

Small Change for Justice

Funding for Justice in England and Wales (2010-2019)

Report commissioned by the Bar Council

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Foreword from the Chair of the Bar Council

For a long time, we have been striving to bring to light just how desperately our justice system needs to be valued and to receive appropriate, sustained investment for the public's benefit. Access to justice has declined for our citizens over a decade and serious, long-term funding needs to be committed to it urgently.

A system with the power to affect people's lives – victims, defendants, witnesses and everyone else who has ever stepped foot in a court in England or Wales – should not have to fight for proper funding and political attention and yet, between 2010-2019 investment in justice has been cut by 24% in real terms. No wonder there was an enormous backlog of cases before Covid-19 struck. During the global pandemic, in England and Wales, we have seen just how desperate things can become when justice is under threat: barristers, whom the government recognised as essential workers required to continue working through the lockdown, have not been provided with adequate financial support to tide them over. For many, their livelihood and careers are at massive risk, leaving the public without experienced practitioners to help with their legal issues in the future. The sustainability of the profession is not secure and it is the public who will suffer. As our report shows, this lack of commitment mirrors a wider trend of providing justice with pennies and expecting it to deliver a world-leading system.

This report reveals some startling realities about just how underfunded our system of justice, including the police, has been over recent years; in 2019, just 39 pence per person per day was spent on it. This pales in comparison to Government spend on defence in the UK in the same year, which was £606 per person per year, or £1.66 per person per day. This report also provides clear figures to those in Government holding the purse strings, offering an opportunity to make real change and reverse some of the damage that has been done over years of drastic cuts. Recent announcements of additional funding to maintain and improve the court estate are welcome, but this report demonstrates that more is needed to make up for years of underfunding across the whole system.

Does 39p per person to run a world-class justice system sound like enough to you? It certainly doesn't to us, particularly when compared to European countries that have maintained or increased their justice spending. England and Wales stands out in decreasing spending per person, and from a shamefully low base. Only 22p more per person would restore spending to 2010 levels (which were not generous even then), after adjusting for inflation. That is small change to restore public confidence in law and order. Against a backdrop of underinvestment, in the wake of the chaos that Covid-19 has wreaked upon justice, and in the interests of ensuring that this damage does not plunge our justice system into an even deeper hole, these pennies are needed now, more than ever.

Amanda Pinto QC
Chair of the Bar Council of England and Wales

Key Findings

- In 2019, justice spending in England and Wales was £144 per person, or 39 pence per person per day, which is low when compared with the justice budgets of other countries in Europe (England and Wales has experienced by far the largest percentage reduction in justice spending compared with other European countries).
- Overall funding for justice was reduced by 24% in real terms between 2010 and 2019. This resulted in a 29% reduction in spending per person in real terms between 2010-2019.
- The Crown Prosecution Service saw a 39% reduction in spending per person in real terms 2010-2019.
- The Legal Aid Agency saw a 37% reduction in spending per person in real terms 2010-2019.
- Central government funding for the police was reduced by 22% in real terms between 2010 and 2019.
- This resulted in the government spending 27% less per person in real terms on the police between 2010 and 2019.
- Police personnel numbers were reduced by 18% between 2010 and 2019 which is a fall of 23% in police per 1,000 of population.
- England & Wales as a jurisdiction is an outlier amongst European countries in its decision to cut spending on justice
- To restore spending to 2010 levels per person, after adjusting for inflation, an extra £2.48bn of spending on the justice system and an extra £2.33bn for the police is required. That's an extra 22 pence per person per day.

1. Introduction

Providing a justice system and fair access to it are fundamental functions of the state. These functions are necessary for an effective society and economy. For England and Wales, oversight of the majority of this provision rests with the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS). The MoJ is a Department that has been subject to some of the most severe austerity measures introduced after the 2008 financial crisis. A previous report examined the extent to which austerity had led to a decline in funding for justice in England and Wales and set that decline in the context of other publicly funded services.¹ That report found that funding for justice had been reduced by 27% in real terms between 2008 and 2018 and that the reduction was substantially more than for almost all other areas of publicly funded services which, notwithstanding austerity, had seen funding over the same period either remaining approximately stable or increasing in real terms.² In the context we now face of a global pandemic with huge implications for our economy and a likely recession, it is critical that justice spending does not fall further.

Having established that cuts to justice have been out of proportion with cuts experienced in other public services, in this report we update the figures and translate them into terms which are easier to interpret – funding per person.³ While the funding of the Ministry of Justice and CPS has fallen, the population of England and Wales has continued to increase and the services of the justice system have therefore been spread more thinly. The consequence is that funding per person has declined even further than the overall figures indicate. Overall funding for the justice system has declined by 29% in real terms per person since 2010.

¹Chalkley (2019) “*Funding for Justice 2008-2018: Justice in the age of Austerity*”

²Defence and Education saw real terms cuts of 6% and 5% respectively, whilst Health, Social Protection experienced substantial real terms growth of more than 20%.

³For reasons of preferring plain English in this report the term per person is used in place of the more commonly used term in official statistics which is *per capita*.

It is also helpful to place the experience of England and Wales in a more international context. For that purpose, we present figures for the funding of justice per person for a number of European countries and how these have changed over time. These figures serve to illustrate that whilst England and Wales had only a moderately funded justice system in international terms, it has cut funding much more than comparable countries.

It is hard to escape the conclusion that funding for justice in England and Wales has been savagely and disproportionately cut since 2010. There are many implications of this across the system that others have documented and described, with cuts falling particularly on the most vulnerable in society: children, migrants and the less well off.⁴

We take as our definition of spending on justice the combined figures for funding of the Ministry for Justice and the CPS. This omits a major presence within the justice system of England and Wales: the police. This omission reflects the way in which figures are reported for international comparison and as reported to the European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice for ‘total justice spending’. As a part of the purpose of this paper is to contextualise the spending on the justice system in England and Wales within

international trends in spending, it is useful to follow the convention of omitting police spending. There are further reasons why simply adding expenditure on policing to the total justice system figure is problematic. First the police perform many functions some of which are not directly related to the justice system and might more usefully be described as ensuring the security of the public, rather than enforcing law and order.

For this reason, in UK government department structures the police fall under the Home Office rather than the Ministry of Justice. There is no way of separating out the different roles of the police in published data. A further difficulty is that whereas funding the justice system is a function of central government, part of the funding for the police is devolved to local government.

Nevertheless, most commonly used definitions of, in particular, the criminal justice system, include the police and for many citizens the police provide the most direct and visible indication of the protections provided by the state of their fundamental rights. We therefore provide in a separate section an analysis of the cuts to police spending and how this is reflected in the context of the growing population of England and Wales using the same methods applied to the remainder of justice spending.

⁴For example, see A. Adams & Jeremias Prassl (2017) “Vexatious Claims: Access to Justice, Judicial Scrutiny, and the Economics of the Rule of Law” MLRForum 009 (available from: <http://www.modernlawreview.co.uk/adams-prassl>); The Western Circuit (2020) “This Doesn’t Look Like Justice: The Consequences of Closed Courtrooms on the Western Circuit and Beyond” <https://westerncircuit.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Western-Circuit-Sitting-Days.pdf> Accessed 11 February 2020; Coram Children’s Legal Centre (2018) “Rights without Remedies: Legal aid and access to justice for children”; Amnesty International (2016) “Cuts that Hurt: The impact of legal aid cuts in England on Access to Justice”; The Children’s Society (2015) “Cut off from Justice: The impact of excluding separated migrant children from legal aid”; follow up report The Children’s Society (2017) An update to Cut off from Justice: The impact of excluding separated migrant children from legal aid”.

We also give some consideration to the decrease of the visible police presence in England and Wales as expressed by the declining numbers of police officers and community support officers per head of population. That data serves to confirm that funding for the police has also been substantially reduced. Accounting for

the growing population, this amounts to a reduction of 27% per person in real terms. There has been a corresponding reduction in the number of frontline police personnel (police officers and community support officers) of 18%.



2. Justice funding in England and Wales

Notwithstanding the current economic climate due to COVID-19 and the 2008 financial crisis, the UK economy⁵ experienced real economic growth from 2010-2019 of approximately⁶ 18%. Thus, as a country we have more resources at our disposal today than a decade ago.

Against that real growth, the justice system saw its budget decline by 11% in cash terms and 24% in real terms between 2010-2019. In the last financial year there has been a modest increase in its (cash) budget of around 4.9%. This effectively incorporated the £1.2bn emergency settlement funding that had been necessary to support the basic functioning of the system into the baseline funding. Table 1 provides the figures⁷ to show the breakdown of expenditure across broad areas of prisons (and probation), courts, legal aid, prosecution and other. The last category includes numerous functions overseen by Ministry of Justice, such as the Youth Justice Board, Criminal Compensation, Criminal Review and the general administrative functions of overseeing the justice system.

⁵The remainder of this report focuses on England and Wales, not the UK but economic growth in England and Wales approximates that for the UK as a whole.

⁶Figures from ONS for GDP (income based) chained volume index.

⁷As in the previous report we use 2011 (and so on) as a shorthand for the financial year ending in 2011. The actual period covered by this figure is April 2010 to March 2011.

Table 1: Total justice spending⁸ in England and Wales 2010-2019 by category of expenditure (£000) and in real terms (£000 in 2019 prices)

| | Prison and Probation Service | Courts & Tribunals Service | Legal Aid Agency | Other Ministry of Justice Expenditure | Crown Prosecution Service | Total justice system | In real terms (£2019) ⁹ |
|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 2010 | 4,173,617 | 1,071,599 | 2,180,818 | 1,535,816 | 657,809 | 9,619,659 | 11,164,749 |
| 2011 | 4,056,421 | 1,092,170 | 2,320,497 | 1,499,231 | 624,687 | 9,593,006 | 10,965,942 |
| 2012 | 3,493,446 | 1,091,883 | 2,183,985 | 2,125,667 | 583,065 | 9,478,046 | 10,630,379 |
| 2013 | 3,533,100 | 1,203,496 | 2,041,537 | 1,815,184 | 556,902 | 9,150,219 | 10,105,156 |
| 2014 | 3,580,997 | 1,027,975 | 1,970,043 | 1,531,066 | 546,907 | 8,656,988 | 9,385,388 |
| 2015 | 3,480,153 | 944,099 | 1,735,858 | 1,567,913 | 506,679 | 8,234,702 | 8,777,035 |
| 2016 | 3,660,493 | 833,483 | 1,611,142 | 1,242,991 | 486,267 | 7,834,376 | 8,314,188 |
| 2017 | 3,722,864 | 1,565,064 | 1,639,385 | 478,618 | 490,013 | 7,895,944 | 8,210,573 |
| 2018 | 3,709,003 | 1,576,656 | 1,680,067 | 661,368 | 506,126 | 8,133,220 | 8,274,802 |
| 2019 | 4,021,404 | 1,662,392 | 1,715,014 | 637,767 | 501,075 | 8,537,652 | 8,537,652 |
| Change | -4% | 55% | -21% | -58% | -24% | -11% | -24% |

The last two columns of the table report the overall total of spending on justice in cash and real terms respectively.

The final column takes account of inflation and therefore gives a sense of how the resources available to the justice system have declined.

⁸Figures in Table 1, as in the previous report, are the relevant department Resource Expenditure Limits which can be found in departmental annual reports (usually labelled core tables). They therefore correspond to expenditure on the provision of services but exclude capital expenditure.

⁹Here as elsewhere in this report expenditure figures labelled real for years prior to 2019 are increased to reflect that fact that increasing prices mean that the same number of £ would have bought more goods and services in earlier years. This adjustment is made using the ONS figures for the GDP deflators (based on 2019).

¹⁰Further details of this reform programme may be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-hmcts-reform-programme#background-to-reform>. If, for example the estimated intended £1bn expenditure on that programme is netted out by a reduction of £333m in the years 2016-19, the overall decline in justice spending would be approximately 27% in real terms from 2010-2019

Increases in the Ministry of Justice budget in the last year mean that the decline from 2010 to 2019 has moderated to 24% from the previously reported 27% (from 2008-2018). The Courts and Tribunal Services is the only broad category of services to see an increase following an expansion of its budget beginning in 2017. This however is a short-term increase associated with the HMCTS Reform Programme.¹⁰ Spending on prisons has been approximately constant but this implies a decline in real terms.

Despite small increases in budget in the Legal Aid Agency since 2016, it continues to show a 21% decrease in its spending since 2010. The Crown Prosecution Service has an overall decrease of 24% since 2010. Other Ministry of Justice expenditures are being funded 58% less than in 2010. The overwhelming picture of justice spending that these figures show is one of continuous and substantial cuts.

3. Justice funding per person

The justice system provides a service for citizens. For a given level of provision, the more citizens there are, the less likely the service is to be available to any one of them. It is important to gauge not only overall spending, but also how many people that spending provides for. We therefore take the figures outlined above and express them in terms of spending per person in England and Wales, by dividing through by the population of England and Wales as reported by the Office of National Statistics. The relevant population numbers are reported in Table 2.

Table 2 Population England and Wales (000) Source: Office for National Statistics¹¹

| | Total | England | Wales |
|---------------|--------|---------|-------|
| 2010 | 55,235 | 52,196 | 3,039 |
| 2011 | 55,693 | 52,643 | 3,050 |
| 2012 | 56,171 | 53,107 | 3,064 |
| 2013 | 56,568 | 53,494 | 3,074 |
| 2014 | 56,948 | 53,866 | 3,082 |
| 2015 | 57,409 | 54,317 | 3,092 |
| 2016 | 57,885 | 54,786 | 3,099 |
| 2017 | 58,381 | 55,268 | 3,113 |
| 2018 | 58,745 | 55,619 | 3,125 |
| 2019 | 59,116 | 55,977 | 3,139 |
| Change | 7% | 7% | 3% |

There has been an increase in the total population of England and Wales of 7%. Total justice spending has therefore become spread over a larger population. The figures in Table 1 expressed in per person terms are set out in Table 3.

¹¹This relates to population estimates based on the figures for the previous year.

Table 3: England and Wales justice system spending per person 2010-2019

| | Prison and Probation Service | Courts & Tribunals Service | Legal Aid Agency | Other Ministry of Justice Expenditures | Crown Prosecution Service | Total justice system |
|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 2010 | 76 | 19 | 39 | 28 | 12 | 174 |
| 2011 | 73 | 20 | 42 | 27 | 11 | 172 |
| 2012 | 62 | 19 | 39 | 38 | 10 | 169 |
| 2013 | 62 | 21 | 36 | 32 | 10 | 162 |
| 2014 | 63 | 18 | 35 | 27 | 10 | 152 |
| 2015 | 61 | 16 | 30 | 27 | 9 | 143 |
| 2016 | 63 | 14 | 28 | 21 | 8 | 135 |
| 2017 | 64 | 27 | 28 | 8 | 8 | 135 |
| 2018 | 63 | 27 | 29 | 11 | 9 | 138 |
| 2019 | 68 | 28 | 29 | 11 | 8 | 144 |
| Change | -10% | 45% | -27% | -61% | -29% | -17% |

Whilst total justice spending in 2019 was 11% less than 2010 in cash terms, when examined within the context of the growing population of England and Wales, the overall cuts to spending are 17% per person.

The magnitude of the per person figures bears further consideration. In 2019, justice spending in England and Wales was £144 per person per year, or 39 pence per person per day. Government spending on the NHS (England) was £2,248 per person on defence (UK) it was £606 per person and the average per person spend on coffee (UK) was £153.¹²

As with the figures relating to overall spending, the per person figures need to be adjusted to account for inflation. As in Table 1, this adjustment is made using overall prices in the economy as reflected in the GDP deflator for 2019. Table 4 sets out the per person spending on justice in real terms:

¹²<https://www.thisismoney.co.uk/money/news/article-6603343/Coffee-drinkers-spent-10bn-beverage-Britain-year.html>

Table 4: England and Wales justice system real spending per person 2010-2019
£ 2019 prices

| | Prison and Probation Service | Courts & Tribunals Service | Legal Aid Agency | Other Ministry of Justice Expenditures | Crown Prosecution Service | Total justice system |
|---------------|------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------|--|---------------------------|----------------------|
| 2010 | 83 | 21 | 43 | 30 | 13 | 191 |
| 2011 | 78 | 21 | 45 | 29 | 12 | 185 |
| 2012 | 66 | 21 | 41 | 40 | 11 | 179 |
| 2013 | 65 | 22 | 38 | 33 | 10 | 168 |
| 2014 | 64 | 18 | 35 | 27 | 10 | 155 |
| 2015 | 61 | 17 | 30 | 28 | 9 | 145 |
| 2016 | 63 | 14 | 28 | 21 | 8 | 135 |
| 2017 | 63 | 26 | 28 | 8 | 8 | 133 |
| 2018 | 61 | 26 | 28 | 11 | 8 | 134 |
| 2019 | 64 | 27 | 27 | 10 | 8 | 137 |
| Change | -22% | 25% | -37% | -67% | -39% | -29% |

The table indicates that in real terms, spending on justice in England and Wales per person has decreased by 29% since 2010. The resources being made available to each citizen in order to provide justice have therefore been reduced by nearly one third.

4. International Context

The extent of cuts to funding for justice is both very large (representing a loss of nearly a third of the real resources available to the system) and out of proportion to any fall in resources, either in the economy or used in other publicly funded services. One question is whether England and Wales as a jurisdiction is following an international trend in reducing resources devoted to its justice system. If it were, this might indicate that it is possible to deliver justice, using less resource and that many countries are availing themselves of the possibility of resource saving. However, if other jurisdictions are not reducing the resources that they devote to justice systems, it is a further indication that the experience of England and Wales is one of a decline in the quality and efficiency of justice.

International comparisons with any degree of specificity are fraught with difficulties and have substantial limitations. The 2009 report commissioned by the Ministry of Justice to compare international spend on legal aid raised significant caveats about basing policy for England and Wales on practice in other jurisdictions.¹³ There is no agreed definition of what is included in the concept of a justice system; countries vary greatly in how they record expenditure on justice, different economies experience different growth rates and are subject to changing population, and so on.

Nevertheless, there are a number of sources of published statistics relating to expenditure on whole justice systems. Whilst at any point in time the figures may vary substantially from state to state, simply reflecting the different basis of measurement, comparing trends in expenditure across states gives a valuable means of comparison. If published figures are taken as being indicators or signals of the resources being devoted to justice, then even if they are not measuring exactly the same things, how they change over time reflects how resources are being changed over time. This fundamental idea of comparing systemic level growth or decline across different countries is the one we adopt.

¹³Ministry of Justice (2009) "International comparison of publicly funded legal services and justice systems" Roger Bowles and Amanda Perry, University of York

There are a number of possible adjustments to be made which often hamper direct comparisons. Our approach is a pragmatic one. We have assessed what are the most readily available and directly comparable measures of resources devoted to justice systems in per person terms out of public funds, as reported by governments themselves or by independent monitors. Our focus is on how those resources have changed over time. We have not been able to collate figures for before 2010 or after 2016, so that period is the basis of comparison and we have restricted attention to European countries for which the relevant data was available.

The following table sets out the key figures. For all countries, the published (or derived) figures for government spending on the whole justice system has been converted to Euros and divided by that country's population at each of the comparison years. The figures for England and Wales correspond to total justice system figures reported in Table 1 which closely correspond but are not exactly equal to what is reported by the Council of Europe European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice (CEPEJ)¹⁴.

¹⁴See <https://www.coe.int/en/web/cepej>. The CEPEJ figures for expenditure on prosecution exactly correspond to the figures we use (Total Resource Expenditure Limits) for the Crown Prosecution Service. The CEPEJ figure for the remainder of justice spending in 2010 also very closely corresponds to the total of Crown Prosecution Service and Ministry of Justice expenditure limits. However, in 2016 the figure reported in CEPEJ for total justice spend is higher than the sum of Crown Prosecution Service and Ministry of Justice expenditure limits. Since it would appear to be in error we utilise our own figures taken directly from departmental annual reports.

Table 5: Total justice system spending per person 2010 and 2016 Europe

| | € per person 2010 | Rank 2010 | € per person 2016 | Rank 2016 | Percent change | Change in rank |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| England and Wales | 202 | 6 | 150 | 9 | -26% | -3 |
| Denmark | 378 | 5 | 338 | 6 | -10% | -1 |
| Finland | 148 | 9 | 169 | 8 | 15% | 1 |
| France | 116 | 11 | 133 | 10 | 15% | 1 |
| Germany | 163 | 8 | 197 | 7 | 21% | 1 |
| Ireland | 558 | 3 | 512 | 3 | -8% | 0 |
| Italy | 130 | 10 | 133 | 11 | 2% | -1 |
| Netherlands | 689 | 2 | 689 | 2 | 0% | 0 |
| Sweden | 435 | 4 | 466 | 4 | 7% | 0 |
| Switzerland | 175 | 7 | 376 | 5 | 115% | 2 |

The figures in Table 5 are in cash terms and therefore do not account for inflation. The reason for this is that inflation data required to make the adjustments previously made to England and Wales data are difficult to find in a single source. However, the period under consideration is in any case one of very low inflation in all the countries listed. Over this shorter period, and before the most recent increases in budget, spending per person in England and Wales declined by 26%.

It is clear on the basis of the reported figures on total justice spending, that England and Wales is towards the lower end of this particular league table. It ranks 6/11 in 2010 and 9/11 in 2016. However, we caution against inferring too much from these individual spending figures, since different jurisdictions may define spending in different ways.

Suffice it to say that England and Wales is not a big spender in terms of total justice.

More important for our investigation is how spending per head has changed over time across different countries. The final two columns in Table 5 give that change in rank and in percentage terms. England and Wales as a jurisdiction is one of only three countries to have experienced a decline in justice spending. It has also experienced by far the largest percentage reduction and it started from a much lower base level of spending than the other two countries showing declines. Denmark and Ireland cut 10% and 8% respectively over the period between 2010 and 2016. After these cuts, Denmark continued to spend more than double than England and Wales per person, whilst Ireland spent more than three times per person.

Countries that have a per person budget closer to that of England and Wales all show increases in funding of between 2% and 21%.

The conclusion that can be drawn from these comparisons is that the cuts observed in England and Wales are not part of a larger international trend towards decreased justice spending. Where other countries have taken the position of maintaining or increasing justice spending, England and Wales stands out in its decision to decrease spending per person. The other countries that have instigated cuts seem to have done so within the context of much larger justice budgets, and even then, their cuts have not reached the level that has been observed in England and Wales.

5. Police Funding

The figures reported above reflect the convention in making international comparisons of excluding expenditure on the police, instead focusing on those elements of the justice system concerned with providing courts, legal services and prisons. However, the police play a fundamental part in the justice system by investigating and enforcing criminal law. They are the most visible and accessible branch of the justice system for many citizens. We therefore now consider expenditure on the police.

As outlined in the introduction, there are some difficulties in the consideration of police funding in conjunction with the rest of the funding put towards the justice system. The police undertake work that is not connected to their function of enforcing the law¹⁵ and, unlike other branches of the justice system, receive funding from both central and local government. The table below shows the figures for the funding that the police receive from the central government in cash¹⁶ and real terms.

¹⁵In addition to "Crime" the grant to individual police forces reflects their roles in "Incidents" (e.g. public disorder), "Traffic" (e.g. assistance at road traffic accidents) "Fear of Crime" (e.g. public reassurance) and "Special Events" (e.g. football matches).

¹⁶The funding for the police in England and Wales is complex and the accounting practices have changed considerably over time. The data focus on central government funding because it is possible to construct a consistent series (using a variety of sources for this). The National Audit Office report indicates that total funding has closely tracked the central government element in terms of percentage changes over this period.

Table 6: Central government expenditure¹⁷ on the police 2010-2019 in cash and real terms (2019 prices)

| | Expenditure £,000 | £ per person | Real expenditure £,000 2019 prices | £ per person 2019 prices |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---|-----------------------------|
| 2010 | 9,543,233 | 173 | 11,076,047 | 201 |
| 2011 | 9,139,314 | 164 | 10,447,318 | 188 |
| 2012 | 8,881,331 | 158 | 9,961,116 | 177 |
| 2013 | 8,322,852 | 147 | 9,191,443 | 162 |
| 2014 | 8,345,745 | 147 | 9,047,957 | 159 |
| 2015 | 8,602,371 | 150 | 9,168,918 | 160 |
| 2016 | 8,633,822 | 149 | 9,162,595 | 158 |
| 2017 | 8,293,666 | 142 | 8,624,143 | 148 |
| 2018 | 8,307,985 | 141 | 8,452,609 | 144 |
| 2019 | 8,621,396 | 146 | 8,621,396 | 146 |
| Percentage change | -10% | -16% | -22% | -27% |

Real funding has decreased by 22% over the decade which places the police closely in line with the 24% real reduction experienced by the rest of the justice system of England and Wales. When the figures are examined further within the

context of the growing population of England and Wales, the cuts that have been made amount to a reduction of 27% per person in real terms (16% in cash terms).

¹⁷Sources: Home Office annual department reports for the years 2011 through to 2019. Data for 2010 which was not available on a consistent basis in the 2011 report was derived from the Home Office "Consistent Time Series" of police funding.

¹⁸ Source: National Audit Office report on sustainability of police funding (<https://www.nao.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Financial-sustainability-of-police-forces-in-England-and-Wales-2018.pdf>).

Table 7: Police personnel total and per 1000 of population¹⁸

The cuts to the justice system through the police can also be observed through the decreasing numbers of personnel who are available to enforce the laws of England and Wales. In presenting this information, we take the numbers of police officers and community police officers.

These two functions can most easily be linked to the police's relationship with the remainder of the justice system, as constituting the police employees who are most likely to take the responsibility for enforcing the law and providing a physical justice presence in England and Wales.

| | Police officers | Community support officers | Total frontline personnel | Total per 000 of population |
|------|--------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2010 | 144,789 | 17,200 | 161,989 | 2.98 |
| 2011 | 143,734 | 16,918 | 160,652 | 2.95 |
| 2012 | 139,110 | 15,820 | 154,930 | 2.83 |
| 2013 | 134,100 | 14,292 | 148,392 | 2.69 |
| 2014 | 129,584 | 14,205 | 143,789 | 2.58 |
| 2015 | 127,909 | 13,066 | 140,975 | 2.51 |
| 2016 | 127,192 | 12,370 | 139,562 | 2.47 |
| 2017 | 124,066 | 11,043 | 135,109 | 2.37 |
| 2018 | 123,142 | 10,213 | 133,355 | 2.32 |
| 2019 | 122,404 | 10,139 | 132,543 | 2.29 |
| | -15% | -41% | -18% | -23% |

Again, we see a substantial decrease in these figures from 2010 to 2019. Community Support Officers in particular have seen a 40% decrease in their numbers over this period. When these figures are expressed in terms of population, the reductions become even more severe. The total number of personnel in the police made available to the public to enforce justice in England and Wales has decreased by 23% between 2010 and 2019.

The 2019 manifesto commitment by the Government to recruit an additional 20,000 police officers is welcome. However, it will take time for this ambition to be met and it does not take into account the time required to train officers and address the gap between those retiring and entering the workforce.

6. Conclusion

The figures reported paint a picture of a substantial decline in government support for the justice system in England and Wales over a long period of time. Over the last decade, despite overall economic growth and a growing population, reductions have occurred across most of the entire justice system with only expenditure on courts having defied the trend. The additional impact of COVID-19 on a system that was underinvested in and under-resourced will be potentially catastrophic.

To restore spending to 2010 levels per person, after adjusting for inflation, requires an extra £2.48bn of spending on the justice system and an extra £2.33bn on the police. This total of £4.81bn per year equates to additional funding of just over 22p per person per day in England and Wales.

We present this report in the hope that it stimulates debate as to whether such substantial reductions from such a low base really do represent the priorities of citizens who rightly look to the justice system to defend their rights and preserve an effective society.

Further information

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