

# More police, more arrests, more AAs, more money?

The impact of 20,000 more police officers on  
demand for appropriate adults for vulnerable  
adults

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## Introduction

### 20,000 more police officers

The Government has announced a national uplift in officer numbers by 20,000, additional to those hired to fill existing vacancies<sup>1</sup>. This paper analyses the likely effect on demand for AAs for adults.

### PACE requirement for a suspect to have an appropriate adult (AA)

Police must secure an AA whenever they:

- Arrest and detain; or
- interview voluntarily;

a child (under 18) or vulnerable adult (defined by PACE Code C). In the absence of an AA police cannot conduct essential custodial and investigatory procedures, such as interviews, searches and samples. Lack of access to organised AA provision significantly impacts efficiency and effectiveness.

### Source of AAs

The AA may be a parent or other person known to the individual. However, where no such person is available, willing or appropriate in the context of the investigation, police must seek an alternative.

### Responsibility for AA provision for children

In the case of children, it is an explicit statutory duty of Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) to ensure provision of an AA. The costs of ensuring provision of AAs for juveniles are thus met by YOTs.

### Responsibility for AA provision for vulnerable adults

There is no such explicit duty for vulnerable adults. Arrangements are local level and varied. Although historically provided by adult social care, the costs of ensuring provision of AAs for vulnerable adults are currently met by a mixture of<sup>2</sup>:

- Local authorities (adult social care);
- Police and crime commissioners;
- Police forces.

### Current spending on AA provision for vulnerable adults

It is estimated that in 2017/18, approximately £3m was spent on organised schemes of AA provision for vulnerable adults, in response to police demand. Of this, it is has been calculated that

- £2m came from local government; and
- £1m came from central government (the Home Office, via PCCs and police forces).<sup>3</sup>

### Current gaps in AA provision for vulnerable adults

Due to the lack of statutory provision, a number of areas do not have organised provision of AA schemes. The estimated cost of this additional provision at current average quality and pricing is £550k per annum<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/home-office-announces-first-wave-of-20000-police-officer-uplift>

<sup>2</sup> NAAN (2018), [There to Help 2](#) p.73-77

<sup>3</sup> NAAN (2018), [There to Help 2](#) p.78-79

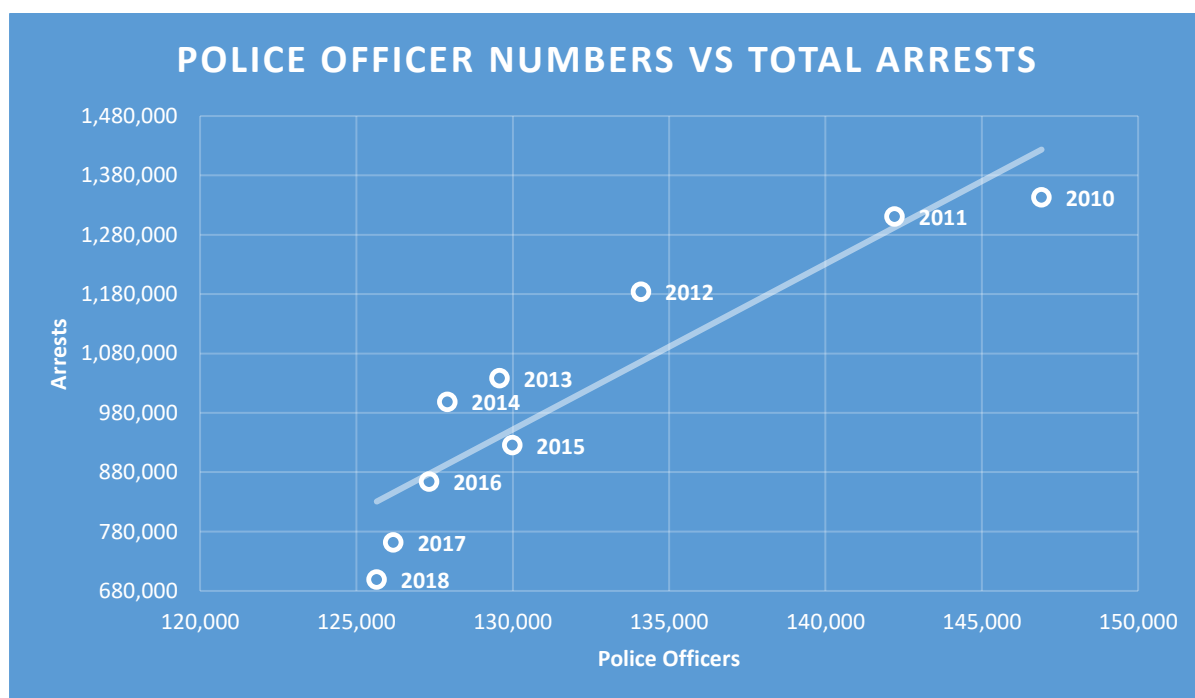
<sup>4</sup> NAAN (2018), [There to Help 2](#) p.103-10. Estimated a value of £528k-£575k

## Impact of increasing officer numbers on total arrests

Based on Home Office data for 2010-2018, the total number of police officers has an extremely high correlation with the total number of arrests ( $r = 0.917$ ,  $r^2 = 0.841$ ).

To 31st March	FTE Police Officers (inc BTP) <sup>5</sup>	Arrests (excl BTP and Lancashire) <sup>6</sup>
2010	146,912	1,342,487
2011	142,217	1,310,228
2012	134,101	1,183,801
2013	129,584	1,037,805
2014	127,909	998,226
2015	129,987	925,087
2016	127,329	863,643
2017	126,186	761,238
2018	125,651	698,737
2019	126,326	849,428
2020	130,000	951,885
2021	136,000	1,119,208
2022	146,326	1,407,171

Note: Figures in blue are forecast using the Excel (linear) trend function based on year 2010-2018, assuming an increase of 20,000 officers from 2019 level.



<sup>5</sup> [Police workforce England and Wales statistics 2010-2018](#)

<sup>6</sup> [Police powers and procedures, England and Wales, year ending 31 March 2018](#). A\_01b: Number of persons arrested for notifiable offences by age group, 2006/07 to 2017/18 (All tables exclude Lancashire, who were unable to provide arrests data in 2017/18. To ensure comparability over years, data for previous years also exclude arrests data from Lancashire)

On the above basis, if officer numbers return to 2010 levels, the total level of arrests would be predicted to return to around 1.4 million per annum.

A number of other factors may act to reduce this somewhat, including:

- Changes in the custodial estate (fewer, larger, more geographically spread out);
- Changes to PACE Code G in 2012 (necessity to arrest);
- Policy drives to reduce unnecessary arrests (particularly children).

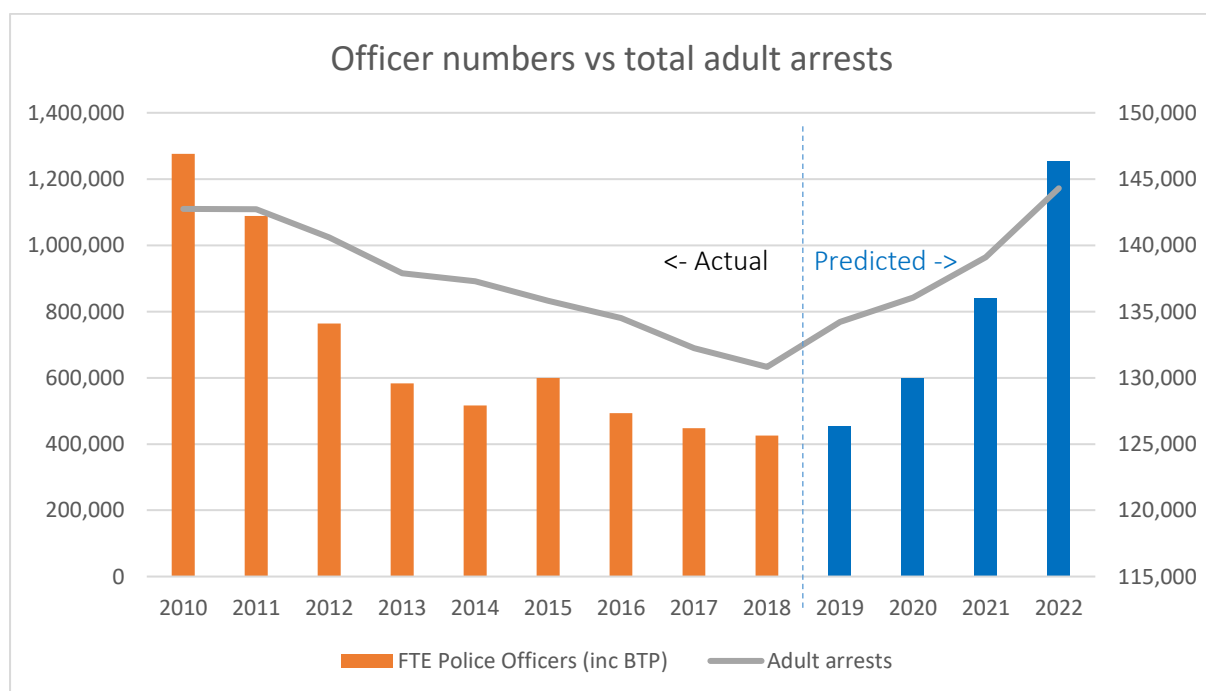
The effect of the above is difficult to determine due to a lack of data. Furthermore, any future 'braking effect' of these factors could be cancelled out by future changes in Government policy, political emphasis or policing strategy.

## Relationship between officer numbers and arrests of adults

Based on Home Office data for 2010-2018, the total number of police officers has an extremely high correlation with the total number of arrests ( $r = 0.885$ ,  $r^2 = 0.782$ ).

To 31st March	FTE Police Officers (inc BTP) <sup>7</sup>	Arrests of adults (excl BTP and Lancashire) <sup>8</sup>
2010	146,912	1,109,611
2011	142,217	1,108,488
2012	134,101	1,023,559
2013	129,584	915,890
2014	127,909	891,631
2015	129,987	832,529
2016	127,329	780,596
2017	126,186	689,418
2018	125,651	632,898
2019	126,326	768,462
2020	130,000	842,610
2021	136,000	963,700
2022	146,326	1,172,096

Note: Figures in blue are forecast using the Excel (linear) trend function based on year 2010-2018, assuming an increase of 20,000 officers from 2019 level.



<sup>7</sup> [Police workforce England and Wales statistics 2010-2018](#)

<sup>8</sup> A\_01b: Number of persons arrested for notifiable offences by age group, 2006/07 to 2017/18 (All tables exclude Lancashire, who were unable to provide arrests data in 2017/18. To ensure comparability over years, data for previous years also exclude arrests data from Lancashire)

## Relationship between officer numbers and arrests of vulnerable adults

The actual percentage of adult detentions which meet the PACE criteria requiring an AA is not known. Estimates of the actual rate of need vary significantly, up to as high as 39%. However, there is strong evidence that the police have historically under-identified or under-recorded the need for an AA. In the year to March 2018, police recorded the need for an appropriate adult in 5.9% of adult detentions in custody and identification rates have been increasing (from 3.1% in 2014) as awareness has increased. The table below shows predicted changes in the number of arrests of vulnerable adults as a result of increased officer numbers. It assumes that the identification rate does not increase further.

To 31st March	FTE Police Officers (inc BTP) <sup>9</sup>	Arrests of adults (excl BTP) <sup>10</sup>	Vulnerable adults (%)	Vulnerable adult arrests
2018	125,651	632,898	5.9%	37,341
2019	126,326	764,962	5.9%	45,339
2020	130,000	846,535	5.9%	49,714
2021	136,000	979,751	5.9%	56,858
2022	146,326	1,209,017	5.9%	69,154

Based on these assumptions, police demand for AAs for adults in custody is therefore predicted to increase by 85%.

## Financial impact on AA services for vulnerable adults

Assuming the ratio of 'family and friends' AAs to organised scheme AAs remains the same, in order to maintain the police's current level of access to AA provision for vulnerable adults, the current funding of £3m p.a. would need to increase to £5.55m.

In order to maintain the current ratios of funding:

- Local government's contribution would need to increase from £2m to £3.7m p.a.
- Home Office's contributions would need to increase by £0.85m from to £1.85m p.a.

If the issue of the remaining areas without access to an organised AA service for vulnerable adults was also to be addressed (at £550k p.a. as per above) at the same funding ratios:

- Local government's contribution would need to increase by a total of £4.07m p.a.<sup>11</sup>
- [Home Office's contributions would need to increase by a total of £1.03m p.a.](#)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-workforce-england-and-wales>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/police-powers-and-procedures-england-and-wales>

<sup>11</sup> At the same time, local government would also have to fund significant increases in demand for AAs for children. There were 65,839 child arrests in 2018. The last time officer numbers exceed 146,000 was 2010, when there were 241,497 child arrests (267% higher than 2018). It is reasonable to assume that, while estate and policy changes would act to avoid these levels returning, there would be a significant increase as result of increase police resourcing.

## Notes

While the tables above can be used to predict the likely rate of change to police demand for AAs, they do not illustrate the actual demand figures.

Demand is a function of volumes of authorised detentions and voluntary interviews.

Arrest statistics are not detention statistics. Although there is clearly a close correlation between the number of arrests and the number of authorised detentions, they are not the same. For example, in 2018, police forces reported 632,898 arrests of adults to the Home Office (excluding BTP and Lancashire). In the same year, 34 forces reported (via FOI) a total of 701,048 authorised detentions of adults (generating an estimate of 825,426 (excluding BTP, including Lancashire). A key reason for this difference is that police forces report only arrests for [notifiable offences](#) only. Therefore actual demand is higher because detentions occur for non-notifiable offences and still require an AA.

Arrest statistics do not include voluntary interviews. Voluntary interviews still require an AA. Data on voluntary interviews is not systematically collected. However, it is reasonable to assume that a similarly high rate of correlation exists between workforce numbers and volume. Research indicates that demand in 2017/18 was split 18% voluntary interviews / 72% detentions, demonstrating a shift from 16% voluntary interview in 2013/14<sup>12</sup>. It is a reasonable assumption that an increase in officer numbers, combined with reforms to Code G, will produce a further shift towards voluntary interviews. This will mean that arrest statistics become an increasingly inaccurate proxy measure for police activity.

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<sup>12</sup> NAAN (2018), [There to Help 2](#) p.42