

How have austerity measures implemented over the past decade affected the operations of the Metropolitan Police in the UK, and what effect did that have on victims of crime?

Charlie Jones

Student Number: 2407843

Degree: Operational Policing

Word Count: 8561

Contents

1. Acknowledgements.....	3
2. Abstract.....	4
3. Chapter 1: Introduction.....	5
4. Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	8
5. Chapter 3: Methodology.....	14
6. Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings.....	17
7. Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and conclusion.....	21
8. Reference List.....	23
9. Appendices.....	31

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my sincere thanks to my lecturers, Allison and Jane. Allison, thank you for your unwavering support and for guiding me through the many ups and downs of the past year. Jane, I am especially grateful for the time and support you have given me whilst I have written this project, you both consistently went above and beyond.

My heartfelt thanks also go to my dearest friend Michael, for always encouraging me to push myself and to aim higher. Finally, to my partner Ella, thank you for helping me prioritise this research, for keeping me focused on my studies and for being there through every challenge of this journey, your support made this possible.

Abstract

This research project examines how austerity measures introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 shaped policing in the United Kingdom. Specifically, how the Metropolitan Police was changed in the years of 2010 to 2020. As funding for other public services were slashed, this study shows how the Metropolitan Police was reconfigured to pick up the pieces. Using published statistics, academic literature and a survey of forty-two retired Police Officers, this study explores the effects of austerity measures on the communities of London, the lived experiences of the officers themselves and the victims of crime that are impacted by the changes. From police station closures, staffing cuts and the merging of roles, the Metropolitan Police experienced vast changes in the previous decade. This study delves into how and why this occurred and what impact these changes had on officers' morale and their abilities to serve victims.

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction to the Topic

Since the formation of the Conservative and Liberal Democrats government in 2010, the landscape of public services in the United Kingdom has changed significantly (Hernandez, 2021). The introduction of austerity measures by the then Chancellor George Osborne marked a widespread reduction in public spending and a large-scale reorganisation of how public services were run (Burton, 2016). The Police Service in the United Kingdom has been a central focal point in this process, with forces across the country facing pressure to cut spending to help reduce the deficit (Gravelle and Rogers, 2011). The knock-on effect of the austerity measures introduced meant police services' reduced staffing levels, closed police stations and cut budgets (Ellison & Brogden, 2012). One force in particular faced significant challenges, the Metropolitan Police. The United Kingdom's largest force, responsible for policing Greater London, the Metropolitan Police have the unique pressures of not only managing day to day crimes, but also handling Counterterrorism, large scale public events and protecting politicians and the royal family (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013).

The central question for this research project asks: How have austerity measures implemented over the past decade affected the operations of the Metropolitan Police in the UK, and what effect did that have on victims of crime? This research project places Austerity on two sides of a coin. On one side it is a matter of reduced budgets, the closure of police stations and the reduction of staff and resources (Facchetti, 2025). On the other it changes the landscape of Policing by reshaping workloads, vastly increased responsibilities and changes in the delivery of services to victims of crime (Turnbull & Wass, 2015).

Delving into this topic is academically valuable, because it is socially significant to a large number of the general public, since their lived experiences make up a vast amount of what the police tackle every day (Muir, 2016). Focusing directly and exclusively on the Metropolitan Police, this research narrows into the force directly at the heart of the austerity cuts, being the poster boy for cuts to policing in the media and therefore in the public's minds (Desai, 2018).

1.2 Background and Context of Austerity in the UK & the Metropolitan Police

The introduction of austerity was formulated by the Coalition Government who sought to reduce the United Kingdom's deficit and pay off debt that was incurred from the 2008 financial crash (Wren-Lewis, 2016). The then Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne set out his plan to reduce departmental budgets averaging 19% over 4 years, with the Emergency Services and Policing expected to absorb substantial portions of this (Humphrys, 2011). In the period of 2010 and 2019, police officer numbers fell across England and Wales by more than 20,000 which is approximately 14% of the entire workforce combined (Draca & Langella, 2020). Police forces also cut around 70% of Police stations and front counters in this time (Facchetti, 2025). Many forces, in a bid to save even more money started to reduce the amount of Neighbourhood officers, resulting in a decline in community trust (Oosthuizen, 2021).

The Metropolitan Police felt the cuts arguably more than the other forces in England and Wales due to their size and positioning within the capital (London Assembly, 2018). The budget for the Metropolitan Police fell in real terms by almost 28% between the years of 2010 and 2022, which resulted in over 6,000 officer and staff jobs being cut combined (Metropolitan Police, 2023). Perhaps the most prominent cut that the Met initiated was the closure of front counters in multiple Police

Stations across the capital which eventually reduced most boroughs to a single manned 24-hour station (London Assembly, 2025).

Demands on front line officers, however, did not decline with the cuts. The force absorbed many of the services traditionally carried out by other public services such as mental health, community wellbeing and medical support due to other services being impacted by the austerity cuts (Lane, 2019). This resulted in a largescale expansion of the workload and role expectation on front line officers alongside a capacity that was shrinking, a phenomenon which Turnbull and Wass (2015, 519) describe as “normalising extreme work”.

Increased pressure reduced resources and an ever-expanding demand on policing services permanently changed the landscape for the Metropolitan Police (HMIC, 2014). Response times (from receiving an alert to a call on the radio and arriving at the scene) lengthened considerably, fewer officers were reported as being seen visibly walking the streets and the erosion of neighbourhood policing units spelt the end for community policing (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013). The overall workloads of officers intensified, due to the staffing cuts, which lead to a concern for morale among the ranks (Muir, 2019). Officers were not the only people to notice the change, victims were increasingly being let down with certain crimes not being followed up in person such as burglaries and ongoing support delayed and inconsistent (BBC, 2013).

Thus, austerity within the Metropolitan Police did not merely come down to a financial constraint, but more of an operational one. The years of 2010 to 2020 are the main theme of this research project and the analysis done to examine how policing changed both internally for the officers and externally for the victims of crime.

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The overarching aim of this research project is to critically evaluate the impact of austerity measures introduced between 2010 and 2020 on operational policing in the Metropolitan Police Service, and to assess how these changes have influenced the quality of service provided to victims of crime.

This aim is pursued through the following objectives:

1. Identify the specific austerity measures implemented by government from 2010 onwards that most directly affected the Metropolitan Police.
2. Critically analyse how these measures altered the delivery of operational policing within London.
3. Evaluate the consequences of austerity measures on Police Officers.
4. Examine the impact of austerity-driven changes on victims of crime.
5. Discuss the outcomes of these transformations in public trust and about the future of policing.

By setting these objectives, this research project will analyse how austerity has shaped both the practice of policing and the experiences of those who rely upon it such as the communities of London and the victims of crime that live there.

1.4 Structure of the Research Project

The remainder of this research project is organised into four substantive chapters, followed by references and appendices. Each chapter is designed to build progressively towards answering the central research question on the impact of austerity on operational policing in the Metropolitan Police Service and its effects on victims of crime.

- *Chapter 2: Literature Review* critically examines the existing literature and research on austerity in the United Kingdom between 2010 and 2020. It explores how the reduction of public service budgets, specifically the police, changed the services. The key themes include police station closures, reductions in workforce, the reorganisation of priorities, officer wellbeing, and the experiences of

victims and the general impact upon them. The chapter concludes by identifying the gaps that justify the survey conducted to establish the impact on operational policing and victims of crime.

- *Chapter 3: Research Methodology* outlines the practical foundations of the study. The survey is designed to show what the lived experiences are of retired Metropolitan Police Officers during and after austerity.

- *Chapter 4: Analysis and Findings* presents the survey results, using quantitative closed ended questions to identify trending statistical patterns within the answers. This chapter identifies trends in officer perceptions of how austerity changed the police, highlighting police station closures, high workloads and poor victim services.

- *Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations, and Conclusion* reflects on the findings in light of the dissertation's objectives. This evaluates whether officers who have retired from the police feel as though austerity was a positive measure or negative. It also covers the limitations of the survey and how they were overcome.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to Literature Themes

The research and literature on austerity in the United Kingdom post 2010 is extensive, covering the economic and social impacts and consequences across different sectors of society (Blyth, 2013; Taylor-Gooby, 2012). Starting in 2010 with the Comprehensive Spending Review (Gov.uk, 2010) under the Coalition Government led by George Osborne and David Cameron, austerity was presented as a new way to reduce spending and reduce the deficit and in turn the debt of the Nation (Taylor-Gooby, 2012). In practice, austerity was a way of reducing costs in public services, which included health services and the police (Hood and Dixon, 2015). Scholars have debated both the immediate and long-term consequences of austerity, arguing its implications for inequality and declining public trust in government institutions (Clarke and Newman, 2012).

Policing has arguably seen higher profile attention because of the role it plays both in the media and in the community, being a cornerstone of the social order and academics have argued that the cuts the Government inflicted upon the police budgets have had several effects such as reduced officer numbers, operational capacity limitations and a change to public expectations (O'Neill, 2019). Others have argued that austerity reshaped the priorities of the police, from community engagement to a reactive force (Greig-Midlane, 2019).

A further study has looked at the effects of austerity not only on the organisational side of policing but on the wellbeing on the officers due to higher workloads, more responsibility and a reduced amount of support all of which have had a negative effect on the front-line officers (HMIC, 2014). The effect on victims has been highlighted as longer waiting times and reduced services across some UK forces (Kirchmaier and Oparina, 2024).

Despite the vast amount of research conducted within the last 15 years, there are gaps which remain. National trends relating to the majority of Police Services within the United Kingdom are well documented, but few studies solely focus on the Metropolitan police, despite it being the largest in the nation. Likewise, a small amount of attention has been placed on victims themselves and the impact they have faced since resources have been dwindling, and budgets have been cut. These gaps provide an opportunity for this research project to expand on these points.

2.2 Austerity in the UK (2010–2020)

Austerity in the United Kingdom began with the formation of the Coalition Government with the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats in 2010, which committed to reducing the deficit through spending cuts and reducing the size of the state-run services rather than purely tax rises (Taylor-Gooby, 2011). The spending reviews in 2010 and 2011 set out plans for the proceeding decade which averaged a 19% cut to departments over a four-year period (HM Treasury, 2010). With policing and local governments heavily reliant on central government grants, they were disproportionately affected (Gray and Barford, 2018).

A large number of public services were restructured post 2010 as a response to Austerity measures. Areas such as the NHS, education and local government all saw budgets reduced (Hernandez, 2021). The effects of these were felt across the spectrum, the closure of youth centres, mental health services and a proportion of social care services meant gaps for other services to fill had widened, with the police being their first port of call (Laub, 2021). Between the years of 2010 and 2018 the central government funding for the police forces in England and Wales fell by approximately 20% in real terms (National Audit Office, 2018). Officer numbers also decreased, between 2010 and 2018 forces across

England and Wales lost 21732 officers (Schraer, 2019). Crime, however, was on the rise, particularly sexual and violent crime (Giuliett and McConnell, 2022).

The Metropolitan Police faced increasing pressures during this period due to the complexity of London itself. The population was on the rise, a heightened threat from terrorism (Basu, 2021) and the many high-profile events (Coaffee, 2021) meant that severe strain was being put on the resources of a dwindling police service being actively reduced by austerity cuts (Laub, 2021). By 2018, Theresa May was Prime Minister, the Police in the UK had lost around 20,000 officers and more than half the police stations were closed (Laub, 2021). Critics and scholars have argued that reductions such as these eroded community trust at a time of need and reduced visibility of officers on the streets (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013).

Scholar responses to austerity are somewhat divided, as Bullock and Millie (2012) have researched whether it was possible that police could have achieved gains with efficiency with reduced budgets by using resources in a smarter and more concise way where fewer officers could still maintain high standards. On the other hand, Brogden and Ellison, (2012) argue that the budget cuts the police faced were uncoordinated and lacked thought leading to a service that was diminished and fragmented.

The evidence shows that the feeling regarding austerity in the United Kingdom was not a temporary fixture but a long-term restructure of the services provided by the Government (Berman and Hovland, 2024). It's effects on policing were not just a direct result of the but cuts they received but also by the knock-on effect of cuts to other services that increased police workloads (Elliot-Davies *et al*, 2016).

2.3 Operational Changes in Policing – The Metropolitan Police

2.3.1 Police Station Closures

Arguably the most visible impact of austerity in London was the closure of police stations and front counters. Between 2010 and 2022, 83 police stations were closed and either sold or the lease of the building was not renewed (Baroness Casey, 2023). The decision to close police stations was intended to reduce the total estate of the Met to save on running costs and maintenance (Grierson and Dodd, 2017). Academics have argued that the effect of this was felt by victims who had to travel further to report crimes and created a distance between the police and the local communities (Blesse and Diegman, 2022). Furthermore, some have argued that this not only highlighted the symbolic disappearance of police on the streets but also strained the relationships between them and the communities (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013).

Station closures caused issues beyond just accessibility, operationally it meant fewer bases where officers in the Emergency Response Units could work, which lengthened response times to emergency calls (Facchetti, 2025). Research into accessibility have shown that visibility along with contact points are important for sustaining legitimacy; by removing both points it risks the public perceiving the police as withdrawing and then crime increasing (Millie *et al*, 2023).

2.3.2 Workforce Reductions and Deployment Shifts

The reductions in staffing levels the Met experienced were among the most severe of any United Kingdom force (Home Office, 2020). Neighbourhood units, response teams and front-line officers faced the biggest losses (Home Affairs Select Committee, 2018). Changes in recent years from the most recent Commissioner Sir Mark Rowley have highlighted these losses and work has been done to reverse the cuts to Neighbourhood officers (Metropolitan Police, 2023). There have however been arguments that the merger of 32 Basic Command Units into 12 streamlined ones enabled specialist

units to be easily resourced across London compared to the original model (Metropolitan Police, 2018). Although Baroness Casey argued that the merger of boroughs resulted in the 'decimation of neighbourhood policing' (Baroness Casey, 2023).

The loss of so many civilian support staff pushed many officers on to administrative roles on cases and within custody, which was historically handled by civilian members of staff, meaning officers spent less time on the streets (McClenaghan, 2013).

2.3.3 Changing Priorities and Reliance on Technology

The reliance of technology during the period of austerity was amplified to replace physical officers and staff and aid the ones on the front line (National Audit office, 2012). Online reporting functions and the 101 service which is used for non-emergency crimes were pushed in promotional campaigns as being more efficient and easily accessible for victims that didn't live near a police station (Facchetti, 2025). Some academics have stated that these technological changes to the met allowed them to handle higher volumes of crime without needing the same number of staff that they would once need (Home Office, 2024)

The outcomes, however, were mixed with some victims welcoming a new age of convenience with digital access to reporting whilst others experienced long wait times, no follow-ups and an impersonal feeling (Clark and Ariel, 2022).

2.4 Impact on Police Officers – Workload, Wellbeing, and Professional Identity in the Met

Austerity did more than merely change budgets and restructure the Metropolitan Police organisationally; it changed the lives of frontline officers completely (Caveney *et al*, 2019). The vast reduction in staff and officers along with police station closure and a demand ever increasing put pressure on the officers who remained on the frontline by producing large workloads, low morale and a lack of cohesion among ranks (Turnbull and Wass, 2015).

2.4.1 Increased Workload and Role Expansion

With a vast reduction in Police Officer and staffing posts between the years of 2010 and 2018 (Allen and Wong, 2024), the officers left on the frontline faced a larger task to overcome. Emergency response units absorbed multiple additional duties, whilst the lack of support staff meant they had to take on much of the administrative and investigative tasks they once didn't have to handle (Mann *et al*, 2018).

Many officers reported being given greater responsibility beyond their job roles such as responding to mental health calls, safeguarding vulnerable people and attending calls for medical emergencies (Solar and Smith, 2018). While the Police has always been a service used for an array of different things, austerity cuts meant that reductions in other vital public services changed the landscape and pushed more responsibility onto the Met (Langton *et al*, 2021). The phenomenon of 'role creep' is relevant to this period of policing as professional boundaries blurred leaving officers with increasing amounts of pressure to attend any and every call even if it didn't fit within the boundaries of the Police (Hogbin, 2023).

2.4.2 Wellbeing and Psychological Strain

The wellbeing of officers during the period of 2010 to 2020 weakened (The Police Foundation, 2019). Data collected shows working under austerity had a detrimental effect to officer's wellbeing, with absences due to mental health almost doubling over the period, rising from 4% in 2010 to over 8% in

2020 (Cartwright and Roach, 2020). By 2018, 73% of officers responding to a Police Federation survey stated they felt low mood, anxiety, and stress relating to the job (PolFed, 2018). Lumsden and Black (2018) argue that the changes brought in through austerity have ignited the emotional toil of policing.

2.4.3 Morale and Retention

Polfed's pay and morale survey in 2018 reported that almost 87% of officers felt moral was 'low or very low' with pay freezes, budget cuts and a lack of officers and staff all factors (Police Federation, 2019). The reliance on overtime to cover staffing gaps meant work-life balance, exhaustion and job satisfaction were all issues officers dealt with, this has not only affected lower ranked officers but ones of Rank too (Turnbull and Wass, 2012).

Staffing retention eventually became a concern as experienced officers were given early retirement (Travis, 2010) which eventually led to concerns around the hiring rate of new recruits and the amount of inexperience within the force years later (BBC, 2022). The knock on effect meant more pressure and higher workloads for the officers that remained, historical knowledge and skills were lost (Fright *et al*, 2023) which created a vicious cycle of young inexperienced officers lacking support and training joining and leaving quickly because of a lack of support, training and morale (Wilson *et al*, 2023).

2.4.5 Summary

This literature highlights the effect of how austerity shaped the lives and lived experiences of Met officers. The change in structure and increased workloads across the board blurred job roles which then raised demands on officers already experiencing wellbeing issues (PolFed, 2018; Turnbull and Wass, 2012). The quantitative evidence showing a double in absences due to mental health demonstrates the vastness of the issue within the while the qualitative research shows the loss of identity within the role and a general fatigue among staff and officers. The Metropolitan Police, whilst already under immense pressure due to the diversity and size of London, emerged from the austerity years having developed what Commissioner Rowley describes as "scar tissue of underfunding" (Easton and Aikman, 2025).

2.5 Victim Experiences and Service Provision in the Met

Whilst the majority of austerity literature focuses on workforce changes and organisational restructuring within policing (Solar and Smith, 2018; Facchetti, 2025) an equally as important issue is how the austerity changes affected victims of crime. With the Met Police being the UK's largest police service (Statista, 2024), it has been the first point of contact for victims across a plethora of offences, from simple common assaults to murder and terrorism (Metropolitan Police, 2018). Reductions and changes to resources driven by austerity and changed priorities changed the victim experience way beyond the ordinary interaction that they would usually have with police (Caveney *et al*, 2019).

2.5.1 Accessibility and Contact

As previously highlighted, the closure of almost half of Police stations in London during the decade of austerity, had a vast effect on the access in which victims have to crucial services (Facchetti, 2025). The ability to simply walk down to your local station and report a crime had been stopped for many in London, removing a vital way victims had historically looked for support safeguarding and reassurance, reducing visibility for victims of crime (Millie, *et al*, 2023).

Victims of crimes such as domestic violence and sexual abuse in particular suffered due to opportunities of early intervention and evidence gathering. A study conducted by Koppensteiner, *et al* (2017) of the University of Leicester showed that early intervention and routine follow ups with

domestic violence victims made a difference in their engagement. Vulnerable victims also suffered, as they were more likely to have no access to the internet, be a non-English speaker or have mental health conditions, all of which have made reporting crimes more difficult (The Bell Foundation, 2022; Pettit *et al*, 2013).

2.5.2 Response Times and Visibility

The experience of victims was also changed by a declining rate of response times for emergency calls (Murphy, 2022). Reductions in the workforce in general and in community support officers reduced the visibility of officers patrolling the streets (London Assembly, 2018). Sindall and Sturgis (2013) have stated that the general public feel more confidence in the police when seeing a higher number of them patrolling the streets, suggesting that the reduction of this exercise during the austerity years harmed trust and feeling within communities towards the police.

This meant longer waiting times for victims and for crimes deemed 'non-emergency' such as burglaries and vehicle crime, no in person visits at all (Rawlinson, 2017). Victim surveys during this period consistently reported dissatisfaction with the timeliness and consistency of police responses in London (MOPAC, 2018).

2.5.3 Secondary Victimisation and Public Confidence

One of the possible effects of austerity in policing regarding the Metropolitan Police was the phenomenon known as 'secondary victimisation' (Heap, 2021). This occurs where a victim has experienced harm from two angles, firstly the offence they're calling the police about and then also the effects of an inadequate response to that call such as a lack of communication, little to no updates and poor safeguarding measures (Jeffrey, 2021). Domestic violence survivors have also spoken about officers safeguarding them in the immediate aftermath of an incident, but they failed to implement longer term measures to keep the victim safe or follow up consistently (Topping, 2021). Experiences such as these could potentially risk losing the confidence of the public and could change the way victims' feel about the broader justice system.

2.5.4 Summary

The literature available makes it clear that the changes brought by austerity changed victims' experiences towards the Metropolitan police in a variety of ways. It shows it reduced accessibility by closing police stations, lengthened response times to emergency and non-emergency calls and weekend specialist units, all increasing the chance of secondary victimisation (Heap, 2021; Jeffrey, 2021). It is possible to draw a conclusion that the austerity decade not only affected individual victims but also had wider implications for the public confidence around the Metropolitan Police.

The review of literature on austerity and policing reveals a substantial body of scholarship addressing funding reductions, organisational restructuring, and the consequences for frontline delivery across the UK. However, several important gaps remain, which this dissertation seeks to address. Other forces within the UK cannot always be an accurate representation of the Met.

Much of the academic literature around the austerity years have focused on budgetary cuts, rising crime rates and reorganizational changes (Millie and Bullock, 2012; Gravelle and Rogers, 2011). Whilst all of these topics are important, there are very few pieces of literature that focus on the victims of crime and the officers themselves. Turnbull and Wass (2015) and Lumsden and Black (2018) both explore how workloads and wellbeing are affected by austerity, but they remain a part of literature

focused on the police. With the Met, the voices of retired officers and the current officers who have faced the changes of austerity are rarely included in academic studies and debates.

Victims of crime remain another area where academic literature is underdeveloped when it comes to the impact of austerity. Little research has been conducted as to how reductions in police stations, response times and the reorganisation of specialist units have directly affected the victims of crime in London, whereas the majority of the academic research shows the effects of these measures on crime rates (Facchetti, 2025), they do not show the impact victims' faced as a consequence, overlooking the most immediate consequences of austerity on public safety and justice.

In summary, the literature that has been produced has made important contributions to the understanding of austerity in policing but is limited to the following respects: A lack of direct focus on the Metropolitan Police, limited attention on officers' perspectives, an underdeveloped analysis on how victims' have suffered and the a lack of long term recovery and change. This research project aims to address these gaps by combining existing research and a survey from retired officers of the Met Police who served during the years of 2010 to 2020, thereby showing a greater understanding of how officers were affected and how this impacted victims of crime.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines and justifies the research methods used to explore how austerity measures put in place between 2010 and 2020 affected operational policing within the Metropolitan Police Service and the impact on victims of crime. It will detail the philosophical stance, research approach, and the design of the study, factoring in data collection, sampling, ethical questions and the analysis procedures. It also outlines the limitations of the research conducted and the position of the researcher. This is all guided by the research aim to understand from the perspective of the people who experienced the austerity measures first hand, how it changed operational policing and the delivery of service to the victims of London.

3.2 Research Philosophy

This study adopted the research philosophy of interpretivism. Interpretivism is the belief that reality is a complete social construct and the only way to understand it is through someone's lived experience due to the differing opinions, beliefs and actions people take (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Interpretivism allows for a more varied understanding of different complex social topics. As this research focused purely on lived experiences of retired Metropolitan Police Officers, Interpretivism was the most appropriate research philosophy.

The impact in which austerity had on the Metropolitan Police was not purely financial or organisational but also experiential. The influence it had on the lives of officers and the understanding of their roles, higher workloads, morale and the delivery of the service to victims made Interpretivism an essential philosophy to use within this research project.

Although interpretivism was the initial research philosophy, the absence of qualitative data meant that the final dataset was descriptive and quantitative.

3.3 Research Approach

An inductive method was used, where the findings were developed from data that was collected rather than any pre-existing theory (Bryman, 2016). Inductive research helps develop the identification of patterns and themes that emerge from the participants' answers and experiences. The effects of austerity on police officers are multi-factored and as such, needed a fluid approach to the collection and analysis in order to accurately map the themes and patterns.

This aligns with the interpretivist philosophy, valuing the answers of participants as a legitimate source (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) rather than trying to prove or disprove their knowledge. This process allowed conclusions to organically emerge from the answers collected.

3.4 Research Design

The research was initially designed as a mixed method survey, combining both qualitative and quantitative data and questions. This design was chosen to provide a way to measure both trends and insights, showing statistical patterns which could also be supported by lived experience and personal accounts. The survey therefore included an option for participants to answer 'other' in their response alongside multiple choice questions.

When it came to answering the survey, all participants chose not to exercise this option and instead completed only close-ended questions. This means that no qualitative comments were recorded.

Therefore, the final dataset was purely quantitative, consisting only of closed-ended questions. This did not however diminish the value of the dataset as the large scale of closed-ended questions enabled the participants to show consistent, comparable answers.

3.5 Sampling Strategy

All participants were selected for this survey based on their relevance to the research question. The participants were all retired Metropolitan Police Officers who had served either pre-2010, post 2010 or across both periods. This strategy allowed for a diverse range of experience that covered the introduction of austerity measures and the effects of them. A total of forty-two retired officers participated in the survey. They were approached through both professional and personal networks. The participation of all officers was voluntary with zero incentives offered or provided.

This cohort was intentionally limited to officers who had lived experience of the metropolitan Police before, during and after austerity measures were introduced. This insured that perspectives were kept to a first-hand experience and knowledge of the organisation. Whilst the sampling size is not representative of the wider policing population, it allowed for the researcher to analyse data that solely related to participants who had experiences of both operational challenges and cultural changes within the Metropolitan Police.

3.6 Data Collection

The data from the participants was collected from an online survey which was distributed through Microsoft Forms. This platform was selected because it met the university data protection standards and provided a GDPR compliant system for participants to share information. The link to the survey was distributed online and the data was collected over a two-week period.

Fifteen questions were displayed which were divided into sections, identifying austerity measures, impact of austerity measures on operational policing, morale and the impact on victims and secondary victimisation. Although the survey comprised of both open ended and closed questions, which also incorporated multiple choice options enabling participants to express their views in a quantitative and narrative way, the participants chose to only answer the closed-ended options. An information section displayed at the front of the survey explained the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature and helplines if any distress occurred during the participation. No personally identifiable information was sought or collected, and all responses were securely stored.

3.7 Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using descriptive quantitative methods. Closed questions enabled quantitative answers, which were analysed to identify clear patterns and themes amongst answers (Hansen and Swiderska, 2023). This enabled the survey to show clear trends which as the austerity measure officers most believed impacted the day to day lives of officers.

As there were no answers from the qualitative question, thematic analysis was not applicable to this dataset. The analysis was conducted using Microsoft Forms and Microsoft Excel to calculate percentages and findings, which forms the basis of Chapter 4.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethics were a large part of the research design. This survey received formal approval from the university ethics committee prior to distribution to participants. Safeguards around ethics ensured all participants were anonymous and voluntary. The information sheet at the start of the survey provided

information on what the survey aimed to achieve and their right to withdraw at any point. Psychological wellbeing was also carefully considered as this topic could be viewed as emotive to the participants due to it being a lived experience. Therefore, helplines were displayed in the information sheet to allow participants to stay safe during the survey.

No operational information that related to the police was displayed or collected and all answers were confidential. Data that was collected was stored securely in a password protected account within university systems that complied with GDPR and the Data Protection Act (2018).

3.9 Limitations

Several limitations must be acknowledged within this survey. The sampling size of forty-two participants, whilst sufficient for good quantitative analysis, limited the study and showed a potentially narrowed view on the research question. As all participants were retired Metropolitan Police officers, their reflections and experiences have a higher chance of being similar to each other due to their characteristics of being in the same job, in the same location around the same time. Their views may differ from current officers or victims of crime. The findings therefore should not be interpreted as being representative of all Metropolitan Police officers or the views of the general public or victims of crime towards the austerity measures in Policing. Nonetheless, the data provided shows a valuable understanding of austerity's impact on the Metropolitan Police.

A further limitation formed when none of the forty-two participants chose to answer qualitative options and chose to answer only quantitative answers. This restricted the study's ability to explore the lived experiences of officers in more depth. However, the number of questions and the structure to the closed-ended answers still gave clear insights into thoughts and feelings of the participants.

3.10 Reflexivity and Positionality

The Researcher had prior experience within operational policing. They spent five years working for the Metropolitan Police service, both on the frontline and in intelligence. The Researchers background allowed for a greater understanding of the research aims and the impact of austerity on the police.

However, bias is also a risk, especially when interpreting data which is constructed to include personal opinions on lived experiences. To mitigate this, the Researcher maintained reflective awareness throughout the creation of the survey and the data analysis. They consciously separated personal views from the participants accounts.

3.11 Summary

This chapter detailed the methodological framework used to analyse and explore the effects of austerity on the operational policing and victims of crime within the Metropolitan Police. This study is based upon interpretivist philosophies and was initially designed as a mixed method survey to collect both qualitative and quantitative data. All responses were from closed-ended questions which changed the study design and resulted in the dataset becoming wholly quantitative. Ethical approval was obtained and the appropriate measures put in place to protect participants. The following chapter presents the findings and analysis that is derived from this methodology.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the research undertaken to understand the impact of austerity measures on operational policing and the effects on victims of crime within the Metropolitan Police from the years of 2010 to 2020. Data was collected from a survey of 42 retired Metropolitan Police officers. This chapter will provide a look into the participant demographics, the quantitative results and the qualitative results.

4.2 Participant Demographics

All forty-two of the participants within the survey were retired Metropolitan Police officers who had served either prior to 2010, when austerity measures were introduced, post 2010 or those whose careers spanned across both periods. Service lengths ranged from under ten years to over thirty years, providing a mix of perspectives. This ensured that any responses were drawn from a cohort of officers who had experienced pre austerity measures and post austerity measures, creating a more balanced view.

Links were sent out to only front line or supervisory officers, who had experience in neighbourhood, response and detective roles. Gender was collected and all forty-two respondents were male, which limits the scope of data collected as female officers make up a large proportion of officer numbers now, however, based on the sample size and questions asked, this shouldn't affect the data findings.

4.3 Quantitative findings

This section shows the findings of quantitative data from questions 4 to 15 which asked participants questions related to their experience and opinions of austerity's effect on operational policing and the effects of victims of crime.

4.3.1 Identifying austerity measures and changes (Q4 to 6)

Question 4: Which austerity measure affected frontline policing

Participants were asked to identify which change within the operational side of policing that stemmed from austerity measures had the biggest day to day change for them. The majority of participants, 43% selected police station closures. This was followed by staffing reductions at 19% and budgetary restrictions at 14%.

A smaller proportion of answers stated that the merger of boroughs was the major issue at 11% and a reduction in specialist units was 4%. This data shows that the majority of officers viewed police stations closures as the single biggest change to frontline policing and this affected officers the most. This view matches the academic literature that shows the impact of police station closures and the reduced accessibility and presence on the police (Sindall & Sturgis, 2013; Facchetti, 2025; Millie *et al*, 2023). The prioritisation of police station closures fits within the academic literature which sees the visibility of police officers decline and complicates deployments and erodes community trust (Sindall and Sturgis, 2013; Facchetti, 2025).

Question 5: Changes to day-to-day policing since austerity measures were introduced

The vast majority of participants answered that austerity caused 'major' changes to day to say policing with 97% choosing this option. One participant answered that online 'some' changes stemmed from austerity measures. No participant answered 'no significant changes'. This shows the scale in which

officers believed the Met changed from 2010 to 2020. This majority view supports the arguments that austerity became a structural shift rather than a temporary change (Berman and Hovland, 2024; Taylor-Gooby, 2011).

Question 6: Agreement that austerity reduced operational resources

Using a ten-point scale with 1=strongly disagree and 10=strongly agree, responses for this question were heavily pointed towards agreement. More than half of participants answered between 8 and 10, which indicated a strong agreement in officers believing that austerity reduced operational resources. However, 16 participants chose answers of 6 and below, with 7 choosing the lowest score of 1. This shows that although there may be widespread belief among officers that austerity reduced resources, a large proportion of officers would disagree with them.

4.3.2 Operational Effects on austerity

Question 7: Impact of police station closures on operational policing

Over 59% of participants described police station closures as having a ‘major negative effect’ on their ability to carry out their duties, with 26% reporting a ‘somewhat negative impact’, showing that vast majority saw police station closures as having a negative impact. 14% of participants remained neutral or positive in their answers. This matches previous studies that have shown fewer central bases for officers have increased travel times and reduced community contact (Facchetti, 2025; Millie *et al*, 2023).

Question 8: Impact on response times

As with question 7, 59% of participants responded that response times were ‘severely reduced’ due to the impact of austerity, with 26% stating it was ‘somewhat reduced’, again showing the majority of officers believing austerity measures reduced response times. 14% reported there was no change in response times, while none indicated any improvement. Question 7 and 8 are more interesting because of the close nature of the answers and of the questions themselves. It can now be argued that the impact of police station closures had a knock-on effect for response times, as stated in the Literature review above. The slowdown in response times is consistent with the view that the change in estate management and staff reductions meant a change to response times (Greig-Midland, 2019, O’Neill, 2019).

Question 9: Responsibilities outside of roles

Most officers answered that austerity measures had impacted their job role and had expanded their professional remit with 47% of participants answering that they ‘frequently’ took on extra tasks outside of their core roles. 33% of participants ‘occasionally’ took these roles on and around 19% stated that they didn’t. This shows that a large proportion of officers felt that their role was at least occasionally expanded beyond their usual scope. As previously states in the previous chapters, this indicated ‘role creep’ that stems from the budget cuts from other public services (Langton *et al*, 2021, Hogbin 2023).

4.3.3 Comparing pre and post austerity policing (Q10 to 12)

Question 10: Visibility of officers

This question showed large cohesion within the participants as 92% answered that visibility was ‘much lower’ than pre 2010 while the remaining participants considered it ‘lower’. None of the participants stated that visibility was higher or unchanged, showing that all participants believed that the visibility

of officers was lower after austerity measures were introduced compared to before. This links to the arguments that show a reducing public confidence and weaker contact between officers and the community (Sindall and Sturgiss, 2013, Millie *et al*, 2023).

Question 11: Workload and demand

Two thirds of participants reported that their workloads had increased ‘significantly’ since austerity measures were introduced with 66%. A further 31% stated that it had increased ‘somewhat’ and only one participant reported ‘no change’. This data reinforces earlier literature that showed austerity impacted workloads due to staffing cuts, furthermore, rising workloads are consistent with national data sets and surveys that show fewer officers have to make up the shortfall and fill in with other work (National Audit Office, 2018; Turnbull and Wass, 2015).

Question 12: Officer wellbeing and morale

Wellbeing was overwhelmingly low with 95% of participants reporting that austerity has ‘significantly’ affected moral and a further 5% saying it had ‘moderately’ affected it. This evidence shows that all officers in this survey reported austerity affecting morale, which supports previous studies such as (Lumsden and Black, 2018) who describe how extending workloads and public feelings towards police place strain on morale. Low officer morale is consistent with the Police Federation survey (2018).

4.3.4 Outcomes for victims of crime

Question 13: Quality of service to victims

All participants answered that the quality of service towards victims of crime had ‘declined significantly’ since the start of austerity in 2010. Demonstrating the perception among officers that victim care nosedived after the austerity measures were introduced. This unanimous view is linked to the previous chapter where reduced accessibility and slower responses are a reason for poorer victim services (Kirchmaier and Oparina, 2024; Turnbull and Wass, 2015).

Question 14: Victim support and follow ups

64% of participants felt that victims ‘rarely’ received adequate support and follow ups since austerity was introduced, with 21% stating they ‘never’ did compared to pre-2010. Of all the results, 86% of officers believed that victims now received insufficient support and follow ups. This echoes several studies highlighting the lack of aftercare given to victims and the new barriers within technology and travel (Pettit *et al*, 2013; The Bell Foundation, 2022).

Question 15: Austerity and secondary victimisation

On the question of whether austerity measures increased the risk of secondary victimisation, 71% reported that they ‘strongly agreed’ and 19% simply ‘agreed’ with less than 10% in disagreement or neutral. This data set suggests that officers believe that there is a link between austerity measures and the harm in which victims have experienced since. This result fits into previously discussed research regarding secondary victimisation and how it has increased since austerity was introduced (Heap, 2021; Jeffrey, 2021).

4.4 Summary of key findings

The dataset from forty-two participants of retired Metropolitan Police Officers showed strong evidence that the austerity measures introduced by the Coalition Government in 2010 changed operational policing in London and impacted victims of crime.

Police station closures were viewed as the most damaging change with 42% of participants citing it. Almost all participants (97%) stated that 'major changes' were introduced to their day-to-daywork, linked to staffing levels and a lack of resources. Response times and increased workloads were highlighted by 86% and 98% of participants respectively. Over 80% of officers reported having additional responsibilities within their role. Morale was shown as having a significant decline with 95% reporting and all officers that participated believed victims had been let down with poor service and an increase of secondary victimisation.

Although this dataset was drawn from only forty-two retired participants, it shows a consistent view that austerity negatively affected the Metropolitan Police and the victims it serves.

Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendations and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion of Findings

This research project aimed to explore how austerity measures that were implemented by the coalition government in 2010 impacted operational policing within the Metropolitan Police and what effects they had on victims of crime. The findings from the study show consistent patterns of decline with morale, resources, operational structure and the quality of service to victims. The results collected within this study are representative of the previous studies within this field of research (Turnbull and Wass, 2015), which suggests that the impact of austerity was wholly negative when it comes to the police's performance and structure.

5.1.1 Operational Structure and impact

The dataset from this study showed an overwhelmingly negative view from participants regarding austerity impacts on the Metropolitan police. The decision to close police stations across London was identified as the most significant negative change. It could be argued that this then impacted upon response times, and then the service to victims, a snowball effect.

Ellison and Brogden (2012) argued that the changes that the police suffered at the hands of austerity happened in an uncoordinated way. The general cohesion among participants that austerity had negatives effects on the Metropolitan Police reinforces the claim that austerity changed the police significantly in the years between 2010 and 2020 in a negative way.

5.1.2 Workloads, Morale and Wellbeing

Over 95% of participants within the study felt their workloads, morale and wellbeing were significantly affected by changes to the Metropolitan Police because of austerity. These further laments the argument of Turnbull and Wass (2015, 519) who stated that austerity led to "normalising extreme work" within policing, and as 98% of participants specifically stated that their workloads increased, shows some agreement. Over 80% of participants stated that they had taken on jobs that were outside of the scope of their usual job role, this is a worrying statistic as Kirchmaier and Oparina (2024) have argued that higher levels of police workloads lead to more victim withdrawals, which links into section 5.1.3.

From an Interpretivist view, the dataset showed that the lived experiences of officers who worked for the Metropolitan police during the austerity period were hard on their wellbeing and mental health. Officers have stated that they felt undervalued, overworked and morale lost (Police Federation, 2019). This mirrors the Polfed Survey (2018) which showed officers had struggled with morale and mental health at increasing rates in recent years.

5.1.3 Impacts on victims of crime

Arguably the most concerning issue with the impact of austerity on policing, is the cost to victims. 100% of participants agreed that the quality of service offered to victims of crime had declined since the start of austerity and 86% agreed that victims 'rarely' or 'never' received adequate follow ups. This finding supports Giulietti and McConnell's (2022) argument that the austerity measures impacted vulnerable and low-income communities the most. It can therefore be argued that these changes may have led to a rise in secondary victimisation, which would potentially have caused significant harm upon victims in London. This was echoed by the Victims commissioner (2020) who stated that victims had lost confidence in the criminal justice system.

The findings within this study could potentially show that the reduction of police budgets not only changed the structure and the scope of the police but also changed the way officers gave their services to victims who needed their help, weakening the social contract everyone signs with the police service.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, several recommendations have emerged:

- **Reinvest in the estate:** The Metropolitan Police should reinvest in local police stations across the wider London area. Particularly within deprived communities and areas with a higher number of vulnerable people who would struggle to report crimes. Potentially showing greater visibility across the capital.
- **Funding distribution:** The funding of departments should be focused on frontline roles that were most affected by austerity cuts. The areas include Neighbourhoods, safeguarding and response, reversing higher workloads and staffing shortages.
- **Officer wellbeing:** Introduce greater staff wellbeing practises included free counselling services, peer to peer support groups and better breaks within work hours, to alleviate stress of frontline officers.
- **Public Service Collaboration:** Public services such as the NHS, Police, Mental health groups and youth services could work closer to relieve the burden that officers currently face. More support and funding need to be pushed into other public services to allow the police to focus on helping victims of crime.

5.4 Personal Reflection

Conducting this research, the Researcher gained a greater understanding of the consequences of austerity on the Metropolitan Police. Having worked as an officer for five years within the Met, the Researcher was aware of the struggle that the service had been through in the years before they joined. They approached this subject with awareness of the potential bias, but they sought to remain as impartial as possible, with academic integrity at the forefront of their mind. This wasn't easy, as the Researcher was balancing personal views and experiences with academic neutrality with the overall goal of creating an unbiased study that reflected the views of retired police officers only.

This study also highlights an important change when discussing austerity, the human cost. The financial cost of austerity is well documented and is frequently depicted within the media, however the human cost of public sector workers who dealt with the consequences day in day out is rarely spoken about, this reinforces the importance of people's perspectives being listened to and how they can reform policing.

5.5 Conclusion

This research project has showed that the measures brought in through austerity in the period of 2010 to 2020 had a vast effect on the Metropolitan Police service, through not only the restructuring and budget cuts, but higher workloads, lower morale, operational strain and that victims were directly affected through police station closures, slower response times and a poor follow up system.

Although austerity was introduced to help the wider economy and stabilise the country, it led to a decimation of the Metropolitan Police. Something that will arguably take years to reverse. Evidence suggests that rebuilding the confidence back into the police from victims of crime will be one of the most important factors in its redemption. If the Metropolitan Police manage to focus their efforts and rebuild within the communities that they serve, it shows victims of crime will benefit.

6: Reference List

Hernandez, T.A. (2021). The Consequences of the Austerity Policies for Public Services in the UK. *Studies in Social Justice*, [online] 15(3), pp.518–537. doi:<https://doi.org/10.26522/ssj.v15i3.2568>.

Burton, M. (2016). The Politics of Austerity: A Recent History. *The Politics of Austerity*, pp.1–5. doi:https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-48285-3_1.

Gravelle, J. and Rogers, C. (2011). Research and Policing in Times of Austerity. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, 84(3), pp.222–233. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1350/pojo.2011.84.3.528>.

Ellison, G. and Brogden, M. (2012). *Policing in an Age of Austerity*. Routledge. doi:<https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203105603>.

Sindall, K. and Sturgis, P. (2013). Austerity policing: Is visibility more important than absolute numbers in determining public confidence in the police? *European Journal of Criminology*, [online] 10(2), pp.137–153. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1477370812461237>.

Facchetti, E. (2025). *Police infrastructure, police performance, and crime: Evidence from austerity cuts / Institute for Fiscal Studies*. [online] Institute for Fiscal Studies. Available at: <https://ifs.org.uk/publications/police-infrastructure-police-performance-and-crime-evidence-austerity-cuts>.

Turnbull, P.J. and Wass, V. (2015). Normalizing extreme work in the Police Service? Austerity and the inspecting ranks. *Organization*, 22(4), pp.512–529. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1350508415572513>.

Muir, R. (2016). *Great expectations: what do the public want from the police?* [online] The Police Foundation. Available at: <https://www.police-foundation.org.uk/2016/09/great-expectations-what-do-the-public-want-from-the-police/>.

Desai, U. (2018). *Unmesh Desai: With more cuts on their way, no wonder Metropolitan Police morale is low*. [online] OnLondon. Available at: <https://www.onlondon.co.uk/unmesh-desai-with-more-cuts-on-their-way-no-wonder-metropolitan-police-morale-is-low/> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Wren-Lewis, S. (2016). *A general theory of austerity BSG Working Paper Series Providing access to the latest policy-relevant research*. [online] Available at: <https://www.bsg.ox.ac.uk/sites/default/files/2018-05/BSG-WP-2016-014.pdf>.

Humphrys, J. (2011). *Osborne: the axe falls*. [online] Yougov.co.uk. Available at: <https://yougov.co.uk/politics/articles/1659-osborne-axe-falls> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Draca, M. and Langella, M. (2020). *Law, order and austerity: Police numbers and crime in the 2010s*. [online] Available at: https://warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/research/centres/cage/news/03-06-20-advantage_magazine_summer/article-3/3._law_order_and_austerity.pdf.

Oosthuizen, J.P. (2021). *To austerity and beyond*. [online] Available at: <https://researchportal.port.ac.uk/en/studentTheses/to-austerity-and-beyond/>

London Assembly (2018). *Revealed: Mayor releases figures to show true scale of cuts to police*. [online] Available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/press-releases/mayoral/figures-show-true-scale-of-cuts-to-police?> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Metropolitan Police (2023). *Force Management Statement 2023*. [online] Available at: https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/foi-media/metropolitan-police/disclosure_2023/december_2023/force-management-statement-2023.pdf [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

London Assembly (2025). *Police Station Front Counter Closures*. [online] Available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/police-station-front-counter-closures-supplementary-3> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Lane, R. (2019). 'I'm a police officer not a social worker or mental health nurse': Online discourses of exclusion and resistance regarding mental health-related police work. *Journal of Community & Applied Social Psychology*, [online] 29(5), pp.429–442. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/casp.2410>.

HMIC (2014). *Responding to austerity*. [online] Available at: <https://assets-hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/uploads/metropolitan-responding-to-austerity.pdf> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Muir, R. (2019). *Better run organisations can improve police officers' wellbeing*. [online] The Police Foundation. Available at: <https://www.police-foundation.org.uk/2019/03/better-run-organisations-can-improve-police-officers-wellbeing/>.

News, B. (2013). *Metropolitan Police 'ignore 45% of London crimes'*. [online] BBC News. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-23324737>.

Blyth, M. (2013). *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*. [online] Google Books. Oxford University Press. Available at: <https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rztpAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Blyth>.

Taylor-Gooby, P. (2011). Root and Branch Restructuring to Achieve Major Cuts: The Social Policy Programme of the 2010 UK Coalition Government. *Social Policy & Administration*, 46(1), pp.61–82. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9515.2011.00797.x>.

GOV.UK. (2010). *The Spending Review 2010*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-spending-review-2010>.

Hood, C. and Dixon, R. (2015). A Government that Worked Better and Cost Less? doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199687022.001.0001>.

Clarke, J., & Newman, J. (2012). The alchemy of austerity. *Critical Social Policy*, 32(3), 299-319. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018312444405>

O'Neill, M. (2019). *Police Community Support Officers*. Oxford University Press.

Greig-Midlane, J. (2019). An institutional perspective of neighbourhood policing reform in austerity era England and Wales. *International Journal of Police Science & Management*, [online] 21(4), pp.230–243. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1461355719889464>.

HMIC (2014). *Policing in Austerity Meeting the Challenge*. [online] Available at: <https://assets-hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/uploads/policing-in-austerity-meeting-the-challenge.pdf> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Kirchmaier, T. and Oparina, E. (2024). *Higher workload for police officers correlates with victims withdrawing statements*. [online] Available at: <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/higher-workload-for-police-officers-correlates-with-victims-withdrawing-statements/> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

HM Treasury (2010). *SPENDING REVIEW 2010*. [online] Available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7c3969ed915d76e2ebbeb5/Spending_review_2010_executive_summary.pdf.

Gray, M. and Barford, A. (2018). The depths of the cuts: the uneven geography of local government austerity. *Cambridge Journal of Regions, Economy and Society*, [online] 11(3), pp.541–563. Available at: <https://academic.oup.com/cjres/article-abstract/11/3/541/5123936?redirectedFrom=fulltext>.

Laub, M.M. (2021). Policing Authoritarian Neoliberalism in South London. *Political Geography*, 90(102471), p.102471. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.polgeo.2021.102471>.

National Audit Office (2018). *Financial sustainability of police forces in England and Wales 2018 - National Audit Office press release*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/press-releases/financial-sustainability-of-police-forces-in-england-and-wales-2018/>.

Schraer, R. (2019). Have police numbers dropped? *BBC News*. [online] 26 Jul. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-47225797>.

Giulietti, C. and Mcconnell, B. (2022). *Kicking You When You're Already Down: The Multipronged Impact of Austerity on Crime* *. [online] Available at: <https://arxiv.org/pdf/2012.08133>.

Basu, N. Learning Lessons from Countering Terrorism: the UK Experience 2017–2020. *Camb J Evid Based Polic* 5, 134–145 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41887-021-00068-1>

Coaffee, J. (2021). Futureproofing against shock: Institutional responses to terrorist risk in London, 1990–2020. *Applied Geography*, 133 doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.apgeog.2021.102493>.

Millie, A. and Bullock, K. (2013). Policing in a time of contraction and constraint: Re-imagining the role and function of contemporary policing. *Criminology & Criminal Justice*, 13(2), pp.133–142.

Roy Bailey, Brogden, M. and Ellison, E. Policing in an Age of Austerity. A Postcolonial Perspective, *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, Volume 7, Issue 3, September 2013, Pages 340–341, <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pas060>

Berman, Y. and Hovland, T. (2024). *The cost of austerity: How UK public spending cuts led to 190,000 excess deaths*. [online] LSE Inequalities. Available at:

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/inequalities/2024/06/19/the-cost-of-austerity-how-spending-cuts-led-to-190000-excess-deaths/>.

Elliott-Davies, M., Donnelly, J., Boag-Munroe, F. and Van Mechelen, D. (2016). 'Getting a battering'. *The Police Journal: Theory, Practice and Principles*, [online] 89(2), pp.93–116. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032258x16642234>.

Casey, L. (2023). *An Independent Review into the Standards of Behaviour and Internal Culture of the Metropolitan Police Service*. [online] Metropolitan Police. Available at: <https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/met/about-us/baroness-casey-review/update-march-2023/baroness-casey-review-march-2023a.pdf>.

Grierson, J. and Dodd, V. (2017). Met police sold £1bn of property to soften blow of budget cuts. *The Guardian*. [online] 13 Jul. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/jul/13/met-police-sold-1bn-of-property-to-soften-blow-of-budget-cuts>.

Blesse, S. and Diegmann, A. (2022). The place-based effects of police stations on crime: Evidence from station closures. *Journal of Public Economics*, 207, p.104605. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpubeco.2022.104605>.

Andrew Millie, Liam Ralph, Michael Rowe & Matthew Jones (2024) Police station meaning, closure and (in)visibility, *Policing and Society*, 34:5, 403-416, DOI: 10.1080/10439463.2023.2293004

Home Office (2020). *Police workforce, England and Wales, as at 31 March 2020 second edition*. [online] Available at: <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/600af735d3bf7f05c06dfc36/police-workforce-mar20-hosb2020.pdf>.

Parliament.uk. (2018). *Policing for the future - Home Affairs Committee - House of Commons*. [online] Available at: <https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmhaff/515/51514.htm>? [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Metropolitan Police (2023). *The Turnaround Plan: More Trust, Less Crime and High Standards*. [online] Available at: <https://www.met.police.uk/police-forces/metropolitan-police/areas/notices/the-turnaround-plan-more-trust-less-crime-and-high-standards/>.

Metropolitan Police (2018). *Metropolitan Police Service BUSINESS PLAN 2018-2021*. [online] Available at: <https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/force-content/met/about-us/met-business-plan-2018-2021.pdf>?

McClenaghan, M. (2013). *Behind the frontline: How cuts to staff are stretching the nation's police force*. [online] Available at: <https://www.thebureauinvestigates.com/stories/2013-07-17/behind-the-frontline-how-cuts-to-staff-are-stretching-the-nations-police-force>.

National Audit Office (NAO). (2012). *Mobile technology in policing - NAO report*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nao.org.uk/reports/mobile-technology-in-policing/>? [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

GOV.UK. (2024). *Policing Productivity Review (accessible)*. [online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/policing-productivity-review/policing-productivity-review-accessible#technology-as-a-productivity-multiplier> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Clark, B., Ariel, B. and Harinam, V. (2022). 'How Should the Police Let Victims Down?' The Impact of Reassurance Call-Backs by Local Police Officers to Victims of Vehicle and Cycle Crimes: A Block Randomized Controlled Trial. *Police Quarterly*, 26(3), p.109861112211287. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1177/10986111221128751>.

Caveney, N., Scott, P., Williams, S. and Howe-Walsh, L. (2019). Police reform, austerity and 'cop culture': time to change the record?. *Policing and Society*, [online] 30(10), pp.1210–1225. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10439463.2019.1691549>.

Allen, G. and Wong, H. (2024). Police Service Strength . *House of Commons Journal*. [online] Available at: <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN00634/SN00634.pdf?>.

Natalie Mann, Priya Devendran, Samantha Lundrigan, Policing in a Time of Austerity: Understanding the Public Protection Paradox through Qualitative Interviews with Police Monitoring Officers, *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, Volume 14, Issue 3, September 2020, Pages 630–642, <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/pay047>

Solar, C. and Smith, M. (2020). Austerity and governance: coordinating policing and mental health policy in the UK. *Policy Studies*, 43(2), pp.1–18. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2020.1711876>. Samuel Langton, Jon Bannister, Mark Ellison, Muhammad Salman Haleem, Karolina Krzemieniewska-Nandwani, Policing and Mental ill-health: Using Big Data to Assess the Scale and Severity of, and the Frontline Resources Committed to, mental ill-health-related calls-for-service, *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, Volume 15, Issue 3, September 2021, Pages 1963–1976, <https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paab035>

Hogbin, J. (2023). *What is Role & Job 'Creep'?* [online] Julie Hogbin. Available at: <https://juliehogbin.com/what-is-role-job-creep/>.

The Police Foundation. (2019). *Police wellbeing and organisational development*. [online] Available at: <https://www.police-foundation.org.uk/publication/police-workforce-wellbeing-and-organisational-development/>.

Cartwright, A. and Roach, J. (2020). The Wellbeing of UK Police: A Study of Recorded Absences from Work of UK Police Employees Due to Psychological Illness and Stress Using Freedom of Information Act Data. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, [online] 15(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paaa033>.

Police Federation (2018). *PFEW Officer Demand, Capacity and Welfare Survey 2018 Metropolitan Police Service November 2018*. [online] Available at: <https://www.polfed.org/media/14040/Welfaresurvey2018METROPOLITAN-20-12-18-v10.pdf>.

LUMSDEN, Karen and BLACK, Alexandra (2018). Austerity policing, emotional labour and the boundaries of police work: an ethnography of a police force control room in England. *The British Journal of Criminology*, 58 (3), 606-623. [Article]

Police Federation (2019). *Pay and Morale Survey 2019 Headline Statistics October 2019*. [online] Available at: <https://www.polfed.org/media/15395/pay-and-morale-survey-2019-headline-report-31-10-19-v10.pdf>.

Turnbull, P. and Wass, V. (2012). *Time for Justice? Long Working Hours and the Well-Being of Police Inspectors*. [online] Available at: <https://orca.cardiff.ac.uk/id/eprint/49592/1/Time%20for%20Justice%20report%20low%20res.pdf>

Travis, A. (2010). *Hundreds of experienced police officers face forced early retirement*. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2010/nov/04/experienced-police-officers-face-early-retirement> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Metropolitan Police chief has concerns over rapid hiring of officers. (2022). *BBC News*. [online] 12 Oct. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-63203550>.

Fright, M., Davies, N. and Richards, G. (2023). Retention in public services How can government keep workers in the NHS, schools and police? [online] Available at: <https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/sites/default/files/2023-10/Retention-in-public-services.pdf?>.

Wilson, J.M., Grammich, C.A., Cherry, T. and Gibson, A. (2023). Police retention: A systematic review of the research. *Policing: A Journal of Policy and Practice*, 17(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1093/police/paac117>.

Easton, M. and Aikman, I. (2025). Sir Mark Rowley: Met chief warns anti-crime pledges need funding. *BBC News*. [online] 28 May. Available at: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyg95n0l05o>.

Statista. (2024). *UK largest police forces 2024* | Statista. [online] Available at: https://www.statista.com/statistics/877540/leading-police-forces-by-officer-numbers-in-the-uk/?srsId=AfmBOopktQ267YtpWsgpKLhme7lwJR1C_mmcDVfDEeYwM8LsczSWw5nb [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Metropolitan Police Service (2018). *Overview of Crimes*. [online] Tableau.com. Available at: <https://public.tableau.com/app/profile/metropolitan.police.service/viz/MonthlyCrimeDataNewCats/Coversheet>.

Koppensteiner, M. and Matheson, J. (2017). *Project 360: An intervention to address victim-police engagement in repeat domestic violence cases*. [online] Available at: https://www.le.ac.uk/economics/research/RePEc/lec/leecon/dp17-08.pdf?uol_r=d307e306

Pettitt, B., Greenhead, S., Drennan, V., Hart, T., Hogg, J., Borschmann, R., Mamo, E. and Moran, P. (2013). *The criminal victimisation of people with mental health problems At risk, yet dismissed*. [online] Available at: <https://www.victimsupport.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/documents/files/At%20risk%2C%20yet%20dismissed%20-%20full%20report.pdf?>

The Bell Foundation. (2022). *Gaps in language support create barriers to accessing justice and rehabilitation, new research finds*. [online] Available at: <https://www.bell->

foundation.org.uk/news/gaps-in-language-support-create-barriers-to-accessing-justice-and-rehabilitation-new-research-finds/.

Murphy, O. (2022). *Police delays endangering capital's victims charity warns*. [online] South West Londoner. Available at: <https://www.swlondoner.co.uk/news/16112022-police-delays-endangering-capitals-victims-charity-warns?> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

London Assembly (2018). *Police Community Support Officer numbers*. [online] Available at: <https://www.london.gov.uk/who-we-are/what-london-assembly-does/questions-mayor/find-an-answer/police-community-support-officer-numbers-1> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Rawlinson, K. (2017). *Low-level crimes to go uninvestigated in Met police spending cuts*. [online] Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/16/low-level-crimes-to-go-uninvestigated-in-met-police-spending-cuts> [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

MOPAC, (2018). *A Better Police Service for London MOPAC London Surveys*. Available at: https://governance.enfield.gov.uk/documents/s76264/metrics_ts2b.pdf [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025].

Heap, V. (2021). Anti-social behaviour victims' experiences of activating the 'Community Trigger' case review. *People, Place and Policy*, pp.19–32. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3351/ppp.2021.9393834535>.

Jeffrey, J. (2021). *The Criminal Injustice System: An Analysis of Professional Perspectives of Secondary-Victimisation for Female Victim/Survivors of Domestic and Sexual Violence Navigating the Legal System*. [online] Available at: <http://eprints.worc.ac.uk/11467/1/The%20Criminal%20Injustice%20System%20%281%29%20%281%29.pdf>.

Topping, A. (2021). 'No support': domestic abuse survivors on feeling ignored by police. [online] the Guardian. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2021/sep/17/no-support-domestic-abuse-victims-on-being-ignored-by-police>.

Millie, A. and Bullock, K. (2012). The Open University. *Open.ac.uk*. [online] doi:<https://oro.open.ac.uk/96907/1/BAReview19%20-%20Millie%20and%20Bullock.pdf>.

Saunders, M.N., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2023). *Research Methods for Business Students*. [online] ResearchGate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/240218229_Research_Methods_for_Business_Students.

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social Research Methods*. 5th ed. Google Books. Oxford University Press.

Creswell, J. and Creswell, J.David. (2018). Fifth Edition. *Research Design*. [online] Available at: https://spada.uns.ac.id/pluginfile.php/510378/mod_resource/content/1/creswell.pdf.

Hansen, K. and Świdarska, A. (2023). Integrating open- and closed-ended Questions on Attitudes Towards Outgroups with Different Methods of Text Analysis. *Behavior Research Methods*, [online] 56(1), pp.4802–4822. doi:<https://doi.org/10.3758/s13428-023-02218-x>.

GOV.UK (2018). *Data Protection Act 2018*. [online] legislation.gov.uk. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2018/12/contents>. [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025]

The Police Foundation. (2019). *Police wellbeing and organisational development*. [online] Available at: <https://www.police-foundation.org.uk/publication/police-workforce-wellbeing-and-organisational-development/>.

Giulietti, C. and McConnell, B. (2022). Kicking you when you're already down: The multipronged impact of austerity on crime. [online] Available at: https://www.cpc.ac.uk/docs/WP104_Kicking_you_when_you're_already_down.pdf.

Victims Commissioner. (2025). *Fewer than half of victims believe they can get justice, finds Victims' Commissioner* - Victims Commissioner. [online] Available at: <https://victimscommissioner.org.uk/news/fewer-than-half-of-victims-believe-they-can-get-justice-finds-victims-commissioner/>. [Accessed 2 Nov. 2025]

7: Appendices: Research Study

...

Police survey post austerity

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this survey. Your responses are valuable and will contribute to important research. Some of the topics covered may touch on sensitive issues, including experiences related to safety, crime, or mental health.

If at any point you feel overwhelmed, please remember that support is available. You are not alone.

For immediate safety concerns or to report a crime:

- **Emergency (Police, Ambulance, Fire):** Call **999**
- **Non-emergency Police (UK):** Call **101**

For mental health support:

- **Samaritans (24/7 support):** Call **116 123** or visit [samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)
- **Mind (Mental Health Charity):** Call **0300 123 3393** or visit [mind.org.uk](https://www.mind.org.uk)
- **SHOUT (Text Support):** Text **'SHOUT'** to **85258** for free, confidential support 24/7

When you submit this form, it will not automatically collect your details like name and email address unless you provide it yourself.

* Required

1. Gender 

☐ Woman

☐ Man

☐ Non-binary

☐ Prefer not to say

2. What year did you join the Police 

3. What year did you leave the Police 

Enter your answer

4. In your experience, which of the following austerity measures most directly affected frontline policing? * 

- ☐ Police station closures
- ☐ staff reductions
- ☐ merger of boroughs
- ☐ budget restrictions
- ☐ reduction in specialist units
- ☐ Other

5. Have you noticed significant changes in the way day to day policing was conducted since austerity cuts were introduced?

* 

- ☐ Yes a major changes
- ☐ Yes some changes
- ☐ No significant changes
- ☐ Unsure

6. To what extent do you agree that austerity measures between 2010 and 2020 reduced resources available for operational policing? * 

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Poor

Excellent

7. How did the closure of police stations affect your ability to carry out operational duties?

* 

- ☐ No impact
- ☐ Somewhat negative impact
- ☐ Major negative impact
- ☐ Positive impact

8. To what extent did austerity cuts impact your ability to respond to incidents in a timely manner?

* 

- ☐ Improved
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Reduced effectiveness somewhat
- ☐ Severely reduced effectiveness

9. Were you required to take on responsibilities outside your core role as a result of austerity cuts (examples: mental health, safeguarding, community support previously done by other public services)?

* 

- ☐ Yes, frequently
- ☐ Yes, occasionally
- ☐ No
- ☐ Not sure

10. Compared to pre 2010 policing, how would you describe the current visibility of police officers on the streets? * 

- ☐ Much higher
- ☐ Slightly higher
- ☐ About the same
- ☐ Lower
- ☐ Much lower

11. How has workload (hours, caseloads, paperwork, expectations) changed since austerity measures were introduced?

* 

- ☐ Decreased significantly
- ☐ Decreased somewhat
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Increased somewhat
- ☐ Increased significantly

12. In your view, did austerity measures affect officer wellbeing and morale?

* 

- ☐ Not at all
- ☐ Slightly
- ☐ Moderately
- ☐ Significantly

13. In your opinion, has austerity affected the **quality of service** provided to victims of crime?

* 

- ☐ Improved
- ☐ No change
- ☐ Declined somewhat
- ☐ Declined significantly

14. Do you feel victims now receive adequate support and follow up compared to before austerity? *



- ☐ Yes, always
- ☐ Yes, sometimes
- ☐ Rarely
- ☐ Never

15. To what extent do you agree that austerity has increased the risk of secondary victimisation (delays, lack of updates, reduced safeguarding)? *



- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Neutral