectors and Chief Inspectors. The impacts include the additional stress and impact on officer wellbeing, strains this can impose on family life and work-life balance, and the adverse effects this has on the efficiency and effectiveness of the Police Service. Police Inspecting ranks regularly contact PFNI seeking clarity on excess hours worked. This includes concerns in relation to additional roles at that rank, accompanied by the inability to avail of rest days owed and to avail of their annual leave entitlement. Anecdotal evidence would demonstrate that police inspecting ranks regularly work more than their salaried hours and well over the 48 hours limit specified in the Working Time Regulations.

Nationally, PFNI note the contents of the Inspecting ranks survey carried out by PFEW colleagues and the key findings published in December 2025. The key findings will be replicated in PSNI where Inspecting ranks face the same challenges and excessive hours, and we are supportive of the issues being raised by PFEW at the Police Consultative Forum. The issue of the outdated PNB 1994 agreement has also been raised at the Police Advisory Board.

The 1994 PNB Agreement, which governs pay and conditions for Inspecting Ranks, is outdated and needs urgent revision. The agreement has not been reviewed in over three decades, and as a result, the conditions that officers face today are vastly different from when it was first introduced. The modern policing landscape demands a more flexible and responsive pay structure.

Since 1994, the Inspecting ranks have worked under different police regulations from constables and sergeants. The changes that were made under the Police Negotiating Board Agreement and are often referred to as the 1994 PNB Agreement.

The main difference this agreement brought about was that casual overtime was no longer paid to inspectors and chief inspectors. It is important to remember a part of the agreement was that inspecting ranks should not be expected to work regular additional hours.

However, since 1994 many inspectors and chief inspectors have been working excessive hours, which has affected their work-life balance and general wellbeing. PFNI remain concerned not only on the working pressures on Inspectors and Chief Inspectors but also the small differential between Inspectors and Chief Inspectors and the large pay gap between the top of the Chief Inspector rank and the bottom of the Superintendent rank. Consideration must be given to reviewing the pay scales to reflect the workload and responsibilities carried by the Inspecting ranks.

PFNI note the following in relation to the position in relation to Police Scotland. The Scottish Police Federation Police pay claim in 2021 reached the following agreement – a new pay point will be added to the top of the chief Inspectors pay scale creating a four point pay scale.

Currently a Chief Inspector in Police Scotland at the top of their scale will earn £80,989. Conversely, a Chief Inspector in PSNI at the top of their scale will earn £73,149. Currently, a Superintendent in Police Scotland at the bottom of their scale will earn £89,569. Conversely, a Superintendent in PSNI, at the bottom of their pay scale will earn £84,177.

PFNI would be supportive of this approach to reduce the gap between the top of the Chief Inspector rank and the bottom of the Superintendent rank. This would go some way to address the wellbeing of those officers in advance of the much-needed restructuring of the Inspecting ranks.

PFNI were welcomed the PRRB commentary specifically in relation to the Inspecting ranks wellbeing in their last report. We concur on the points in relation to Inspectors likely to earn less than Sergeants working similar hours and agree with a focus on improving wellbeing and work-life balance. However, we remain concerned with the delay to the restructuring of the pay and workload of the Inspecting ranks. We are supportive of the introduction of temporary, time-limited payments for the inspecting ranks to compensate them for a high workload where this is unavoidable.

Inspecting ranks who are 'on call' on a working day, if recalled to duty, do not receive any additional remuneration apart from the 'on call' allowance. A further measure of excessive hours is accrued hours (time owed) which can be taken back as shorter days and/or re-rostered rest days. As of 1 March 2026, in PSNI there are 95 Chief Inspectors with 940 days owing and 376 Inspectors with 2651 days owing.

With effect from 28 April 2020 Annex H, England & Wales Police Regulations 2003 was amended so that Inspectors and Chief Inspectors can carry over, for a further 12-month period, any rest days in lieu not taken due to exceptional circumstances, exigencies of duty or work demands.

Currently PSNI Regulations, only allow Inspectors to avail of days in lieu, for twelve months from the date they are earned. This puts our Inspecting ranks at a detriment to their equivalent ranks, and we request that consideration be given to updating the PSNI regulations to provide parity with counterparts in England & Wales.

### Recommendation 5

- The introduction of a temporary time-limited payment for Inspectors and Chief Inspectors, to be claimed when more than 48 hours are worked in any week.
- The introduction of a determination to facilitate Inspectors and Chief Inspectors to carry over, for a further 12-month period, any rest days in lieu not taken due to exceptional circumstances, exigencies of duty or work demands.

### Incremental Pay

4.34 In our tenth submission to PRRB we highlighted the issues with delays in awarding incremental pay and summarise the past delays below:

- Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2021 – delayed until March 2022 - 7 months.
- Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2022 – delayed until February 2023 - 6 months.
- Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2023 – delayed until November 2023 - 2 months.
- Contractual, Incremental payments – from September 2024 onwards – no delay.

PFNI welcomed the recommendation in PRRB’s ninth report in relation to incremental pay – *‘The introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time.’*

This recommendation was repeated in PRRB’s tenth report in relation to incremental pay. PRRB also included the following commentary *‘PSNI officers have also been experiencing lengthy delays in the payment of their increments since 2021 but, because of a decision taken this year to separate increments from the annual pay award, the delay was reduced to two months. However, we were concerned to learn that this timelier payment of increments had been approved just this once. We consequently recommend again the introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time.’*

*‘We stress our concerns this year about the cumulative damage caused to officers’ morale by repeated delays to the annual pay award and continuing uncertainty over the timing of salary increments. We therefore recommend again the introduction of a police regulation to ensure that police officer increments in Northern Ireland are paid on time and received after one year. This includes the first constable increment. This accords with the principle of parity with England and Wales.’*

*'We await a response from the Justice Minister to our 2023 recommendation on the introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time. The practical, financial, ramifications for officers not receiving their annual increments on time, and the associated impact on their morale, are too great for this matter to go unaddressed. We therefore repeat this recommendation and in doing so uphold the parity principle. We observe that the payment of police officer increments in England and Wales is not subject to delay.'*

In a letter to PRRB dated 17 December 2024, the Justice Minister had stated –

*'I have agreed to defer the following recommendations for approval to allow further consideration as to how they may be progressed.*

*VII. The introduction of a police regulation in Northern Ireland on police officer increments to ensure that they are paid on time.'*

The PFNI has consistently highlighted this as a significant area of concern and resorted to issuing judicial review proceedings to resolve the matter definitively. While this has prevented delays since 2024, we remain concerned that without the introduction of a determination added to the regulations, any future policy change may result in easily avoidable delays to police officer increments. Therefore, we once again include this recommendation in our submission.

## **Recommendation 6**

A determination is added to the PSNI Regulations stating that pay increments are payable annually. This would align the PSNI Determinations with Annex F of the England and Wales Police Regulations 2003.

## **Mutual Aid Allowances**

4.35 The introduction of Determination W in May 2023 by DOJ brought PSNI officers in line with colleagues in England and Wales, however they are significantly behind colleagues in Police Scotland in relation to payment for mutual aid duties. In line with our previous recommendation 10 above, we make the following submission.

PFNI, along with PFEW colleagues, request an uplift in these allowances to the Scottish model of two types of overnight allowance: an overnight allowance and a separate additional disruption allowance (held in reserve allowance); accompanied by a minimum standards allowance (hardship allowance) payable for sub-standard accommodation.

The current rate of allowances effective 1 April 2026 –  
an overnight allowance for those members who are not “held in reserve” but are practically unable or prevented from returning home (i.e. required to stay overnight away from home) because of the need to perform duty away from their usual place of duty - £82.07.

A additional disruption allowance (held in reserve allowance), in addition to the overnight allowance, where officers are required to stay away from home overnight *and* restrictions are placed on their off-duty activities for operational or security reasons and/or they are required to be available for recall to duty at any time during this period, they should be paid an additional allowance - £54.72

A minimum standards allowance (hardship allowance), for officers who are required to stay overnight away from home whenever the basic standard of accommodation, namely minimum 3-star industry standard, is not met - £123.11.

The above recommendations would ensure members are adequately compensated for the inconvenience, the disruption to family life and caring responsibilities; and being unable to return home. It acknowledges that officers can be deployed on mutual aid often at short notice.

They would remove the inconsistency of payments currently made to officers in similar circumstances and would improve morale. In addition, it would ensure parity between officers throughout the UK, often required to work alongside each other.

The away from home overnight allowance and the hardship allowance are not due to be reviewed by the PCF for a further two years.

The current rates of the Away from Home Overnight and Hardship allowances were set in 2012 and have not been updated since. It is our view that they are outdated, do not reflect the cost-of-living crisis or the impact of officers who volunteer for duties and are unable to return home.

### **Recommendation 7**

An amendment to mutual aid payments to mirror the provisions in place for officers in place in Scotland.

### **Vehicle business mileage rate**

4.36 Police officers' business mileage reimbursement have been tied to HMRC's Approved Mileage Allowance Payments (AMAPs), which remain at 45p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p thereafter (plus 5p per mile for passengers). These rates have not changed since 2011, despite significant and sustained increases in fuel and motoring costs over the last 15 years.

By contrast, fuel pump prices and motoring costs have moved substantially. Official UK statistics show average petrol and diesel prices have fluctuated at elevated levels in recent years, including a record spike in 2022, then settling to mid-130s for petrol and low-140s for diesel through 2025 before rising again in early 2026 amid global tensions centred on the Middle East.

The AMAP freeze since 2011 no longer reflects these cost realities borne by officers using their own vehicles for duty travel. The static AMAP rates, while administratively simple, have not tracked the real-world cost of operating a private vehicle. The Government’s temporary 5p/litre fuel duty cut has only partially offset higher underlying prices; duty is scheduled to rise in stages from September 2026 to March 2027, adding renewed upward pressure thereafter. Since 2011, fuel and operating costs have risen materially and persistently. A static 45p/25p reimbursement no longer covers average running costs for officers who must drive for duty.

### **Recommendation 8**

An uplift in Police officer business mileage reimbursement to 55p per mile for the first 10,000 miles and 35p thereafter (retain 5p per mile for passengers).

### **Unused Rest Days**

4.37 Police Officers work longer and far less predictable hours than most other professions. Even when compared to other public safety/emergency roles, this proves to be true, as the demands on police officers stand out to be uniquely unpredictable, with a high prevalence of cancelled rest days, irregular hours, and mandatory attendance at short notice.

Officers in the federated ranks are entitled to rest days at the rate of two per week. These are essential to provide rest and recuperation from the strenuous demands of working as a police officer. However, these days are regularly cancelled and officers required to work, often for long hours at short notice, depriving them of a much-needed break.

It is vital that the protections provided for in police regulations and determinations are adhered to. Rest days should only be cancelled due to exigencies of duty, and these should be kept to an absolute minimum by improved workforce planning. Rest days cancelled with 15 days or more notice should be re-rostered within four days, so that officers know when the re-rostered days will fall and can make arrangements and plan accordingly. However, in practice this does not happen and there is no penalty on PSNI for not complying with regulations and determinations.

PSNI rely on officers working their rest days due to a lack of resources and there is often not the ability, or reduced options for officers to take annual leave entitlements. Whilst regulations dictate that for Constables and Sergeants these rest days should be rostered within four days, in practice this is not the case. The following table shows the scale of the issue and how the position has worsened in the last year. Many officers find themselves with large numbers of rest days owed to them, with no expectation of when they will be afforded the days’ rest.

Number of rest days owing to federated ranks	Feb 2025	Feb 2026
Rest days owed to Chief Inspectors	647	940
Rest days owed to Inspectors	2002	2651
Rest days owed to Sergeants	1639	2162
Rest days owed to Constables	6704	7746

Between June and August 2025, PSNI conducted a pilot that suspended routine allocation of Modified Rest Days (MRDs) for Constables and Sergeants and instead relied primarily on paid overtime (OT) and Time Off in Lieu (TOIL) to compensate rest day working. The pilot was designed to test whether paid overtime would be operationally feasible, financially manageable, and preferable to the workforce, while also reducing the administrative complexity and perceived unfairness associated with MRD banking. The outworkings of the pilot remain under review.

For Constables and Sergeants any outstanding rest days after 3 months should have the option of being converted into pay, this would operate in a similar way to time off in lieu (TOIL).

For the Inspecting ranks this should be the case once the rest day reaches 12 months and they have been unable to take the rest day owed to them.

In addition, there should also be an option for officers to buy up to 5 days annual leave at the start of the annual leave year. This is quite common in the NHS and other organisations.

### **Recommendation 9**

For Constables and Sergeants any outstanding rest days after 3 months should have the choice of being converted into pay, this would operate in a similar way to time off in lieu (TOIL).

For the Inspecting ranks this should be the case once the rest day reaches 12 months and they have been unable to take the rest day owed to them.

An option for officers to buy up to 5 days annual leave at the start of the annual leave year. This is quite common in the NHS and other organisations.

### **Constable Retention and Attrition**

4.38 Policing is experiencing a significant and damaging loss of experience at the Constable rank. This trend is eroding operational capability, weakening frontline supervision, and undermining public confidence. While recruitment has increased, new officers are far more likely to leave early in service, creating a cycle where experience is continually lost faster than it can be replaced. This attrition is now one of the most pressing threats to effective policing in Northern Ireland.

Constables enter frontline duties immediately and are exposed from the outset to high-risk, emotionally intense, and complex situations. They do so with limited practical support, as the ranks that traditionally provided mentoring and protection—experienced Constables and frontline Sergeants—have been depleted. The result is a workforce where the least experienced officers carry the greatest operational burden, increasing stress, reducing resilience, and ultimately driving more early departures.

Unlike other public or private sector roles, policing is uniquely dependent on practical experience. Constables must be able to move, in a single shift, from managing confrontation and risk to providing compassion and reassurance to victims. These essential skills cannot be taught solely in training; they must be learned over time, through exposure to a wide range of incidents. When this experience is missing, service quality suffers and the risk to officers and the public increases.

Constable level leadership is a critical but often overlooked element of policing. It is almost always a Constable who first arrives at serious, violent or traumatic incidents, and the confidence and competence they demonstrate directly shape public trust. Their ability to contain scenes, calm victims, control aggressive behaviour, and keep colleagues safe relies heavily on accumulated experience. Less experienced officers typically depend on more seasoned colleagues to guide them, debrief them, and support their emotional wellbeing after incidents. As this peer support network collapses, the organisation becomes increasingly vulnerable.

Attrition at the Constable rank therefore cannot be viewed through the lens of general workforce turnover. Policing is “bottom fed”: today’s Constables are tomorrow’s Sergeants, Inspectors, and senior leaders. Losing capable officers early in service diminishes not only current operational effectiveness but also the future leadership pipeline. No private sector comparator captures this dynamic, making such comparisons inappropriate and misleading.

The current rate of Constable attrition is feeding a vicious cycle: fewer experienced officers lead to higher pressure on new recruits, which accelerates departures, which further increases inexperience on the frontline. This cycle will, if unchecked, continue to depress public confidence and weaken the leadership foundation of the PSNI for years to come.

The challenges faced by Policing can be summarised as follows:

- Loss of experience across the PSNI, creating a workforce with significantly fewer seasoned Constables.
- High early service attrition, with new officers more likely to leave before gaining critical operational skills.
- A “spiral effect”: loss of experience → reduced peer support → increased pressure on remaining officers → more leaving.
- Immediate frontline deployment of new officers with minimal practical support or mentoring.
- Increased exposure to risk, confrontation and trauma at the earliest stage of service.

- Reduced availability of experienced Constables and Sergeants to guide, train and safeguard new recruits.
- Growing workloads as experienced officers retire or transfer internally, placing heavier strain on less experienced staff.
- Skill demands increasing, requiring emotional flexibility and rapid decision-making that can only be gained through experience.
- Erosion of Constable level leadership, which is essential for handling high risk incidents and providing public reassurance.
- Negative impact on officer wellbeing, with fewer experienced colleagues available to debrief and support after traumatic incidents.
- Damage to public confidence, as the public predominantly interacts with less experienced frontline Constables.
- Weakening of the future leadership pipeline, as policing is a “bottom fed” organisation reliant on Constables becoming future supervisory ranks.
- Inappropriate comparisons with private or public sector attrition rates, which do not reflect policing’s unique demands.
- A worsening cycle of cost and inexperience, as rising attrition increases recruitment and training demand while reducing capability.
- Pay not reflecting responsibility, with new Constables carrying full legal and operational burden despite being paid at trainee level points.

PFNI believes that police officers are fully experienced earlier than presumed, and there should be a shorter pay scale as in other professions. PFNI noted the proposals submitted last year by the NPCC in relation to restructuring the constable pay scale. This included the abolition of pay point 1 and the restructuring of the remaining pay points. The NPCC view was that the pay scale mostly rewards officers after years 5 and 6, however, officers are experienced after 4 years and continue to leave the service in larger numbers at this career stage, as opposed to years 5 and 6. We note that NPCC have made no recommendations in relation to the constable pay scale in 2026.

In respect of PSNI data the table below shows the number of Constable leavers at each respective pay point. Pay points 1 to 4 are the key attrition points with figures particularly high at pay point 3 and 4. It is noted that figures should however be considered in conjunction with the number of joiners in each particular year and the requisite recruitment rates in previous years.

Number of Constable Leavers at each Pay Point								
Year	Pay Point 1	Pay Point 2	Pay Point 3	Pay Point 4	Pay Point 5	Pay Point 6	Pay Point 7	Pay Point 8
2020	16	3	1	1	0	0	0	185
2021	26	14	3	1	2	1	0	168
2022	29	17	11	7	3	4	0	240
2023	25	9	11	14	7	4	5	171
2024	7	7	9	13	5	5	3	243
2025	8	3	13	15	11	5	8	201
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1208</b>

### Recommendation 10

PFNI believes that police officers are fully experienced earlier than presumed, and there should be a shorter Constable pay scale.

### Shift Alteration Allowance

4.39 This type of allowance is currently not in Police Regulations. In conjunction with colleagues in PFEW, we have evidence that shows that the shifts of Police Officers are being changed at an unsustainable rate. Officers are entitled to know their shift schedules 90 days in advance. While changes are sometimes necessary due to exigencies, they often result from inadequate forward planning. Regardless of the reason, such changes can have a financial impact on officers, for instance, requiring them to arrange additional childcare. PFNI note the commentary from PRRB in their previous report, accepting short notice shift changes are likely to have financial consequences for officers

### Recommendation 11

Officers are entitled to know their shift pattern 90 days in advance. PFNI request that consideration to be given to a payment when excessive shifts are changed within the 90-day window.

### Bonus payments and team recognition awards

4.40 Special Bonuses were designed to be used to reward exceptional performance in particularly demanding tasks or where good performance was achieved under particularly adverse conditions through either individual or team effort. The special bonus scheme remains in place within PSNI, unfortunately, the payment of a special bonus has not been a regular feature within PSNI, with the last payments being made since December 2020.

This may be a result of the scheme being closed to Police staff; however, the scheme remains in place for Police officers.

Bonus payment rates in England and Wales	Bonus payment in PSNI
All ranks (£50-£2,000). Payments where the chief officer is satisfied an officer has performed work of an outstandingly demanding, unpleasant or important nature.	All ranks (£50-£500).

To ensure parity with colleagues we recommend that the payments recommence as soon as possible and are uplifted to reflect the awards payable to colleagues in England and Wales

Team recognition awards were not introduced in PSNI despite being available in England and Wales.

Team recognition awards in England and Wales	Team recognition awards in PSNI
Discretion to make bonus payments of £50–100 for unpleasant or demanding tasks extended to whole teams from 2012	Not introduced.

To ensure parity with colleagues we that Team recognition awards are introduced in PSNI to reflect the awards payable to colleagues in England and Wales

### Recommendation 12

Bonus payments should be increased to reflect awards payable nationally and team recognition awards should be introduced in PSNI to ensure parity with colleagues in England and Wales.

### Recommendation 13

Annual uprating of allowances – In November 2023 staff associations sought an increase either in line with inflation or the corresponding pay award, for all allowances set at a flat rate where there is no uprating mechanism in place. We again request that the PRRB recommend this as a basic measure against continual reduction on the real terms value of these allowances.



## 5 APPENDICIES

### Appendix A – PRRB Northern Ireland remit letter 2026-27

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Minister's Office Block C,  
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Our Ref: SUB-0066-2026

Zoë Billingham  
Chair  
Police Remuneration Review Body  
Office for the Pay Review Bodies  
First Floor, Caxton House  
6 – 12 Tothill Street  
LONDON  
SW1H 9NA

Via email: [Gabrielle.kann@businessandtrade.gov.uk](mailto:Gabrielle.kann@businessandtrade.gov.uk)

24 February 2026

Dear Zoë

**Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) Remit 2026/27 – PSNI Federated and Superintending officers**

I wrote to you last month to advise that approvals for the PSNI pay award for 2025/26 for federated and superintending officers had concluded. I am happy to advise that payments have been made to officers, backdated to 1 September 2025.

I am now writing to ask the PRRB to commence its annual review in respect of federated and superintending officers in the PSNI for 2026/27.

Working together for fairness, justice and safety.



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Department of

**Justice**

An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt

Máinnystrie O tha Laa

[www.justice-ni.gov.uk](http://www.justice-ni.gov.uk)

In line with the principle of broad alignment of PSNI officer pay with their counterparts in England and Wales, I ask that for the 2026/27 pay round the PRRB considers the following matters:

- How to apply the pay award for 2026/27 for police officers in the PSNI up to and including chief superintending rank; and
- Consideration of the regular elements of the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance in relation to the Northern Ireland security threat level for Police Officers and the Dog Handlers' Allowance.

The Northern Ireland Public Sector Pay Policy has not yet been set for 2026/27, but I would ask that the PRRB considers the affordability and budgetary position, along with the different funding structures available in Northern Ireland. Further detail on this will be set out in both written and oral evidence.

I would invite you to have regard to the PRRB's standing terms of reference. I look forward to working with you, and your members, in support of the process for the year ahead.

Yours sincerely

**NAOMI LONG MLA**  
**Minister of Justice**

*Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.*

Working together for fairness, justice and safety.



## Appendix B – Remit letter from the Minister of State for Policing and Crime 2026-27



Sarah Jones MP  
Minister of State for Policing and  
Crime

2 Marsham Street  
London SW1P 4DF  
[www.gov.uk/home-office](http://www.gov.uk/home-office)

Zoë Billingham  
Chair, Police Remuneration Review Body  
1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Caxton House  
Tothill Street  
London  
SW1H 9NA

19 February 2026

Dear Zoë

### Police Remuneration Review Body Remit 2026/27

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you and the members of the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) for your 2025 report. The Government appreciates the independent, expert advice and valuable contribution that the PRRB makes.

I write to you now to formally commence the 2026/27 pay round and ask for the PRRB to make recommendations on how to apply the pay award for all police officers in ranks up to and including chief superintendent, in England and Wales.

I also ask that you consider proposals resulting from year two of the National Police Chiefs' Council's review of allowances, taking into account the views of policing stakeholders.

We accepted your recommendation for the 2025/26 pay award. However, since it came in well above the figures we set out as affordable within our evidence, we again had to take difficult decisions and make savings elsewhere in the Home Office's budgets to provide additional funding to forces to help with the increased costs. We undertook a rigorous in-year savings exercise and put in place enhanced spending controls, finding efficiencies across various programmes and reducing discretionary spend. As the Spending Review confirmed, all pay must be funded from Departmental budgets and there will be no additional funding available for pay settlements.

During this pay round, you will receive evidence from my department, HM Treasury and key stakeholders. My department's evidence will set out the funds available to policing for 2026/27, following the Spending Review in June, as well as the recruitment and retention context alongside pay and earnings data, and will provide an update on our Police Reform White Paper.

The police pay year begins on 1 September and we are committed to announcing pay awards as close to this date as possible. To support this, I would be grateful if you could submit your report at the earliest point that allows you to give due consideration to the relevant evidence. To support with this, the Government will provide its written evidence as soon as possible after the police funding settlement is published, as this will inform the affordability position.

I look forward to receiving your report in due course.

Very best wishes,

Sarah Jones MP  
Minister of State for Policing and Crime

## Appendix C – PFNI Letter to DOJ- Matters for Inclusion in Remit Letter 2026



Brian McCarthy  
Police HR & Pensions Branch  
Department of Justice  
Stormont Estate  
Belfast BT4 3SG

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Tel: 028 90 764200  
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Web: [www.policefed-ni.org.uk](http://www.policefed-ni.org.uk)

Our ref: DW-PRRB-01-26

14<sup>th</sup> January 2026

**Via email only:** [brian.mccarthy@justice-ni.gov.uk](mailto:brian.mccarthy@justice-ni.gov.uk)

Dear Brian

I am corresponding with you in respect of the matters the Police Federation for Northern Ireland wish to be considered for inclusion in the Department's annual remit letter to the PRRB to initiate the 2026/27 review of pay and conditions for officers in the PSNI. The Police Federation for Northern Ireland would welcome consideration of the following to be included in this year's remit letter:

1. An uplift to police officer's salaries (federated ranks), with similar application to Dog Handler's Allowance and the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance.
2. Introduction of Unsociable Hours Allowance and other associated allowances awarded to colleagues in England and Wales in the event CRTP is removed or phased out.
3. An increase to On-Call Allowance to reflect the impact performing this duty and the adverse impact this continues to have on the work life balance of police officers.

4. An increase in annual leave entitlement. Given that there is currently no increase in entitlement after 20 years' service, consideration of an increase is requested to take cognisance of the fact that, due to recent changes to pensions, many police officers will in future be required to work significantly past the 30 years' service mark. For example, an 18 year old joining the PSNI would have to work for 42 years to attain a full unreduced pension (or a minimum of 37 years for an actuarially reduced pension).

5. The re-introduction of either overtime payments or a temporary time-limited payment for Inspecting Ranks, which takes into consideration the additional hours many are required to work in performing their duties.

The 1994 PNB Agreement, which governs pay and conditions for Inspecting Ranks, is outdated and needs urgent revision. The agreement has not been reviewed in over three decades, and as a result, the conditions that officers face today are vastly different from when it was first introduced. The modern policing landscape demands a more flexible and responsive pay structure.

6. A Determination is added to the PSNI Regulations stating that pay increments are payable annually. This would align the PSNI Determinations with Annex F of the England and Wales Police Regulations 2003.

7. An increase in away from home overnight allowance and hardship allowance to mirror the provisions paid to officers Police Scotland.

8. Mileage allowance – An increase to both the essential user lump sum element and the mileage rates for essential and casual users to properly reimburse members who make available their own vehicles for policing purposes.

9. Unused rest days and annual leave. For Constables and Sergeants any outstanding rest days after 3 months should have the option of being converted into pay, this would operate in a similar way to time off in lieu (TOIL).

For the inspecting ranks this should be the case once the rest day reaches 12 months and they have been unable to take the rest day owed to them.

There should also be an option for officers to buy up to 5 days annual leave at the start of annual leave year.

**10.** PFNI believes that police officers are fully experienced earlier than presumed, and there should be a shorter pay scale as in other professions.

**11.** Officers are entitled to know their shift pattern 90 days in advance. PFNI request that consideration to be given to a payment when excessive shifts are changed within the 90-day window.

**12.** A simplified approach to acting up, temporary salary and temporary promotion. This would provide provides payments from day 1 which is pensionable and reckonable from Day 1.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information and I look forward to our continuing engagement in matters relating to Police officers pay.

Yours sincerely



**Damian Walsh**  
**PFNI Secretary**



**Appendix D – Letter issued to Liam Kelly SUB- 0066-2026**

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Minister's Office Block C,  
Castle Buildings  
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Our Ref: SUB-0066-2026

Liam Kelly

Via email: [chairman@policefedni.com](mailto:chairman@policefedni.com)

24 February 2026

Dear Liam,

**PRRB AND SSRB REMIT LETTERS 2026/27**

I am writing to inform you that I have issued the Department's remit letters to the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB) and the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) on 24 February 2026 and have asked them to initiate the pay round for 2026/27. A copy of the letters will be issued to you in due course.

On 19 December, my officials invited you to put forward issues you wished to be considered for inclusion in the remit letter. I am now writing to inform you why the following issues were not included in my request to the PRRB.

Closing Competency Related Threshold Scheme and, Introduction of Unsocial Hours Allowance

Working together for fairness, justice and safety.



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



The PRRB has indicated that it expects stakeholders to submit further evidence on this topic in the 2026/27 pay round. It will therefore be addressed during the course of the evidence gathering process. In addition, the introduction of new, or amendment to existing, terms and conditions which would be expected to result in additional expenditure will require Ministerial approval by way of a business case.

The PSNI will be invited to submit business cases on these matters for Departmental consideration.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

Increase to rate of on-call allowances.

Following recommendations within the 2024/25 and 2025/26 PRRB reports on-call rates have increased from £20 to £35, in line with rates applicable in England and Wales.

Without a formal proposal with substantive supporting evidence, and in line with the principle of broad alignment, it would not be appropriate to refer this to the PRRB.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

Introduction of additional annual leave entitlements beyond 20 years' service.

Annual leave entitlements were revised following a PRRB recommendation and should NPCC provide further detail on this issue the Department will consider in line with any recommendation from the PRRB. Without a formal proposal with substantive supporting evidence, and in line with the principle of broad alignment, it would not be appropriate to refer this to the PRRB in isolation.

Officials await sight of any NPCC proposals on this issue.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

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Allow Officers to purchase up to 5 days additional leave per year.

Current annual leave provisions are commensurate with forces in England and Wales which do not offer the provision to purchase additional annual leave. Without substantive supporting evidence or a full operational assessment by PSNI and NIPB, it would not be appropriate to refer this to the PRRB.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

Re-introduction of overtime rates of pay for Inspecting ranks.

This payment is not currently paid to Home Office forces. Without substantive supporting evidence and in the absence of a formal proposal with supporting rationale, it would not be appropriate to refer this to the PRRB.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

Annual pay increments to be reflected in the PSNI Determinations

The Department confirmed in 2024 that PSNI officers have a contractual entitlement to incremental progression payments at a specific date as was required by the DoF policy and associated guidance for the temporary approval process that PSNI officers have a clear. At that time, it was noted that as the determination on this matter is extant a replicate determination is not required.

However, officials are engaging with NPCC. While Annex F of the England and Wales Determinations does detail annual incremental progression it also includes additional performance evaluations which are not currently in place within PSNI.

Following the conclusion of engagement with NPCC, DoJ officials will engage with relevant stakeholders. As this matter is under active consideration it would not be appropriate to refer this to the PRRB for 2026/27.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



An increase to away from home overnight allowance, mirroring Police Scotland  
Police Scotland sits outside the scope of PRRB's remit, and this request align does not align with the established principle of broad alignment.

The Department will continue to keep a watching brief of the NPCC's proposals on such matters.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

An increase to all rates of mileage allowances

Current mileage rates are commensurate with those set by HM Customs & Revenue and those in place with forces in England and Wales. The Department will continue to keep a watching brief of the NPCC's proposals on such matters.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

Constables, Sergeant and Inspecting ranks to be paid for unused rest days. Any outstanding rest days after 3 months should have the option of being converted into pay, this would operate in a similar way to time off in lieu (TOIL). For the inspecting ranks this should be the case once the rest day reaches 12 months and they have been unable to take the rest day owed to them

In such circumstances, and in accordance with existing determinations, the officer will receive payment at the appropriate rate for the day worked and be notified of an alternative rest day within 4 days. Unlike TOIL a rest day, on which no duty is performed, will not attract pay.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB.**

Shorten pay scales as officers are fully experienced earlier than assumed.

An amendment of the pay scales for PSNI only would not align with the principle of from parity with forces in England and Wales. Pay scales will therefore be dependent on the



FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



Home Secretary's future announcements on the pay award for officers in England and Wales.

- **It is suggested that this is not included in the PRRB's remit letter.**

Officers to be compensated for excessive roster changes within 90 days.

Compensation for duty roster adjustments, without due notice, are accounted for within existing Regulations and Determinations.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

A simplified approach to acting up, temporary salary and temporary promotion.

This would provide provides payments from day 1 which is pensionable and reckonable from Day 1.

Acting up allowance payable within PSNI is commensurate with that paid to forces in England and Wales. Without substantive supporting evidence and in the absence of a formal proposal with supporting rationale, it would not be appropriate to refer this to the PRRB.

The Police Pension Regulations Northern Ireland dictate which allowances are considered pensionable, police pensions fall outside the remit of PRRB.

- **It is therefore not appropriate to refer this to the PRRB at this time.**

For completeness, I also attach a full list of matters raised by PAG stakeholders which have not been included in the SSRB and PRRB remit letters.

Should you have any queries relating to these issues my officials will be happy to discuss them further with you.

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I understand SSRB and PRRB officials have contacted you outlining the proposed dates by which they expect receipt of written evidence from stakeholders as well as providing you with a timetable for oral evidence session.

Yours sincerely



**NAOMI LONG MLA**  
**Minister of Justice**

*Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.*

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## Appendix E – DOJ letter to PFNI Notification of Pay Award 7<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026

FROM THE OFFICE OF THE JUSTICE MINISTER



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Our Ref: SUB-0005-2026

Liam Kelly  
By Email: [chairman@policefedni.com](mailto:chairman@policefedni.com)

07 January 2026

Dear Liam

### **2025/26 PAY AWARD TO THE FEDERATED AND SUPERINTENDING RANKS OF THE POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND (PSNI)**

I am pleased to inform you that the requisite approvals have now been received for the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) recommendations for 2025/26 for officers at federated and superintending ranks.

The award consists of:

- A consolidated increase of 4.2% to all pay points for federated and superintending ranks.
- An increase of 4.2% in the current level of the NITA.
- The On-call Allowance for both the federated and superintending ranks for evenings, weekends and Northern Ireland public holidays is increased in the PSNI to £35.

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- The current three bands for the Motor Vehicle Allowance essential users' lump sum, linked to engine size of the vehicle, be replaced with a single allowance of £1,239 irrespective of engine size.
- The Away from Home Overnight Allowance be increased by £10 from £50 to £60.
- The Hardship Allowance be increased by £10 from £30 to £40.
- That Dog Handlers Allowance is uplifted by 4.2%.
- DOJ and PSNI commit in principle to adopting the NPCC's review's resultant proposals, subject to any views expressed by PRRB.
- That parties bring forward proposals on closing the CRTP scheme to any further officers and introduce the Unsocial Hours Allowance for officers in the federated ranks not in receipt of CRTP. Parties are asked to submit their proposals in their 2026 evidence.
- CRTP is frozen at its current level until further notice.

I would like to convey my thanks to all parties for your contribution to the pay round process and look forward to working with you in support of the 2026/27 process.

Yours sincerely

**NAOMI LONG MLA**  
**Minister of Justice**

*Please ensure that you quote our reference number in any future related correspondence.*

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