



Te Kawa Mataaho
Public Service Commission

Performance Improvement Review of the **New Zealand Police**

APRIL 2026



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Lead Reviewers' Acknowledgement

We want to acknowledge the depth of insight, perspectives, and contributions provided throughout this review. We are grateful to the many individuals - within Police and the wider justice sector - who shared their experiences candidly and constructively. These contributions have been invaluable in shaping our findings and recommendations.

The review team also acknowledges the advice and support provided through the review by Robert Anderson, Erwin Ricketts, and Bethan Streatfield from the Public Service Commission.

Most importantly, we acknowledge the outstanding work of every member of New Zealand Police. Police serve with professionalism and commitment to protect the safety and wellbeing of New Zealanders. This dedication underpins the trust and confidence of our communities. The challenges identified in this review present opportunities to build on the exceptional efforts of Police and further strengthen the capability and support needed to deliver a modern, effective, and trusted police service for all New Zealanders.

Lead Reviewers



Belinda Clark, QSO

Belinda Clark is an experienced director and public administration specialist. Currently, she is a Board member of Fire and Emergency (FENZ), Te Urewera Board, and the Australia–New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG). Prior to becoming a director Belinda was a senior executive with over 30 years’ experience, including being NZ’s first woman Secretary for Justice, a role she held for over 10 years, and head of the Public Sector in Victoria, Australia.

As inaugural Director of the Office of Treaty Settlements, she led the settlement of the first major Treaty claims–Ngāi Tahu and Waikato–Tainui– and many subsequent claims. At ACC she led the response to the Cartwright Inquiry, and the introduction of competition into the Employers’ Account. This followed her early career with MFAT, which included a posting to the United Nations where she participated in developing UN Conventions in the areas of human rights and international law. She is a lawyer by training and among other roles was in commercial practice with Minter Ellison, acted for the Reserve Bank in its banking regulator role, and was a Commissioner with the Law Commission.



Kevin Jenkins

Kevin Jenkins is a seasoned professional director with over 40 years of experience spanning the public, private, and not-for-profit sectors. He currently chairs the New Zealand Qualifications Authority, Iti Kōpara – Public Governance Aotearoa, and the Real Estate Institute of New Zealand, and holds directorships with Harrison Grierson, Accessible Properties, WorkSafe New Zealand, and BRANZ.

As a founder of business advisory firm MartinJenkins, Kevin has more than 30 years’ experience of helping organisations across a wide range of industries to drive performance and tackle complex challenges. He has also led many reviews, including co-leading a review of aspects of Wellington Water in 2024. Kevin has also been the Niue Public Service Commissioner and is a Chartered Member of the Institute of Directors. Kevin also chairs the Risk and Assurance Committees (RAC) for Stats NZ and the Ministry of Defence and is a member of the Ministry of Health RAC.

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Overview

To meet public and internal expectations for organisational performance, New Zealand Police (Police) must tackle three major challenges in the coming five years. They need to rebuild Police integrity; address persistent traditional crime while adapting to increasingly complex, digital, and transnational threats; and build their corporate performance in the face of ongoing fiscal pressures.

Rebuilding integrity is a mission-critical challenge

Police integrity underpins the public's trust and confidence in the organisation. The November 2025 Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA) report revealed integrity failings across a small group of senior individuals. Our findings add to the scale of Police's integrity challenge: we found a perceived culture that holds seniors to a lesser standard than juniors, tribalism especially at senior levels, and complaint systems which can fail staff at all levels.

An integrity reset is urgently needed. Police understand the scale and urgency of this issue, the recent leadership refresh has aimed to address these challenges, and they have initiatives well underway. To ensure success, Police leadership will need to sustain this effort over years to embed integrity across the organisation. Culture and systems from frontline decision-making to executive governance need to reinforce zero tolerance towards misconduct. We see a strong base to rebuild integrity: the Police staff we met are committed to keeping our communities safe and lifting integrity across the organisation.

Crime is evolving and Police are struggling to keep up

A wave of crime is arriving on our shores which threatens our economic prosperity, democracy, and social cohesion. Transnational organised criminal groups are bringing increasing amounts of drugs, firearms, and laundered money into our communities. Increasingly, online fraud (which is the fastest growing source of harm in New Zealand) is originating offshore. Meanwhile traditional physical crimes persist, and they are growing more complex, armed, and violent.

To counter this evolving threat environment, Police must operate effectively across two parallel worlds. They must continue to respond to traditional, place-based crime – an area where stakeholders consistently report that Police perform strongly as first responders. At the same time, Police must rapidly build the capability, confidence, and tools required to prevent and respond to harm in digital, transnational, and increasingly borderless environments. This is not a challenge unique to New Zealand. Police agencies worldwide are grappling with the same fundamental shift in crime. The difference will lie in how quickly and decisively Police adapt.

Police need the tools and the workforce to prevent, respond, investigate and resolve crime

Police need to address pressing skills issues. Immediate action is required to restore core investigative competence. Investigation skills are deteriorating, particularly among less experienced officers, and this is undermining case outcomes and public confidence.

Looking ahead, Police must secure the right people, skills, tools, and technology to operate effectively in an increasingly complex, cyber-enabled crime environment. Training must evolve to keep pace with emerging threats and international best practice. Recruitment and retention strategies need to attract talent and build specialist expertise in areas such as digital forensics, intelligence and family harm. Stakeholders described cyber as the 'new frontline' and strongly support expanding the use of non-sworn specialists, particularly in response and investigation functions.

This workforce equally needs the right tools and systems to succeed. Modern data platforms, AI-driven analytics, and automation tools are essential to manage increasing volumes of evidence data, save time at the frontline, and direct Police resources and attention to the greatest risks. Police also need the right equipment to ensure they have the tactical options to respond to harm and keep both officers and the public safe. Without these foundations, Police will increasingly struggle to deliver core policing going forward.

Core policing depends on strong corporate performance, policy skills, and influence

Police have historically underinvested in their corporate backbone which has contributed to their ageing property, equipment, systems, and strained financial position. These factors are constraining Police's service delivery. To operate effectively at Police's scale, complexity, and devolution, the organisation needs to lift its finance, workforce planning, property, asset management, technology, and risk assurance functions. Without this strengthened backbone, the frontline will be unable to scale to meet the demands of an increasingly complex, digital, and borderless crime environment.

Success at the frontline will also increasingly depend on Police's ability to influence the wider decisions, frameworks, and systems that shape the policing environment. The Search and Surveillance Act 2012, for instance, was designed for a different era and it now frustrates investigations in the current environment of pervasive digital evidence. Similarly, complex social harm – such as mental health incidents – often require an initial Police response, yet pathways to tailored services once these situations stabilise can be unclear. Together, these pressures highlight the need for Police to strengthen their policy and influencing capability so frontline realities are reflected in wider government decision-making.

New Zealanders need to have trust and confidence in a police service that delivers core policing

New Zealanders expect Police to deliver core policing while maintaining the public's trust and confidence. Core policing spans prevention, response, investigation, and resolution – not only in domestic settings but increasingly across digital and international environments where harm also originates. While a range of factors influence success within any of these areas, Police need to focus on what they – and only they – can deliver which is enforcing the law and ensuring the safety of our communities.

This Review sets out the performance challenges that Police need to overcome over the next five years, and recommendations to help lift Police's performance and ensure they can deliver the core policing New Zealanders expect. The Police staff we spoke to – whether they are constables, emergency call centre staff, or senior members of Police National Headquarters – all shared a deep commitment to keep our communities safe and a drive to do better. We are confident that Police will focus on lifting their performance, and their leaders are bringing the right leadership and focus to these challenges.

Roadmap for Police Success

The Commissioner of Police has set new operational targets for Police: achieving 80 percent public trust and confidence in Police, reducing public place violence by 15 percent, increasing retail crime resolutions by 15 percent, and reaching 80 percent satisfaction with service quality. These targets align with the Future Excellence Horizon that we have identified for Police.

The Commissioner of Police has a comprehensive work programme in place, structured around four core pillars: focus on core policing; strengthened support for the frontline; leadership visibility and capability uplift; and long-term fiscal sustainability. This programme comprises 36 initiatives delivering on *Our Business* and Police's strategic goals of Service, Safety and Trust.

Many of these initiatives will help Police respond to the performance challenge we outline through this Review. Key examples include the People Strategy with an associated Investigations Workforce Strategy which is developed to help address investigative skill fade. Police are also working to define the future of the Royal New Zealand Police College, which includes a fundamental review and reset of the College's operating model, recruit curriculum, specialist training, and leadership development pathways.

Police must balance multiple pressures in the months and years ahead. They need to implement the recommendations from this Review, advance the Commissioner of Police's existing strategic priorities, and respond to reactive issues when they arise. All while managing through a constrained fiscal environment faced by all government agencies. Choices will have to be made.

To support Police's balancing efforts, we outline three implementation horizons targeting the most urgent priorities identified through this Review.

Horizon one: Strengthening policing foundations (0–12 months)

Police need stronger foundations to sustain effective service delivery and maintain the public's trust and confidence. Horizon one creates the platform for everything that follows. It signals a leadership

commitment to integrity and accountability, restores confidence in core policing, and ensures the organisation is financially and operationally steady enough to support the next wave of capability building.

Police need to take decisive action to strengthen integrity. They need to keep advancing the Integrity Action Plan which they started in late 2025. Police must demonstrate that their culture and systems meet the highest standards of fairness and accountability. This means embedding integrity into leadership, oversight, and everyday practice - not as a compliance exercise but as a defining feature and value of policing.

At the same time investigation and case management skills need to be improved to meet the expectations of victims and those of wider society that offenders are held accountable through the justice system. Remedial training in core investigative and case management skills for supervisory ranks is urgently required, along with a review of recruit training.

Police also need to stabilise their corporate functions. They need to lift financial discipline, embed comprehensive budgeting, and improve transparency so that Police know the value of every dollar spent. Risk and assurance functions need to be strengthened to provide independent oversight and early warning on issues that could compromise service delivery or integrity. These measures will ensure quality service delivery and improvement and give ministers and the public confidence that Police are managing resources responsibly.

Horizon two: Modernising police's operating model (2–3 years)

With the foundations secure, Horizon two builds the organisational and technological foundations Police need to deliver digitally adept, intelligence led, and transnationally enabled policing. This Horizon focuses on developing and implementing a Police Capability Plan, maturing partnership models, and workforce transformation.

The Police Capability Plan moves Police away from incremental, demand-driven investments towards

a clear, 10-year view of the capabilities Police need to succeed, and how Police will meet those needs. It will tie together operational strategy, workforce planning, digital and data investment, and asset investment decisions into a single coherent narrative that can inform Budget processes and cross-agency decision making. This Plan provides the core pillar for other critical Police strategies such as workforce and digital.

During this Horizon, Police need to mature their partnership approach with partner agencies, financial institutions, regulators, and international law enforcement. These partnerships unlock the coordination and the data sharing that is necessary to respond to growing transnational, cyber, and terrorist threats. Supplementing these efforts, Police need to build their policy skills and leverage their influence to shape privacy reform, data-sharing arrangements, and enforcement powers to support modern policing.

Delivering this Horizon also depends on workforce transformation. Traditional Police career pathways cannot meet the growing demand for specialist skills. Police should open lateral entry, attract talent from new sectors, and normalise continuous learning to keep pace with their operating environment. The sooner Police secures this talent, the sooner they can build momentum for the next transformation horizon.

Horizon three: Reorient police for a digital and transnational future (3-5 years)

With a Police Capability Plan in place to provide investment certainty over the coming years, supported by more effective data-sharing arrangements, and the right mix of skills, Police will be ready to push their operating model to the forefront of modern policing. This Horizon aims to build a seamless, technology-enabled service model that meets the needs of victims and communities in an increasingly digital, cyber-enabled, and transnational threat environment.

A fully integrated digital backbone is the foundation of this future. This system will feature real-time updates, proactive communication, and self-service options – underpinned by clear service standards. Victims will be able to track case progress online, receive automated notifications, and experience consistent service whether they engage through 111, 105, digital channels, or in person.

Police must replace fragmented processes with integrated, end-to-end systems. Casework should move to fully digital workflows, enabling information to flow seamlessly from first contact through resolution. Deployment must be supported by unified dispatch, real-time resource visibility, and data-driven decision-making. Consistent service standards should be embedded across every touchpoint, ensuring all interactions are timely, transparent, and empathetic.

Emerging technologies will increasingly shape policing. Artificial intelligence will accelerate evidence processing and management, transcription, translation, and analysis. Predictive analytics will allow Police to predict harm and deploy resources proactively. Cybercrime units will operate as global partners, equipped to counter ransomware, online fraud, and hostile state-linked activity. These capabilities will ensure digital harm is treated with the same urgency as physical harm, reinforcing public confidence in Police's ability to protect communities in every environment.

Corporate renewal will support this transformation. Modern finance, asset management, and HR platforms will provide the stability and agility needed to sustain performance. Strengthened risk and assurance will safeguard integrity and accountability, while Police will continue to advance their Police Capability Plan to deliver these new capabilities within fiscal constraints.

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Responding to the challenge

This section contains New Zealand Police and Central Agencies responses to the findings of this Review. These responses provide the platform to build on the insights and recommendations coming out of this review process.

In this section:

- New Zealand Police Commitment
- Central Agencies Support

Comment from the Commissioner of Police

As a new Commissioner, last year I invited the Public Service Commission to undertake this PIR because I wanted a clear-sighted, independent look at how New Zealand Police was placed organisationally.

That was an important step both for public confidence and for my own confidence as leader of New Zealand Police.

I asked the Reviewers to put a particular focus on organisational culture, and integrity and conduct.

It has been a challenging period for our organisation, but I am incredibly proud of the progress we have made in the last 12 months and of the dedication shown by the New Zealand Police staff.

The review also points to what we have been doing well. It is pleasing to see acknowledgement of the gains from visible policing, including the beat teams, gang disruption, and a focus on retail crime, as well as the excellent progress in achieving the Government's targets to reduce youth offending and violent crime.

The Review also points to the challenges New Zealand Police face in the years ahead, both internally and operationally. I am confident that with the right focus we can meet those challenges.

The issues recently investigated by the IPCA were not the only reason for the Review, but that did reinforce the need for a hard look at our organisation.

The recommendations set out in this Review are extensive. They sit alongside a wider suite of changes underway in New Zealand Police, many of which are aimed at strengthening integrity and conduct.

As an Executive, we will now work through the recommendations and consider how to best prioritise them alongside other opportunities and within fiscal bounds.

I thank the Reviewers for the thorough report and wide-ranging recommendations.

Many elements of the Review are forward looking, and those recommendations will help ensure we are well-placed to meet future challenges.

I appreciate the participation of the many who contributed to this, including frontline and district staff, and others both inside and outside New Zealand Police.

I will work with the rest of the Executive and District Commanders to ensure we make positive progress.

Richard Chambers
Commissioner of Police

Central Agency Support

Police occupy a central place in safeguarding the wellbeing, security, and confidence of New Zealanders. Their performance is fundamental to the integrity of the justice system and to trust in institutions. This Review provides a comprehensive assessment of the challenges and opportunities that will shape the future of policing.

We affirm the Review's finding that rebuilding integrity is a mission-critical challenge. The public need to be able to trust Police, and this trust depends on the confidence that organisation wide systems and culture will identify and address misconduct without delay. Police leadership have moved swiftly to respond to the recent integrity failings, and we will continue to support Police as they advance their Integrity Action Plan and the broader justice sector response in the coming months.

The Review also raises challenges and opportunities relating to capabilities, systems, and infrastructure. Police are navigating a transition where they need to balance the delivery of physical policing, with building technology and skill capabilities to handle growing cyber and international threats.

Like the rest of the Public Service, Police must respond within a constrained fiscal environment. Choices must be made by Police and by ministers. A Police Capability Plan could provide a platform to guide these decisions. This would ensure advice is realistic, identifies the investments required to maintain or alter service levels, and sets out the necessary choices and trade-off decisions to deliver fit-for-purpose Police. Central Agencies can also assist agencies and ministers to prioritise and allocate system resources to address complex issues, for example Government Targets 3 and 4 and the systemic response to Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime through the National Security and National Resilience Boards.

Central Agencies can also support Police as it works through the workforce transformations recommended by this Review, including by facilitating targeted development opportunities across the wider Public Service to broaden experience and deepen senior leadership capability. We will also help Police to identify and fill these critical talent gaps by connecting Police with expertise from across the system.

Data sharing is another cross-Public Service issue that affects not just Police but many of the agencies in both justice and social sectors. The Central Agencies will continue to work with Police and partner agencies to improve data-sharing arrangements (with appropriate safeguards) and adopt enabling technologies that strengthen prevention, response, investigation, and resolution. We will also help foster Police's policy capability and system influence so that frontline insights are sufficiently integrated into wider government decision making.

In the coming months, Central Agencies will support Police through implementation of this Review, brokering support across the system to remove barriers and maintain momentum.

We would like to thank Police for commissioning this Review and for the work they already have underway to lift their organisational performance. We would also like to acknowledge the service and dedication of New Zealand Police staff who work hard every day to maintain the safety of our communities.



Sir Brian Roche
Public Service Commissioner
and Head of Service



Ben King
Secretary of the Department of
Prime Minister and Cabinet and
Chief Executive



Iain Rennie
Secretary to the Treasury and
Chief Executive

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Future Excellence Horizon

This section presents the New Zealand Police Future Excellence Horizon developed by the Lead Reviewers, in close consultation with New Zealand Police and Central Agencies. It outlines the contributions New Zealand Police need to make to meet the expectations of New Zealanders, and the performance challenge that Police need to overcome over the next five years. Ratings and discussion in the rest of this report are framed against the Future Excellence Horizon outlined in this section.

In this section:

- About New Zealand Police
- Strategic Pressures
- Future Expectations
- Performance Challenge

About New Zealand Police

New Zealand Police operate as an independent, nationwide civilian constabulary under the Policing Act 2008. They are New Zealand's primary law enforcement agency responsible for preventing crime, enhancing public safety, maintaining order, and holding offenders to account through the justice system. With more than 15,000 personnel, they fulfil a broad range of functions including criminal investigation, traffic and commercial vehicle enforcement, emergency response, search and rescue, and the protection of people, property, and national interests.

Police trace their roots to the Police Act 1886, which established New Zealand's first national, civilian police force separate from military oversight. Before that, policing evolved from early colonial arrangements beginning in 1840, when magistrates and constables maintained order. These early structures laid the foundation for today's independent constabulary, which continues to uphold their motto of "Safer Communities Together" while adapting to the changing needs of New Zealand.

Strategic Pressures

Forces that shape the future of policing in New Zealand

Over the next five years, policing demand, public expectations, and Police's ability to respond will be shaped by the following pressures.

Expectations of integrity and service delivery

Integrity is foundational to public trust and confidence and enables Police to exercise their mandate. The November 2025 IPCA report exposing failures in Police internal complaint processes and the strong public reaction demonstrates how much integrity and conduct matters to New Zealanders, and how quickly integrity issues impact trust and confidence.¹ Unquestioned integrity will remain an absolute standard for Police.

Service expectations are also changing. Victims expect timely updates, clear explanations, and responses that recognise trauma, cultural context, and cumulative harm. Police must align service design and operating practices to the different needs of communities to ensure effective and equitable responses.

In a small, highly connected society, incidents can quickly escalate into national scrutiny through social media and live video sharing – a trend that will only intensify. Police need to be diligent in training and practice to ensure every action remains lawful, fair, and consistent across all communities.

Increasing complexity of crime and harm

There will always be persistent policing demands from traditional crime (local, physical offending against people and property). While maintaining prevention, response, investigation and resolution capabilities to meet these demands, Police need to adapt to a crime and harm environment that is becoming increasingly networked, cyber-enabled, and transnational.

Traditional harm events are growing increasingly layered, demanding more Police time,

documentation, investigation, and follow up. Family violence, youth offending, organised crime, alcohol and drug abuse, mental distress, and online exploitation often overlap in the same households and peer groups making prevention, response, investigations and resolution more challenging. An ever-expanding data layer from electronic communications adds a further complexity to the investigative process.

As digital technologies become more powerful, and their use widespread, cybercrime volume will continue to grow. Historically you could avoid dangerous places, but online every user is exposed to risk. New Zealanders are already more likely to suffer fraud or cybercrime than interpersonal violence – and this trend will continue to intensify. Generative artificial intelligence, deepfakes, crypto-assets, and new payment platforms will support more sophisticated frauds and identity-related crime. The borderless nature of digital platforms adds an international dimension to an already challenging enforcement landscape.

Organised crime is another growing trend that stretches current policing models. Transnational organised crime groups are using New Zealand's small, open economy, long maritime border, and proximity to Pacific nations with weak enforcement to traffic drugs, weapons, and illicit funds. These operations are often concealed behind encrypted communications, complex corporate and financial structures, and offshore operations. The same applies to the threat of terrorism.

Internal operating pressures

Police are managing through pressures in their workforce, property, infrastructure, and systems which limit their ability to respond to existing demands and build capabilities to respond to their changing environment. Many Police stations and custody facilities, along with Police equipment, are ageing and are no longer fit for current operational demands. Information and corporate systems have grown over time around specific functions, leading to fragmented data, multiple tools, and manual workarounds.

¹ Independent Police Conduct Authority (11 November 2025). *Review of Police handling of complaints against Jevon McSkimming*.

There is no clear pathway for asset and system renewal. Police's current financial situation is unable to support the necessary investments due to historic weakness in financial management. Police have spent their depreciation on other initiatives beyond asset replacement and have underinvested in support functions which have struggled to keep pace with an expanding constabulary. The wider Public Service fiscal environment is constrained which further limits Police's ability to stabilise and upgrade their assets.

Increasing reliance on partners to effectively respond to harm

Family violence, child protection concerns, youth offending, mental health crises, substance abuse, homelessness, and online exploitation increasingly co-occur, driven by social, health, economic, and environmental factors. While Police will often be the first responder, durable resolutions require services that sit outside Police's mandate and capability. As these harms grow, effective outcomes will depend on stronger, structured partnerships with government agencies and community providers.

Transnational organised crime, cybercrime, financial crime and the threat of terrorism are other areas that require a more sophisticated partnership approach. The New Zealand Customs Service, New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, Government Communications Security Bureau, Inland Revenue, financial regulators, major banks, and telecommunications providers each hold data and capability needed to detect, disrupt, and prosecute these harms.

International partners, including Australia, Five Eyes, the Pacific, and international law enforcement and security partners, are becoming essential to tackling transnational threats. Police need to work closely with these networks to counter the growing threat of foreign interference, where unfriendly states use cybercrime and organised crime to pursue their goals (which can include infiltrating Police). As these threats grow, New Zealand's safety and economic resilience will depend even more on Police working effectively with domestic and international partners.

Refer to Appendix 1, for in-depth consideration of these themes, and Police's organisational context

Future Expectations

What the public requires from Police over the next five years

The public expects Police to deliver core policing while maintaining the public's trust and confidence. Trust and confidence is grounded in Police integrity and sustained through effective, fair, and proportionate policing. High trust and confidence in turn supports core policing as people are more likely to call on and co-operate with Police, enabling Police to more effectively exercise their mandate and keep people safe.

In five years time, the reviewers expect public trust and confidence to exceed the highest levels recorded in the past decade, and performance is tracked and publicly reported through clear outcome measures. The reviewers expect Police to provide timely, transparent, victim-centred services that meet resolution standards across prevention, response, investigation, and resolution. Policing activity needs to span New Zealand's domestic environment as well as digital and international contexts where harm increasingly originates.

The reviewers expect Police to reduce serious harm in our communities. That means fewer incidents of family violence, sexual violence and sexual assault, and fewer offences involving firearms. Road deaths and serious injuries should be falling. Retailers and other businesses should feel safe to operate in every community. Organised crime, including transnational crime, must be disrupted at scale (demonstrated by more criminal assets being frozen and forfeited, more drugs seized, and more illegal firearms recovered). Police responses to cybercrime need to be modern and effective, with victims receiving timely updates, strong support, and reporting satisfaction with outcomes.

To meet these expectations, Police need to deliver the following across New Zealand, and in the digital and international spaces where harm to New Zealanders increasingly originates:

Prevention

- Police play their role (whether that is leading or supporting) within the wider systems that prevent crime and harm.

- Police provide visible policing presence in communities to prevent harm and promote public confidence and safety.
- Police collect and analyse intelligence to mobilise their own and partners' resources to target risk.
- Police disrupt crime at its source (which requires increasing disruption activities in areas such as the Pacific and South America)

Response

- Police maintain capabilities to respond to serious harms in the community (including emerging areas such as violent crime, digital crime, and organised/international crime).
- Police maintain effective channels so that all communities can effectively report threats.
- Police response is timely, decisive, and proportionate.

Investigation

- Police ensure clear communication and consistent support to victims throughout the investigation process.
- Police leverage best practice methods, intelligence, and technology to identify offending, establish facts, and support resolution.
- Police draw on information across systems, government, communities, and international sources to create a complete picture of offending.
- Police maintain the highest professional and ethical standards in case management.

Resolution

- Police prepare and present high-quality evidence, working collaboratively with prosecutors and the courts to ensure cases progress efficiently, fairly, and in accordance with due process.
- Police ensure victims are informed about all stages of the justice process.

- Police work with justice and community partners to support restorative approaches to reduce re-offending and strengthen long-term safety where appropriate.

Trust and confidence

- Police act lawfully, fairly, and transparently, ensuring the public can rely on their integrity and professionalism.
- Police engage and partner with communities to build shared approaches to safety and problem-solving.
- Police demonstrate value and impact through their operations, and their sustainable stewardship of resources.
- Police workforce and leadership reflect the needs of our communities.

Performance Challenge

The key areas that Police must address to reach future excellence

Over the next five years, New Zealand will face increasingly sophisticated online fraud, hostile state-linked activity targeting our interests, and transnational organised crime bringing violence, extortion, and drugs into our communities. These pressures come on top of persistent, traditional crime.

We conclude that Police are not fully prepared to meet these emerging threats in a way that meets the expectations of New Zealanders. The workforce lacks critical skills and tools, and historic weakness in corporate functions have left Police an ageing asset base with no clear plan for renewal. We set out the key dimensions of this performance challenge below.

Despite these issues, we are confident that with a focused approach and the right support from ministers, Central Agencies, and partner agencies, Police will be able to materially lift their performance. Police are dedicated and open to new tools, systems, and methods that will help them keep New Zealand safe.

Challenge 1 – Reset and strengthen trust and confidence

Police are facing serious integrity and conduct failings, if not addressed, could erode public trust and confidence. The November 2025 IPCA report details behaviours and issues which provide the most recent example within a long-running string of cultural and conduct issues.

Dame Margaret Bazley’s 2007 Commission of Inquiry into Police Conduct found systemic issues dating back decades. Since then, Police have implemented all recommendations from the Inquiry and shifted to a more values-driven, prevention-focused organisation. Independent reviews confirm sustained, meaningful progress in embedding the Inquiry’s intent. Despite this progress, further work is necessary to resolve current integrity failings and set a clear course for long-term cultural reform.

Immediate action is necessary to improve Police integrity and culture

The November 2025 IPCA Report publicly exposed a range of very serious internal Police integrity failings across a small cohort of senior leaders.² Our findings add to the scale of this integrity challenge. At times, we found a culture and processes have failed Police staff at all ranks. We heard instances of junior staff fearing speaking up against rank – it can be career limiting. There is a perceived double standard where seniors are held to a lesser standard than juniors. Internal complaints processes are not necessarily robust and can take years to resolve.

The Government and Police have accepted the IPCA recommendations and their intent. We support the Commissioner of Police’s decisive response in commissioning this Performance Improvement Review, as well as strengthening information security controls and auditing, adding additional investigators to the Police National Integrity Unit, developing an Integrity Action Plan, and initiating a review of Police’s Code of Conduct. Police need to maintain this momentum: it is critical for Police to build a culture of zero tolerance towards all misconduct.

The immediate integrity and conduct challenge must not overshadow longer-term risks to public trust and confidence

Current integrity challenges highlight a hard truth: trust and confidence is hard won and can be easily lost. Police must act decisively to strengthen the culture, systems, and safeguards that underpin the integrity New Zealanders expect. At the same time, Police must anticipate and manage less visible but growing risks that, if ignored, could erode public confidence over the long-term.

One such risk is the long-standing culture of “tribalism” within Police, particularly at the executive level. Interviewees described tribalism as loyalty formed around rank, shared history, or personal alliances, creating competing groups within the organisation. Such tribal loyalties often develop in stressful work environments where organisations have a strong internal focus. These loyalties endure

² The report also recognises the integrity and professionalism of Police staff who were investigating these issues.

over entire careers and are most visible during senior leadership transitions, when association with previous leaders may overshadow merit (resulting in capable people being moved on despite having the skills and experience to outperform their replacements).

The solidarity and bonding between members of the same “tribe” or subculture creates a range of risks including the likelihood of members protecting each other from scrutiny or disciplinary action; and preferring each other for promotion or other employment opportunity. In this way tribalism undermines meritocracy and fairness. It makes staff sceptical of being assessed on merit, interfere with people’s judgement, blind them to integrity issues, and improperly protects people that are not performing. It also turns attention inward, causing staff to prioritise tribal interests over organisational goals, which undermines cross-team cooperation and slows progress on organisation-wide outcomes.

Insider-threat is another present and growing risk to Police. Instances of staff misusing information, leaking operational details, or exploiting their position for personal gain can cause disproportionate damage to public confidence. Stronger recruitment vetting and systems to detect compromise or vulnerability to compromise throughout a Police career are necessary.

Police leaders need to drive the initiatives needed to address recent integrity failings and address these longer-term risks. An independently chaired Integrity Advisory Group should help support, monitor, implement the Integrity Action Plan already underway. Police also need to work closely with the Inspector-General of Police, once in place, to drive delivery and provide public confidence of action being taken to drive sustained improvement.

See further: Values, behaviour, and culture

Challenge 2 – Reshape workforce to prevent and respond to crime

Police face a widening gap between workforce capability and the demands of modern policing. Weak investigative skills are undermining service delivery, while constrained access to digital expertise and other specialist capabilities leave Police

inadequately positioned to respond to increasingly complex, transnational, and online harm.

Remedial training is necessary to improve investigation quality

Senior Police staff, justice, and victim representatives commented on the declining quality of investigations, and Police’s varying ability to support prosecutions. Cases are increasingly placed on weak foundations due to variable crime scene management, gaps in evidence gathering, uneven file quality, and difficulty meeting prosecutorial standards. We heard some officers are unable to effectively support prosecutions in court, presenting as nervous, unfamiliar with material they are speaking to, and unprepared for cross-examination.

Police must address the investigation skills deficit now to prevent further skill fade.³ A focused remediation programme at the sergeant and senior sergeant levels will help rebuild foundational investigative, case management, and case presentation skills and equip this cohort to coach and pass those skills to junior staff. This effort must be complemented by strengthened Police College training and structured opportunities to apply the end-to-end process of investigation and file preparation through to prosecution.

Workforce reset is necessary to secure future skills and leaders

Police’s workforce model is under pressure. Recruitment is difficult, and many tasks still default to sworn constables even when authorised officers or skilled non-sworn staff – who do not need full Police College training – could do the work. Growth in cybercrime, online harm, and complex financial offending is also increasing demand for specialist digital and financial skills which are often developed outside traditional policing pathways (for example in banking and cybersecurity).

Attrition pressures are also emerging: we heard that mid-career staff are leaving Police due to workload, changing expectations about career length, and attractive career opportunities outside policing. These dynamics risk weakening Police’s operational depth and leadership pipeline. Growing international policing demand may further draw experienced

³ We heard the term ‘skill fade’ to describe the Police-wide decline over time in investigation skills which are impacting investigation timeliness and court success rate.

staff into overseas liaison and deployment positions requiring backfill to protect domestic service delivery.

To address these issues, Police need a single long-term, coherent, and flexible workforce strategy. This should consider the best mix of sworn, unsworn, and authorised officers and explore flexible specialist pathways to secure expertise that traditional constable recruitment cannot readily supply. This expansion of lateral career pathways has wide support within Police. Succession planning is also necessary to secure future leaders and shape the culture of Police going forward.

We note that Police are working on a Workforce Strategy.

See further: Workforce Development, Core function Investigation

Challenge 3 – Equip Police for an increasingly complex, digital, and borderless environment

Police will not keep pace with the volume of traditional crime and expanding digital and borderless crime with their current tools, systems, and data capabilities. Time saving software, technologies to support deployment and core policing, and stronger data access and use offer methods for Police to do their job more effectively and multiply the impact of every officer.

Police face many frictions today that could be addressed with digital solutions. There is no unified multichannel portal for all communications with Police, and the 111-emergency call system is growing increasingly fragile. Preparing and sending files to court still involve manually printing the documents and delivering them to the courthouse. Translation services, vital to investigations, still depend on a small pool of external contractors, and the translation work required for a single case can take months.

Technology can also make a big difference on the frontline. Lawful, transparent use of technologies like facial recognition, number plate recognition, and biometrics can speed identification, link crimes, and improve officer safety. Better dispatch systems and artificial intelligence tools can also help integrate geospatial analysis, repeat victim/offender data,

patterns, and environmental factors in real time to drive deployment decisions and make the most of an already stretched constabulary.

Data access and sharing also needs dedicated attention. Police data is fragmented, cross-border data is often difficult to obtain, and partner agencies' overly cautious interpretations of privacy can limit access to information critical to investigations. Police must work with Central Agencies and partner agencies to create standards and secure pipelines for timely access to health, social, justice, border, and international law-enforcement data (with fit-for-purpose safeguards).

Police are aware of these issues, and programmes of work are underway to drive improvements. But progress appears piecemeal and slow. These issues need to be presented as a coherent package of enabling investment, with senior sponsorship to underpin implementation and embed partnership with partner agencies.

See further: Data, analytics and digital technologies.

Challenge 4 – Rebuild the corporate backbone

Police's ability to deliver frontline services are constrained by weak corporate foundations. Asset management, financial management, digital, people, procurement, and risk and assurance functions have been historically underpowered for an organisation operating at Police's scale (Police's operating budget in 2025 alone exceeded \$3 billion).⁴ The result is ageing property and equipment, inadequate systems to manage performance and risk, and a financial position that lacks a clear pathway for renewal.

Police need strong corporate enablers to sustain performance. These functions ensure that Police stations are safe for Police staff and those in custody, vehicles are reliable, and systems fit-for-purpose. Yet historically these functions have been underpowered and undervalued. Police need to shift their mindset: the corporate backbone is not an administrative overhead, but a critical enabler of Police's operational success on the frontline

Police have a multi-year transformation ahead to build the required strength. Police must implement an integrated asset management system, roll out a modern financial platform, and develop a long-term

⁴ Martyn Dunne Police Independent Rapid Review: *Final report for the Minister of Finance and Minister of Police* (The Treasury, 5 April 2024).

asset strategy with a clear capital pipeline. Police need to find a way to progress this transformation while ensuring it has the corporate capabilities to support the range of initiatives we recommend in this Review.

See further: Financial management, data, and risk

Challenge 5 – Strengthen policy skills, influence, and system leadership

Frontline experience gives Police unique visibility of justice and social system pressures and opportunities, positioning them to drive practical improvements. It also means Police are best placed to advise and influence system settings enable effective and efficient policing. This includes influencing budget decisions, shaping policy, and driving law reform to secure resources, legislative frameworks, and ministerial support required for operational excellence.

Much like corporate functions, policy skills, influence, and system leadership are not overheads, but critical enablers of frontline policing success. Recent challenges, such as Police beginning to step back from some mental-distress callouts illustrate this point. While Police will always respond where harm and safety risks exist, clarity on when to step back requires strong protocols and coordination with government partners and service providers. These arrangements depend on Police's ability to lead, and influence at a system level.

Police also need to lead on privacy and data issues to support core policing. The Search and Surveillance Act 2012, notwithstanding amendments, has not kept pace with the modern digital environment. This legislation creates uncertainty around the adoption of technology such as facial recognition and mobile data extraction, which slows the adoption of these game-changers. Police are uniquely positioned to lead the case for change, and influence ministers and agency partners to act.

Historically, this function has not been a priority but future pressures demand a shift. Police must invest in policy capability and strengthen their influence to create a better regulatory, data, and service environment for core policing. Through these capabilities, Police will be able to lead system conversations, advocate for better laws, and ensure partners and Police protocols can align to deliver the best outcomes for communities.

See further: Leadership, Engagement with Ministers

3


Results

This section assesses how the agency uses all its skills, resources, and organisational capabilities to deliver results for New Zealanders.

In this section:

- Government priorities
- Core function: Prevention
- Core function: Response
- Core function: Investigation
- Core function: Resolution

Government priorities

Question	Rating
How well positioned is the agency to deliver on the Government's priorities?	

What we found

Police have responded rapidly and effectively over the past two years to advance Government priorities, and are well positioned to continue progressing Government priorities, notwithstanding delays in D500.⁵

Government Target 3: Reduced child and youth offending

Police are making greater use of alternative resolutions and youth-focused interventions such as Fast Track and Intensive Case Management Teams. These approaches appear to be having some success notwithstanding evidence gaps which can make measurements of impact difficult. Recent measures indicate that the number of children and young people with serious and persistent offending behaviour has dropped to 892 (from a baseline measure of 1,100 in June 2023).⁶ Regional disparities remain, however, with the Eastern District showing increases and Northland the largest decreases as at September 2025.

Government Target 4: Reduced violent crime

According to the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) year ending August 2025, there have been 38,000 fewer victims of serious violent crime since the target was set in 2023.⁷ As a justice sector joint-target, and led by the Ministry of Justice, Police have been required to collaborate with sector partners to ensure that all initiatives consider the criminal justice pipeline appropriately. Police report that they helped achieve these results through their frontline policing focus, gang disruption, retail security upgrades, and family violence outreach pilots.

Backing the frontline

Police have faced challenges delivering the D500 including limited capacity at the Police College, and attrition from an ageing workforce and competitive pressure from Australian police services. Treasury projects that a net increase of 500 constables will not be reached until September 2026, which is almost one year later than the 2025 target from the coalition arrangement.

Police have supported D500 by expanding the College and opening an additional Auckland campus. Police also refocused its recruitment campaign, launching the Ride Along series and targeted campaigns to attract former officers back to Police. These efforts have resulted in more applications (June 2025 recorded 643 constabulary applications – almost two-thirds higher than the previous monthly average).

D500 faced criticism after a 2025 audit revealed a number of applicants were allowed into the College, despite failing preliminary tests. These decisions were based on individual merit, and relied on discretion which has been a long-standing part of Police's recruitment process.⁸ In response to this audit, the Commissioner of Police instructed the College not to accept anyone who has not met all mandatory recruitment standards.

Gangs and organised crime

Ministerial feedback supports Police efforts to disrupt gangs and organised crime and reduce the harm they cause within our communities.

Police have led the implementation of the Gangs Act 2024 which prohibits the public display of gang insignia, enables dispersal notices to break

⁵ D500 is the name of the programme to deliver the 2023 coalition agreement between New Zealand First and the National Party commitment to "training no fewer than 500 new frontline police within the first two years".

⁶ August 2025 measure, reported by Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet.

⁷ Ministry of Justice, New Zealand Crime & Victims Survey (NZCVS): Cycle 7 (2025).

⁸ While discretion had been used in the past to allow applicants to enter the Police College, no recruit has ever graduated without meeting all mandatory standards required to become a Police officer.

up gatherings that unreasonably disrupt others, and introduces non-consorting orders that prevent specified gang offenders from associating. To operationalise these powers, Police established the National Gang Unit (NGU) to coordinate intelligence and enforcement, and district level Gang Disruption Units (GDUs) to support frontline staff. NGUs are concentrated in districts with the highest gang activity.

Alongside enforcement, Police integrate prevention and community resilience. As lead agency for the Resilience to Organised Crime in Communities (ROCC) programme and co-lead of the Transnational Organised Crime Strategy (TNOC), Police partner with iwi, health services, and social providers to address local drivers of harm (particularly methamphetamine demand) and to support communities. ROCC's community-led, place-based initiatives have demonstrated strong social returns on investment, while TNOC aligns agencies against international supply chains that feed domestic organised crime.



Addressing retail crime and strengthening public visibility

Since late 2024, Police have taken a coordinated, intelligence-led approach to retail crime that is improving public safety and confidence. Police have established Retail Crime Taskforces in every district to target high-impact offenders and focus on high-risk locations. Police have also helped accelerate crime prevention upgrades (such as store fortifications and CCTV enhancements) across local businesses, working closely with retailers, local councils, and insurers.

Police have also expanded Community Beat Teams in high-risk urban and regional centres, including Auckland, Rotorua, Christchurch, and New Plymouth. These teams delivered approximately 16,500 foot-patrol hours between August 2024 and July 2025 (representing a 113 percent increase over the previous year).

Through dedicated focus on retail crime, engagement with shop owners and staff, faster identification of emerging hotspots, along with increased Police visibility within communities, retailers and community groups report feeling safer. Ram raid and aggravated robbery incidents have declined, and perceptions of Police responsiveness have improved.

Core Function: Prevention

Question	Rating
How well positioned is the agency to effectively deliver the contributions expected of it?	
How well positioned is the agency to be able to efficiently deliver those contributions?	

What the agency needs from this core function

To successfully deliver the Future Excellence Horizon, New Zealanders need the following from this core function:

- To feel safer and more confident in their communities through a visible and trusted Police presence.
- Experience proactive protection in digital spaces, with Police actively reducing online harm, scams, and cyber-enabled crime.
- Seeing organised crime networks disrupted and reduced contraband entering New Zealand, supported by strong international policing partnerships.
- Benefit from smarter, data-driven prevention that anticipates risks and targets resources where harm is most likely.
- Have clear pathways to social and health support when Police connect them to the right agencies for family harm or mental health issues.

About this function

Police’s prevention function focuses on understanding risk, working alongside communities, and targeting early interventions to keep people safe before harm occurs. Prevention is embedded across all areas of policing – from intelligence and frontline response to community partnerships and harm-reduction initiatives – ensuring Police efforts are directed where they can make the greatest impact. Examples of prevention activities include beat policing, early intervention for repeat victims and offenders, community problem-solving to address local crime hotspots, youth engagement, and family harm initiatives.

Police cannot be expected to deliver every programme that contributes to effective prevention. Many prevention initiatives require specialist expertise – such as social work, mental health, addiction services, and education – which sit beyond core policing skills. Police’s primary role is to identify risk, engage with individuals and communities, and connect them to the agencies and services best equipped to provide the support required.

What we found

In the past two years, Police have refocused on ‘frontline’ policing, which emphasises visible police presence within our communities. This refocus has been well received by Police staff and community groups. One Police officer commented “*we have our mojo back, it’s like night and day.*” A community representative told us “*I love the new style, I love seeing you guys out and about.*” Retailer representatives were also very positive about the increased presence of Police in communities. Police data suggests that frontline beat policing has been effective: robberies fell by 25 percent in Auckland, 22 percent in Wellington, and 67 percent in Christchurch in areas where beat patrols operate between 2024 and 2025.⁹

We support this return to frontline policing and encourage Police to sustain this focus into the future. Police must always focus on the contributions that only Police are mandated to deliver, for example, beat policing and deterrence.¹⁰ This focus should not lose sight of the value of engagement with government agencies and community groups. Police have been able to identify and support at risk youth through their deep relationships with iwi and social service providers. We heard about the success of Te Pae Oranga (an alternative to court process for low-level offenders) in addressing reoffending, preventing escalating crime, and steering at risk youth in a new direction.

⁹ Police data cited in New Zealand Police. (3 July 2025). New Beat team for Rotorua and one year anniversary of Community Beat Teams.

¹⁰ We expand on this theme in Core Function Response.

Police need to actively manage the wave of digital and transnational crime hitting our shores

The Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational Serious and Organised Crime recently stated “organised crime is one of the most significant threats we face as a country. The extent of the threat cannot be understated or underestimated.”¹¹ Increasingly, organised criminal groups, and unfriendly state actors are using digital and transnational means to cause harm in New Zealand. These actors exploit technology, encrypted platforms, and global supply chains to traffic drugs, launder money, commit cyber-enabled fraud, and infiltrate legitimate businesses.

Increasingly, prevention needs to address both digital and transnational threat vectors at the same time. Estimates from Australia suggest over 70 percent of cybercrime targeting Australia originates offshore, with similar patterns expected in New Zealand.¹² And cybercrime is a growing field: around 40 percent of victimisation in New Zealand relates to online scams or fraud.

Police are taking preventative action. For example, they engage through Interpol, the Pacific Islands Chiefs of Police, and other international partnerships to run joint operations and taskforces and share intelligence. Police also joined the New Zealand Anti-Scam Alliance in July 2025 to combat the growing threat of online fraud and scams. However, these actions fall short of a coherent strategy to adequately respond to the fast evolving nature of online and international based threats.

Police’s core prevention strategy needs to integrate disruption of harm at its source – which increasingly requires an international focus and presence. Police need to focus on the Pacific which is increasingly used by organised criminal groups as a staging ground for drugs, weapons, and laundered money to enter New Zealand. Police also need to lead other agencies, firms, and non-government organisations to better prevent crime. Examples include better data-sharing and coordinated priorities e.g. securing

airports and other border entries or identifying sources of insider threats.

Other jurisdictions are adopting aggressive transnational prevention approaches, including disrupting cybercriminals “on their own turf” through joint operations with foreign law enforcement. Police must follow this path, combining global collaboration with advanced digital tools and intelligence-led strategies to protect communities from increasingly borderless crime.

Police need to leverage intelligence and global networks to manage evolving crime

We were encouraged to hear how global intelligence networks are helping Police anticipate new crime trends. For example, patterns seen in Australia often appear in New Zealand about 18 months later. Current intelligence shows knife crime and risks in crowded spaces are rising in Australia. This insight prompted Police and their partners to create a Crowded Spaces Strategy to prepare for similar risks here.

However, more can be done to leverage data and technologies to drive more targeted prevention. Retailers in New Zealand use platforms like Auror to share real-time alerts about active shoplifters in their area, helping other stores and Police respond quickly. Police need to explore further opportunities to harness data generated in the community and leverage this data using tools like artificial intelligence to identify patterns of criminality and trends and shift prevention activities.

Government partners also hold valuable data that can strengthen prevention efforts by providing earlier insights into risk and vulnerability. However, Police often face data sharing frictions that limit timely access to this information, reducing the ability to deliver fully informed preventive interventions.¹³

¹¹ Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational Serious and Organised Crime. (September 2025). *Lead Boldly, Act Decisively: Tackling and Dismantling Organised Crime. Final Report to the Government of New Zealand.*

¹² Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime. (31 March 2025). *TSOC-MAG 25/01: March Report.* Wellington: New Zealand Customs Service.



¹³ For a full discussion of this issue, see *Data, analytics and digital technologies.*

Recommendations

- **Establish a Digital Harm Prevention and Response unit** – Scale current pilots such as the Anti-Scam Alliance and retail crime platforms into a permanent unit with specialist hires and tools to combat digital harms.
- **Implement offshore harm disruption strategy** – Police should formalise their harm disruption strategy for the Pacific (and other high-risk areas), with clear priorities, resourcing, and joint taskforce arrangements. Disruption metrics including seizures and time from intelligence to action should be reported through existing governance channels.

Recommendations to improve data-sharing arrangements in the Data, Analytics and Digital Technologies section are also key to lifting prevention performance.

Core Function: Response

Question	Rating
How well positioned is the agency to effectively deliver the contributions expected of it?	
How well positioned is the agency to be able to efficiently deliver those contributions?	

What the agency needs from this core function

To successfully deliver the Future Excellence Horizon, New Zealanders need the following from this core function:

- Help that arrives fast and in the right place, with Police using real-time data and intelligence to anticipate harm and deploy resources where they are needed most.
- Joined-up emergency services that work seamlessly, so every call for help triggers clear, coordinated action between Police, frontline officers, and partner agencies.
- Reliable capacity during major events and crises, with flexible staffing and technology ensuring continuity of service when demand surges.
- Consistent accessibility for all communities, including digital-first reporting options and language support, so no one is left behind when seeking help.
- Proactive readiness for emerging threats, such as cyber-enabled incidents and transnational crime, with specialist response teams and advanced tools available on demand.

About this function

Response often begins at Police communication centres which take emergency 111 calls, and non-emergency 105 calls. This information leads to a Police response, which can range from providing advice over the phone, dispatching officers to attend incidents, coordinating emergency services for serious harm events, or mobilising specialist units for complex or high-risk situations. This function must

also integrate real-time information from multiple sources to prioritise harm and allocate resources effectively. In every case, the goal is to ensure the right resources arrive quickly, risks are managed, and people are kept safe.

What we found

We recognise the commitment of both sworn and non-sworn staff who respond to crime and emergencies across the organisation, whether in the field, in communications centres, or through digital channels. Staff work hard to deliver the best service possible with the tools and systems currently available. However, those tools and systems are increasingly unable to meet the demands of modern response. Police require more integrated, reliable, and fit-for-purpose capabilities that support speed, accuracy, and coordinated action.

Police need to sustain their focus on frontline response

While Police have a legislated role to keep the peace and protect public safety, stakeholders told us that Police had become the default responder for issues better led by health and social services. We heard that in recent years “Police tried to do too much, including what is in the domain of social agencies.” This included Police playing a more prominent role in mental health, child protection, and family harm issues. This stretched Police resources thin across activities that could have been provided by other government agencies. 2024 research found Police were responding to a mental health-related call every seven minutes, taking up around 500,000 hours of frontline time each year, even though only five percent of these incidents involve a criminal element.¹⁴

¹⁴ New Zealand Police. (30 August 2024). Police announce phased plan to reduce service to mental health demand.

In the last two years, Police have refocused on frontline policing – attempting to put protocols in place to scope their frontline first responder role and manage demand from areas such as mental health which often does not involve criminality. We heard examples of Police officers left waiting with mentally ill patients in hospital waiting rooms for several hours. Under the new protocol, Police pass responsibility to hospital security guards as soon as the immediate safety and public order risk has passed. However, progress is mixed, with some partners not ready to step in where Police are stepping back.

Police need to keep working with partners so that Police can focus on frontline policing, which means responding to crime and safety risks. Police will never be able to completely pull back from mental, social, and family harm issues as they always have a first responder responsibility, but Police can work better with partners to ensure scope and handover protocols are in place.

The 111-emergency response system is a critical vulnerability for Police

Beyond customer satisfaction, the fragility and governance around the 111 platform presents a fundamental risk to emergency response.

The 111-system originated in the 1950s, and the current system is built around the Initial Call Answering Platform (ICAP) from the 1990s. Spark operates ICAP, answering all emergency calls first before transferring them to the appropriate emergency service. The fragmented ownership model means that Police do not have full control over the end-to-end emergency call process. This limits their ability to modernise, integrate, and manage the system in line with operational needs. The lack of direct oversight creates vulnerabilities in coordination, especially during high-pressure or multi-agency incidents.

The system has faced persistent reliability and performance issues, compounded by difficulties in integrating with other agencies, with some faults taking weeks to resolve. These outages, and planned outages, put pressure on call-takers and compromise public safety (notwithstanding business continuity models which are in place in multiple regions). 111 only supports voice calls – it does not support text, video, or social media reporting. This makes it increasingly unfit-for-purpose, particularly for

some emergency types where speaking may not be possible or safe.

Given these system level issues, there is a clear need for strengthened ownership and oversight of emergency communications. A modern, integrated platform capable of handling multiple communication channels and providing real-time information is necessary to ensure resilience, responsiveness, and future system integrity. We appreciate this is a matter for government and requires wider consideration across other emergency service agencies. However, maintaining the current emergency communication system over time presents service delivery and public safety risks that need to be more actively managed.

Better dispatch systems would support more effective and efficient responses

The current Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) system is outdated and fragmented, operating across two unconnected platforms. This requires dispatchers to manually coordinate information across multiple screens, creating inefficiencies and increasing the risk of error. Modernisation of the dispatch system is essential to improve operational performance and service delivery. A contemporary dispatch solution should incorporate predictive and analytical capabilities. For example, the ability to anticipate the impact of emerging patterns – such as a surge of incidents within a neighbourhood – would enable proactive resource deployment.

While Police have telematics in vehicles and systems such as the Situational Awareness Map (SAM) and Deployment and Safety app (DAS), which provide near real-time location of deployed staff, the level of integration of these data sources within emergency dispatch centres is less comprehensive than in District Command Centres. Enhancing the real-time integration and accessibility of this information at the dispatch level could further improve deployment decisions, particularly for high-demand specialist units such as dog teams.

The roles and functions of District Command Centres (DCC) and the National Command and Co-ordination Centre (NCCC) need to be clarified. While DCCs offer unique, local, real-time oversight of events, the threshold of handover to the NCCC can increase the risk of miscommunication during critical incidents. To drive response effectiveness and efficiency, Police need to clarify the roles of

DCC and NCCC and implement clear handover protocols.

Police need better tools to counter violent crime and ensure officer safety

Police are facing an increasingly violent environment, including more frequent use of firearms, gang-related activity, and assaults on frontline officers.¹⁵ In response, Police have developed the Tactical Response Model (TRM) focusing on enhanced frontline training, risk-based deployment using intelligence, and greater access to specialist support such as Offender Prevention Teams and Tactical Dog Teams. Evaluations show positive results: fewer assaults and injuries to officers, reduced use of force, and improved confidence among frontline staff.

To support the success of the TRM, Police should identify and advance business cases for critical tools to support officer safety and tactical depth during high-risk operations. We heard about the Android Team Awareness Kit (ATAK) which Police may wish to explore. This is a phone-based application to support real time tracking and tasking during tactical operations. This system is already used by New Zealand Defence and could similarly support Police operations.

Body-worn cameras (BWC) are another tool that supports officer safety among a range of other benefits. BWC have a deterrent effect on violence towards officers (the Department of Corrections experience show reductions in assaults when staff wear cameras) and they can help prevent violent situations from escalating.¹⁶ BWC can also help provide accurate evidence, and support public trust and police transparency when complaints about Police arise. Police should continue their current

initiative to adopt BWC, and work with partners to ensure appropriate policies, privacy safeguards, and robust governance are in place.

Within a persistently challenging operating environment, Police must ensure they are protecting the mental wellbeing of their staff.¹⁷ Police are currently working to extend mandatory wellness checks to all frontline roles, building on services already provided to specialist groups such as the Criminal Investigation Branch. Given the increasing demands and risks faced by frontline officers, this initiative may help ensure staff have access to timely support and could contribute to strengthening frontline resilience.

Better partnership arrangements will help respond to crime

Despite years of effort, frictions still exist in the way government agencies collectively tackle crime. Various departments address different aspects of criminality without clear cooperation arrangements. The Serious Fraud Office addresses large white-collar fraud, while gang related fraud is managed by the Police Financial Crime Group. Inland Revenue also holds data relevant to response but sharing and partnering protocols with Police are not clear. The Ministry of Business Innovation and Employment leads the government response to human trafficking, while Police hold the enforcement powers.

Police need to work with partner agencies to ensure there are coordinated and effective all-of-government responses to crime types where responsibilities are unclear or overlap. This is critical for growing crime types such as online fraud, and transnational crime. This includes clarifying lead agencies, partnering protocols, and data-sharing arrangements.

¹⁵ New Zealand Police Association. Escalating threats to law and order in New Zealand: "It couldn't get any worse." (1 September 2023). This article summarises Police Association member survey findings, showing that 90 percent of members view crime and violence as the most significant threat, with officers reporting increased exposure to firearms, gang activity, and rising levels of violence on the frontline.

¹⁶ Following a trial of BWCs by Corrections staff, they found "Analysis of all incidents over 12 months prior to the trial and during the six months of the trial itself showed an overall reduction of incidents of between 15 and 20 percent." Beales, N., & Marsh, L. (2016). On body cameras in prison. *New Zealand Corrections Journal*, 4(1). Retrieved from https://www.corrections.govt.nz/resources/research/journal/volume_4_issue_1_august_2016/on_body_cameras_in_prison.

¹⁷ For more about the scale of mental health concerns within Police, see New Zealand Police Association. (2025). *Policing on Empty*. Police Association Newsroom. Retrieved from <https://www.policeassn.org.nz/news/policing-on-empty#/>.

Recommendations

- **Unify dispatch and enable real time deployment** – replace the two CAD platforms with one national CAD. Enable automatic vehicle location (AVL) for all cars and secure location for officers, with “nearest capable unit” dispatch and live status of specialist resources (e.g. dog teams). Predictive analytics to position units when incident clusters emerge should also be considered.
 - **Implement frontline-response scope and handover protocols** – Police should make their frontline policing scope explicit and apply it consistently nationwide. This includes establishing firm handover protocols with related services (such as family harm, social work, and mental health providers) to ensure Police can withdraw from non-core policing demand without leaving vulnerable people at risk.
 - **Critical tools to support officer safety and tactical depth during high-risk operations** – Police need to identify priority investments and advance business cases for critical futureproofing capabilities. Police may wish to explore capabilities such as ATAK and BWC.
 - **Investigate options for a modern, integrated 111 emergency communications platform** – Police, in partnership with relevant agencies, should assess options for upgrading the 111 system to meet future needs. This includes exploring solutions that support voice, text, video, location sharing, and real-time data exchange across agencies, while ensuring resilience and strong governance.
 - **Clarify responsibilities and operating arrangements for evolving areas of crime** – Lead work with justice, intelligence, defence, and regulatory agencies to clearly assign lead responsibilities for crime types where there are overlapping accountabilities, such as fraud, cybercrime and human trafficking. The framework should include a more unified operating model for transnational crime, enabling joint tasking, rapid intelligence sharing, and streamlined legal gateways so agencies can act collectively and at speed against serious threats.
- Recommendations to improve, review, and modernise recruit training in the Workforce Development section are also key to improving response performance.

Core Function: Investigation

Question	Rating
How well positioned is the agency to effectively deliver the contributions expected of it?	
How well positioned is the agency to be able to efficiently deliver those contributions?	

What the agency needs from this core function

To successfully deliver the Future Excellence Horizon, New Zealanders need the following from this core function:

- Timely and accurate resolution of serious crime, ensuring offenders are held accountable and justice is delivered promptly to maintain public safety and confidence.
- Transparent, victim-focused investigations, providing clear communication and consistent support throughout the process to uphold trust and reduce harm.
- Modern, technology-enabled investigative capability, leveraging advanced digital forensics, data analytics, and integrated intelligence to address complex and emerging crime effectively.
- Strong partnerships to enable effective and effective data-sharing to support investigations.

About this function

Investigations start when Police receive credible information that an offence may have occurred and end when all reasonable inquiries are complete and an outcome is decided (prosecution, alternative resolution, or closure). High-quality and timely investigations are critical to Police effectiveness and public trust. They ensure crimes are resolved promptly and offenders are held accountable. Poor investigations undermine justice, lead to failed prosecutions, and leave victims dissatisfied. Because resolution outcomes depend on investigation quality, these two functions are inseparable – strong investigations drive strong resolutions.

What we found

We found a worrying decline in investigation quality. This increases the risk that serious offences go unresolved, victims lose confidence in the justice system, and critical public safety decisions are made on incomplete or unreliable information.

We heard the term ‘skill fade’ to describe the Police-wide decline in investigation skills which are impacting investigation timeliness and court success rates. This needs immediate remediation. Beyond the immediate skill-fade issue, Police need to leverage technology to process, interrogate, and manage investigation data.

Investigation skill-fade is impacting investigation timeliness and quality

We heard about investigation skill-fade from a wide range of interviewees, including Police staff and justice system stakeholders. Interviewees noted the concerning variability of skills. While members of the Criminal Investigation Branch (CIB) and some Detectives were regarded as high performing, other Detectives and officers working on less-specialised investigations were regarded as having variable investigative abilities.

This skill fade is impacting Police’s ability to adequately support prosecutions. We heard how Police are failing to collect crucial items of evidence, compromise evidence through mishandling, miss key information through interviews, and fail to take sufficient notes to support investigations. These deficiencies are undermining Police performance which can be seen in the table below where Police are failing to meet their performance standards.¹⁸

¹⁸ The following performance measures are drawn from New Zealand Police. (2025). Annual Report 2024/25 (p. 51).

Measure	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2024/25 Performance Standard
Percentage of homicide, sexual assault, and serious assault investigations finalised within 12 months	40%	34%	29%	28%	21%	Greater than 60%
Percentage of Judge Alone Trial cases withdrawn/dismissed at trial stage due to the Police providing insufficient evidence	9%	9%	9%	9%	9%	Less than 6%
District Court Judges' satisfaction with the performance of Police prosecutors	89%	89%	94%	84%	80%	Greater than 85%

These trends are worrying. New Zealanders expect the Courts to resolve cases on their merits – this expectation is undermined when cases fail due to insufficient evidence. Investigation quality is a core policing function, and weaknesses in this area directly erode public trust and confidence. The following section outlines the underlying drivers of this skill decline.

Drivers of declining investigation quality

There has been a breakdown in the apprenticeship model that Police relies on to build investigative capability on-the-job. While the Police College provides foundational training, the organisation depends on senior officers to develop junior staff through practical, case-based learning. However, we heard that senior officers can now progress to these ranks without having developed strong investigative skills themselves (and promotion pathways have accelerated compared with those of 10–20 years ago). As a result, senior cohorts are increasingly unable to sufficiently upskill junior officers, leading to a compounding decline in investigation skills.

Efforts over the years to help address case management workload have also had the unintended consequence of weakening core investigative skills. See the discussion about fragmented case management responsibility under core function resolution.

Today we see poor implementation of investigation protocols. For example, the IPCA found that the Complex Investigation Phased Engagement Model (CIPEM) was implemented poorly in some areas, leading to inconsistent investigative practice and poor lines of questioning. The IPCA noted that “these failures were generally not integral to CIPEM and were due to poor practice and inadequate oversight.”¹⁹

We also heard about forensic skill deficits. Officer training is limited, and we heard examples where officers were unable to take fingerprint evidence in a way that would meet evidence quality standards. Public Health and Forensic Science (PHF Science) indicated that Police take a very transactional view of their relationship, and that they could do more to leverage PHF skills to support crime scene analysis and investigations.²⁰

¹⁹ Independent Police Conduct Authority (2025). Police Investigative Interviewing and the Complex Investigation Phased Engagement Model (CIPEM). Wellington: IPCA.

²⁰ Previously the Institute of Environmental Science and Research, known as ESR. PHF provides Police with critical forensic services, including crime scene examination, DNA profiling, toxicology, drug analysis, and physical evidence interpretation. PHF Science’s forensic experts work alongside Police to analyse evidence, support investigative decision-making, and strengthen the evidential base for prosecutions.

Specialist skills required to investigate cybercrime, and fraud also appears to be limited, and failing to keep up with growing demand.

Finally, there appears to be a resourcing issue in complex and long-running cases. While investigations can start off strong, staff can be pulled away due to competing demands. This slows the investigation – which can take years – and can undermine the ability to bring charges.

How to address the immediate skill fade challenge and lift investigation outcomes

We heard that Police have an attitude of “we are overworked and doing our best” in respect to investigation quality. While understandable, this is not sustainable for Police as investigation quality directly flows through to public trust and confidence.

The first step to address this challenge is to deliver a targeted remedial training programme with a focus for Sergeants and Senior Sergeants. Remedial training for this group should help break the generational skill decline that we have heard about. This training programme needs to be accompanied by centralised quality and assurance standards for investigations at a district level, with greater national oversight.

Police College graduates also need to be prepared with foundational investigation skills including scene observation and note taking, interview techniques and notetaking, and handling of evidence. Police College training should be adapted to effectively teach these fundamentals, and implementation monitoring needs to be in place to ensure the training is delivering the desired outcomes.

To support long and complex investigations, Police need to introduce a dedicated resourcing approach. We acknowledge this is a difficult issue for Police as some of these investigations and subsequent cases can go on for ten years or more. However, Police success or failure in these large and complex cases can have a significant impact on public trust and confidence.

Technology is necessary to support the future of investigations

The volume of digital data relevant to Police investigations is growing rapidly, with mobile phones, cloud platforms, social media, financial data, and partner-agency information now central to building strong cases. Successful prosecutions increasingly depend on timely, lawful access to this material and the capability to extract, analyse, and authenticate it. Police need consistent processes to ensure digital evidence is admissible and clearly presented in court. Without the tools, skills, and frameworks to manage expanding data sources, critical evidence risks being missed or excluded, weakening investigative quality and undermining prosecution outcomes.



Technology is essential for Police to handle growing volumes of data. We heard that Police rely on human translators to process foreign language evidence – a process that can take months. AI tools may be able to achieve similar results within minutes. Similarly, AI might be able to review hours of video footage very quickly compared to a human operator. Police need to find a way to augment their investigative processes with tools such as AI to ensure they can keep up with demand.

System and work skills also need to be upgraded to handle cyber-crime and transnational crime. This will require deeper partnerships with partner agencies and international data holders.

Recommendations

- **Deliver a targeted remedial training programme for supervisory ranks** – Roll out a staged, one-off training programme for Sergeants and Senior Sergeants to fill gaps in investigative skills and ensure consistent use of protocols and methods. Include practical modules on evidence handling, interviewing, and case continuity.
- **Embed an ongoing career-stage training framework** – Introduce a structured refresher programme at key career milestones – from recruit stage through to senior supervisory roles – to keep investigative skills current and reinforce best practice.
- **Strengthen forensic and digital evidence capability** – Expand forensic training for frontline officers so evidence meets scientific standards (e.g., fingerprints, DNA). Increase specialist training for cybercrime and fraud investigations, supported by better technology tools and international partnerships.
- **Strengthen foundational investigation training** – Focus Police College on core skills (scene observation, note taking, interviewing, evidence handling) with monitoring to ensure effectiveness.
- **Resource long and complex investigations** – Establish a dedicated, sustained resourcing model to support long and complex investigations and cases
- **Invest in technology to support investigations** – Deploy transcription and translation software to improve accuracy and efficiency in recording and processing interviews, especially in cases involving multiple languages.

Core Function: Resolution

Question	Rating
How well positioned is the agency to effectively deliver the contributions expected of it?	
How well positioned is the agency to be able to efficiently deliver those contributions?	

What the agency needs from this core function

To successfully deliver the Future Excellence Horizon, New Zealanders need the following from this core function:

- Resolution outcomes delivered promptly and fairly, with cases progressing efficiently through the courts and offenders held accountable in a way that upholds public confidence.
- Rehabilitative outcomes that reduce reoffending, ensuring Police work with justice and community partners to address harm and strengthen long-term safety.
- Victims supported and informed throughout the resolution process, so they experience transparency, respect, and confidence in the justice system.
- Joined-up resolution pathways across agencies, ensuring seamless handovers and integrated approaches that deliver better outcomes for victims, offenders, and communities.

About this function

Police decide between three resolution pathways depending on the seriousness of the offence, offenders’ history, and other circumstances:

- **Court:** The most formal pathway, involving prosecution under the Criminal Procedure Act 2011, where Police file charges, present evidence, and attend trial. Convictions create a criminal record and may result in fines, community sentences, or imprisonment.
- **Te Pae Oranga Iwi Community Panels:** A restorative, community-led process for low-level offending where eligible participants admit responsibility and complete an agreed plan.

Successful completion means no further Police action and no conviction.

- **Informal Warnings and Diversion:** For minor offences, Police may use warnings, diversion, or Pre-Charge Warnings to hold offenders accountable without formal prosecution, helping reduce unnecessary court involvement and supporting reduced reoffending.

What we found

Despite pockets of excellence, Police courtroom performance has deteriorated. While serious cases usually meet required evidence standards, quality across other cases is inconsistent. Skills fade, which has been exacerbated by training gaps and fragmented case management leave many officers under-prepared for court and cross-examination. This has resulted in withdrawn charges, avoidable acquittals, and declining victim satisfaction. Police need to lift their performance as supporting criminal proceedings is a fundamental part of core policing.

Police are increasingly ill-equipped to support criminal proceedings

As discussed in the previous section, weak investigation skills lead to poor quality foundational documentation and case artefacts which put criminal proceedings on weak foundations. While very serious cases tend to have adequate evidence, the evidence quality of less serious cases can vary.

Presentation at court is also increasingly inadequate. Officers frequently present as nervous, unfamiliar with the material they are speaking to, overly reliant on their notebooks, and ill-prepared for cross-examination or judge inquiry. Sometimes officers have not reviewed evidence, such as CCTV footage, before they introduce it in court. There is a sentiment that officers can be *“too casual (in court) and expect what they say will be accepted just because they’re the Police.”*

Poor presentation skills can result in withdrawn charges, and successful not guilty pleas due to poor quality Police cases. This has a ripple effect on trust and confidence as victims and the community lose faith that the criminal justice system can bring offenders to account. Lawyers and judiciary also lose respect for Police.

This trend of weaker case management and presentation skills has developed over many years. In the past three years, Police officers' understanding of court process, and their role in this process has worsened. We heard that while a few excellent Detective Inspectors truly stand out, many others – including senior officers such as Detective Sergeants and Detective Senior Sergeants – are increasingly ill-prepared. This performance failure is related to the skill fade issue we discussed under core function investigations, as well as fragmented case management processes which we discuss below. Mandatory, practice-based training for disclosure and courtroom presentation is required to lift performance in this area.

We heard that compliance with disclosure regimes has previously been an issue but was now improving. Part of the issue was Police taking overly-cautious approach to the question of “*what is relevant material?*” and therefore reproducing unnecessarily large amounts of material slowing the process down considerably. It was also partly due to the considerable demands of the disclosure regime itself, but we understand that the Solicitor-General has recently updated guidelines that go some way to address this problem.

Case management support systems have unintentionally weakened case management skills

Efforts over the years to help address case management workload have had the unintended effect of weakening core case management skills. In the past Police Prosecution Service (PPS) support roles and district-level case-management groups would support the Officer in Charge (OC) through case management. These efforts have been centralised into the Criminal Justice Support Unit (CJSU), established in 2025, to reduce delays and enhance case progression in the District Court. It aims to free up frontline officer's time, through court readiness, case management, and coordination with justice agencies to minimise adjournments and backlog.

This process segments stages of a case so that different personnel handle different parts.

One person prepares the statement; then it is transcribed by another person and then it goes to the CJSU where another person will take over the file. One officer might be responsible for collecting CCTV evidence while another officer presents that evidence in court.

While it was seen as efficient to outsource tasks, it has disconnected the OC from the initial response and from the later stages of the case. This meant the OC lost the opportunity to understand what it means to run a case from end-to-end.

We heard of localised responses to improve the situation such as in Auckland District which introduced a policy that each recruit must manage their first 10 files from end-to-end, to build up skills and confidence. This practice should be considered across the country – noting that some districts are limited by lesser volumes of files and fewer staff.

Lack of skills to support sexual violence cases

While Police maintain a dedicated and skilled specialist workforce to manage sexual violence cases, the complexity of these investigations and sustained demand place ongoing pressure on specialist capability and capacity. These investigations demand a nuanced understanding of trauma-informed practice, evidential fragility, and the unique legal thresholds associated with sexual offending. While some inexperienced officers can learn quickly and adapt, the steep learning curve combined with the sensitive nature of these cases creates considerable risk.

Victims of sexual violence require consistent, skilled engagement from the outset to maintain confidence in the process. When inexperienced officers are assigned to these cases without adequate support or oversight, victims can lose trust, feel dismissed, or disengage entirely.

Sexual violence files often hinge on the quality of early evidence collection, careful interviewing, and meticulous preparation for court. Inexperience can result in evidential gaps that are difficult to remedy later. Mistakes can lead to charges not being filed, cases being withdrawn, or acquittals that might have been avoidable with stronger investigative foundations.

Police need to honour victims' experiences and their own public commitments. Victims must have faith that not only will Police respond quickly and effectively to a sexual violence crime, but that Police will also investigate thoroughly and do the best possible job of presenting the evidence in a prosecution.

Victim impact statements

We heard that, across the country, investigators and OCs sometimes forget or are unaware that they can refer victims to Victim Support or other service

providers. Additionally, when drafting victim impact statements, practices are inconsistent. At different times, Victim Support, OCs, and the CJSU have all been involved in preparing these statements.

Support for Te Pae Oranga

Te Pae Oranga has wide community support and Police engagement in the process is seen as effective and constructive. Overall, available feedback suggests that Te Pae Oranga remains a credible and impactful alternative to traditional justice responses.

Recommendations

- **Lift courtroom and pre-trial capability** - Introduce mandatory, practice-based training for disclosure and courtroom presentation, including mock trials and role plays co-designed with Crown prosecutors, defence counsel, and judges. Certification should be required for investigators and supervisors to ensure consistent standards and uphold justice system integrity.
- **Reinforce end-to-end case ownership** - Redesign case management so officers maintain full accountability for a minimum number of complete files annually, supported by structured mentoring and clear performance expectations. This will reduce fragmentation caused by current processes while preserving efficiency and improving case quality.
- **Strengthen specialist response for sexual violence** - Expand specialist units and mentoring for sexual violence cases, embed trauma-informed practice, and upgrade interview audio quality to meet evidential standards. These steps will improve victim confidence and ensure Police meet obligations to vulnerable communities.
- **Standardise sensitive interview protocols for sexual violence cases** - Review and strengthen protocols for interviewing victims of sexual violence to ensure investigations are trauma-informed and gather enough evidence for prosecution. Provide specialist training for officers on these interviews.
- **Establish an independent oversight group to review Police's response to sexual violence victims** - This needs to have an external chair and members. This group should review and approve training materials for sexual violence investigations.
- **Embed smarter resolution pathway decisions** - Implement a decision-support tool for selecting Court, Te Pae Oranga, or Diversion pathways, incorporating victim input, risk assessment, and cultural considerations. Establish quality assurance for alternative pathways to maintain integrity and deliver better outcomes for victims, offenders, and communities.





4

Organisational Management

In this section:

- Leadership and Direction
- Delivery
- Engagement
- Workforce
- Financial management, data, and risk

Leadership and direction

	Rating
<p>Purpose, vision, and strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well do the agency’s staff and stakeholders understand and support its purpose, vision and strategy? • How well does the agency use long-term thinking and its strategy to plan and drive delivery? 	
<p>Leadership and governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the senior leadership team collectively lead and direct the agency and implement change? • How well does the agency take accountability for and lead the improvement of relevant system or sector level results? 	
<p>Values, behaviour, and culture</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency develop and promote the organisational culture it needs to achieve its strategic direction? 	
<p>Governance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency use governance arrangements to drive performance and deliver value-for-money? 	

Recommendations

- **Ensure the Integrity Action Plan is comprehensive** – The Plan should coordinate all integrity improving interventions from the immediate response to the November 2025 IPCA report through to addressing longer-term integrity risks such as insider threat, and information leaking. An independently chaired Integrity Advisory Group should be established to support development of the Plan and provide implementation and effectiveness monitoring.
- **Mandatory ethics training** – Develop and implement ethics and values training in the form of online modules that all staff must complete every year.
- **Independent oversight in senior recruitment** – Mandate independent oversight in senior recruitment by requiring external members on interview panels for all senior leadership appointments (Inspector level and above). External member dissent to hiring decisions need to be noted and escalated to independent parties.
- **Structured exit interviews** – Conduct exit interviews with departing senior leaders to identify drivers of turnover and potential cultural risks.
- **Review pre-entry vetting processes** – This should include consideration of reintroducing home visits and closer vetting of applicants' social media
- **Establish ongoing vetting** – Police need to establish a programme of ongoing vetting throughout the career of officers to ensure active risks to integrity are managed and updated
- **Develop a policy outcomes strategic roadmap** – Police need to outline the policy outcomes they need to achieve to support modern policing, accompanied by a roadmap outlining how they will achieve these outcomes. A member of the executive leadership team needs to own and drive this initiative.

Purpose, vision, and strategy

Police communicate their purpose and vision through the *Our Business* document (set out below). We saw this document displayed in many locations during our visits across the country, and officers from senior to junior seemed to understand what it is trying to communicate.

Police report that the goals of service, safety, and trust resonate well across all levels of the organisation as they represent long-held organisational values. These goals are clear, and well-articulated, and easy to understand both internally and externally.

The four priorities outlined in *Our Business* – supporting the frontline, focus on core policing, leadership, and fiscal responsibility – are equally clear and well supported within Police, particularly among frontline, communication centre, and specialist groups. An internal Police survey of senior staff found that approximately 80 percent of respondents rated the priorities highly relevant for the next five years (except for fiscal responsibility which had 70 percent of respondents rating it as highly relevant).

One Police employee commented “*While vision and mission is very clear, the strategy to achieve these goals is not clear and transparent.*” Recent initiatives have aligned with the priorities such as the refocus on core policing, and the D500 programme to recruit an additional 500 constables, and the focus on retail crime, and gangs. However, the long-term strategy around how to realise these priorities – particularly regarding fiscal sustainability is not so clear.²¹

Police have built a strong platform with *Our Business*, the next step is to create an easy-to-understand strategy which outlines the initiatives that will take *Our Business* forward over the next five years. The Commissioner has set a refreshed 2025/26 work programme that targets the areas most critical to lifting Police performance and strengthening public trust and confidence. The programme prioritises frontline capability and tackles core organisational and governance issues head-on. Insights from this Review will directly inform and sharpen the detailed initiatives under each focus area, ensuring the plan delivers measurable and sustainable improvements.

²¹ Refer to financial management section of this report.

OUR BUSINESS



WHY WE ARE HERE

VISION
For New Zealand to be the safest country

MISSION
To prevent crime and harm

PURPOSE
To ensure everybody is safe and feels safe

OUR GOALS

- Service**
Serve our communities through timely and responsive policing
- Safety**
Improve public safety and feelings of safety by being visible and accessible
- Trust**
Strengthen trust and confidence through connections with our communities

WHAT WE DO

OUR APPROACH
We help create safer communities together, through:

- Community engagement
- Collaborative problem solving
- Partnerships and trusted relationships

We prevent crime and harm by:

- Enforcing the law
- Targeting and apprehending offenders
- Providing priority service to victims

FUNCTIONS

- Keeping the peace
- Maintaining public safety
- Law enforcement
- Crime prevention
- Community support and reassurance
- National security
- Participating in policing activities abroad
- Emergency management

HOW WE DO IT

OUR PRIORITIES

- Supporting the frontline**
Enhancing staff safety, wellbeing and capability
- Focus on core policing**
Enforcing the law, prevention, response, investigation and resolutions
- Leadership**
Is visible, supportive and accountable
- Fiscal responsibility**
Including identifying opportunities to reinvest in the frontline

VISIBLE - REASSURING - RESPONSIVE

OUR PARTNERSHIP WITH MĀORI
TE HURINGA O TE TAI

Pou Mataara
Our people and our mindset

Pou Mataaho
Effective initiatives and improved practice

Pou Hourua
Effective partnerships

WORKING TOGETHER WITH IWI MĀORI TO GET BETTER OUTCOMES FOR ALL

OUR PEOPLE ARE:

- Equipped and empowered
- Adaptable and versatile
- Reliable and competent

WE ARE ACCOUNTABLE FOR:

- Our performance
- Our conduct

Leadership

Police leadership have successfully led a refocus on core policing and frontline support. Morale has improved across Police, and this refocus is helping to rebalance the expectation on Police as a “*solution to everything agency*”. The recently introduced initiative requiring sworn staff within Police National Headquarters to spend at least five days a year on the frontline further reinforces this pivot and connection to the frontline.

Police have not had permanent Deputy Commissioners (DC) for most of 2025. Police staff have been acting-up to fill these roles, and represent Police at inter-agency networks. Government partners have indicated that this has caused some instability, one interviewee commented “we don’t know who [from Police] is going to turn up next”. These issues should resolve now that permanent Deputy Commissioners, a Chief of Staff and new Assistant Commissioners are in place. Embedding the leadership of Police will be critical for driving the organisational reset.

Police need to improve their policy and influencing with government partners

Police have a significant opportunity to use policy and strategic influence to shape the operating environment to support frontline policing. As crime becomes more complex and interdependent with social systems, Police increasingly rely on government partners to deliver effective solutions. Police are the best placed to advocate for the operational realities, the system settings, resources, and cross-agency cooperation needed to succeed.

Currently, Police are not realising this opportunity. Weak policy and influencing capabilities are limiting Police’s ability to shape decisions that directly affect their operating model, workforce, and long-term capability. Agencies and ministers consistently described Police as insufficiently proactive and often “missing in action” during key policy, strategy, and budget discussions. Historically, Police have tended to push initiatives on their own if they cannot get the support of partner agencies, as discussed in the values, behaviour, and culture section of this report. There have been occasions where Police have used information leaks to achieve favourable decision outcomes which frustrates partners and ministers.

Feedback highlighted that insights from frontline and uniformed staff rarely translate into coherent policy

positions. Internally, policy functions appear to lack influence over Police’s organisational direction. Externally, Police advice is not always well-couched, lacks transparency, is often seen as last-minute, and tends to default to cost concerns rather than system-level first principles thinking.

A reset is required. This is not necessarily about more policy and influencing resources but using existing capabilities more effectively. We encourage Police to continue their focus on lifting policy quality, consistency, and system leadership through better practice, earlier engagement with partners, and strengthened governance and advice. Success will also depend on strong executive oversight of policy engagement, valuing internal policy expertise, and consistently participating in strategic forums.

Values, behaviour, and culture

Police are confronting deeply embedded behaviours and culture that risk undermining organisational integrity. The November 2025 IPCA Report has made public a range of very serious internal Police integrity failings across a small number of very senior leaders. Our findings go beyond these immediate failings. We found integrity risks from internal Police ‘tribalism’, insider threat, and information leaking which can risk eroding public trust and confidence.

Police have moved swiftly to address these integrity issues. To successfully embed integrity and embed a culture of zero tolerance towards misconduct, the Commissioner of Police will need to lead a systematic and sustained approach over the coming years. We outline this approach at the end of this section.

Police must maintain their momentum and focus on lifting integrity

IPCA’s November 2025 report found weak complaint controls, inconsistent investigative decisions, insufficient verification of a senior officer’s account (even in alleged criminal and Code breaches), and escalation failures.

Our findings provide further context to the IPCA’s findings. At times, we found the culture and processes have failed Police staff of all ranks. We heard instances of junior staff fearing speaking up against rank – it can be career limiting. There is a perceived double standard where seniors are held to a lesser standard than juniors. Internal complaints processes are not necessarily robust. We heard

how some Police will refuse to provide statements to the National Integrity Unit (NIU) when they are performing an internal Police investigation.

The IPCA's recommendations will help address these issues. It will take sustained effort from Police leadership over many years to address the deeper cultural issues suggested by our findings.

Tribalism within Police is a deep-seated challenge

Police culture values hierarchy, builds strong team loyalty, encourages colleagues to support each other, and rewards those who defend the organisation from criticism, helping maintain unity.²² This is typical of vertically aligned hierarchical structures which are reliant on order and discipline. While this culture has many benefits for policing, it also can produce negative consequences.

One such negative consequence is the culture of 'tribalism'. We heard this term used several times to describe how groups of officers across the hierarchy and including senior leaders form groups (commonly referred to as tribes) which operate against other tribes and may privilege their own tribe over the good of the organisation. Tribalism is on peak display during senior leadership changes, which often sweep out people associated with the previous leaders who may have the skills and experience to outperform their replacements.

Tribalism undermines meritocracy and fairness. It makes staff sceptical of being assessed on merit; interferes with people's judgment, blinding them to integrity and misconduct issues; and improperly protects people who are not performing. We heard that "people know they are in a camp" and that "if you have a contrary opinion [to the leading tribe] it is not valued".

Police is often described by staff as a "family" rather than a workplace. The same qualities that help build an effective policing culture – loyalty around rank, shared history, personal alliances – are the same ones that hold these tribes together. The challenge for Police is to maintain the positive aspects of this culture, while putting measures in place to curb negative expressions such as tribalism.

One immediate measure Police can implement to help address tribalism is to ensure there is at least one independent external member on all senior promotion panels. In situations where the external member disagrees with the panel's decision, this dissent should be registered with an independent party (potentially the Inspector-General of Police, or the National Integrity Unit). Police should also conduct exit interviews with departing senior leaders to understand their reasons for leaving. Insights from these processes should be analysed regularly and used to trigger further actions where tribalism becomes pronounced or begins to undermine impartial decision-making.

Insider threat is a growing risk to Police

The National Integrity Unit (NIU) assesses insider threat, including corruption, as the most significant risk facing Police. Several interviewees also stated that insider threat is present and increasing. Insider threats may arise where Police employees maintain connections to organised criminal groups or links to hostile foreign state actors seeking to exploit privileged access to Police systems and information.

Insider threat and corruption complaints within Police are trending upwards.²³ Some of this may simply be due to the increased workforce, but may also be due to insufficient vetting at the recruitment stage. Historic safeguards such as home visits and face-to-face checks by recruiting staff have largely been replaced by online processes with limited personal interaction. Some psychometric and literacy testing is now completed online, which can be vulnerable to misuse. As a result, there are examples of unsuitable candidates entering the Police College.

There are also no systematic mechanisms to detect compromise across an officer's career. Cost of living pressures, and Police's salary progression (it can take 21 years to reach the top Police pay band) can make Police vulnerable to compromise. Even a small financial reward can entice staff to share information that seems innocuous (shift rosters, patrol routes, meeting times), but when aggregated by criminals or hostile actors it can have an outsized operational impact and, undermine public trust and confidence in Police.

²² For more on Police culture, see page 111, Independent Police Conduct Authority. (2025). Review of Police handling of complaints against Jevon McSkimming.

²³ See further Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime (TSOC-MAG). (30 May 2025). Corruption in New Zealand and the Pacific (TSOC-MAG 25/03).

To reduce these risks, Police should review pre-entry vetting processes, including consideration of reintroducing home visits and closer vetting of applicants' social media. Police should also establish a career-long vetting programme for all employees to identify integrity risks early and take timely action.

Culture of information leaking undermines trust

During our interviews with ministers and agency partners, concerns were consistently raised about a pervasive culture of information leaking within Police. There was a view that confidential information is at times disclosed to the public or media presumably to influence sentiment, shape policy settings, pre-empt internal decisions, or apply pressure on other agencies and ministers by creating external expectations.

These unauthorised disclosures occur frequently enough to suggest to a number of those we interviewed that it may have been normalised.

Such behaviour is deeply concerning. By bypassing proper accountability and consultation channels, Police risk being perceived as driving outcomes through external pressure rather than transparent engagement, undermining the integrity of Police and the wider public sector. Internally, it fosters suspicion and erodes confidence, as staff fear that sensitive discussions may be used for external leverage. Addressing this culture will require stronger information management protocols, clear leadership expectations, and meaningful consequences for conduct that compromises the professionalism and neutrality expected of Police.

Police leadership need to sustain systematic action to shift Police culture

Police integrity is a corner stone of public trust and confidence. Without public trust and confidence, Police cannot exercise their mandate. Therefore, Police leaders must always prioritise building and embedding integrity and addressing integrity risks.

The Commissioner of Police has responded to these integrity challenges by commissioning this Performance Improvement Review, as well as strengthening information security controls and auditing, adding six investigators to the Police

National Integrity Unit, developing an Integrity Action Plan, and initiating a review of Police's Code of Conduct. We support these efforts and encourage Police leadership to maintain this momentum.

Following the IPCA report, the Government established an Inspector-General of Police to provide independent, statutory oversight. Police should work closely with the Inspector-General to ensure this role succeeds. That includes making sure the Inspector-General has access to the right information – being able to access any Police document without needing approval from the Commissioner of Police or the Executive Leadership Team – and being able to speak with any Police staff member without requiring prior approval.

The Integrity Action Plan presents a significant opportunity for Police leaders to drive integrity improvement over time. Police need to ensure that the Plan effectively responds to the immediate integrity challenge, while also responding to longer term integrity risks such as insider threat, and information leaking. We recommend the Commissioner of Police create an independently chaired Integrity Advisory Group to support the development and regular review of the Plan. This Group can also provide implementation support, and effectiveness monitoring.

Police need to embed systems and culture which reinforce an expectation on all staff to report any internal misconduct. Police need to embed a culture of zero tolerance towards bad behaviour of any type, including bullying, harassment, dishonesty or other misconduct.²⁴ To succeed Police leaders need to drive this behaviour change. To do so they need to sustain their current momentum and leverage the Action Integrity Plan and supporting mechanisms such as Inspector-General of Police to create this shift.

²⁴ As outlined above, this is an expansion of the IPCA Report's Recommendations 10 and 11.

Governance

Effective governance is critical for ensuring Police can deliver on its strategic priorities while maintaining accountability and transparency. Police have taken steps to simplify and strengthen its governance arrangements in recent years. Previous structures were complex, with overlapping committees and unclear accountability lines that often slowed decision-making and created reactive responses. The refreshed model has reduced duplication, clarified mandates, and improved alignment between governance forums and organisational priorities. These changes have made governance more streamlined and purposeful, enabling clearer accountability and a stronger connection between strategic direction and operational delivery.

At the centre of the governance framework is the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), supported by three core governance groups: the Senior Leadership Team (SLT), the Strategic Tasking and Co-ordination Governance Group (STCGG), and a dedicated health and safety governance forum.

SLT meets weekly to oversee strategic delivery, investment alignment, and organisational capability. STCGG provides oversight of operational deployment and ensures tactical decisions reflect organisational priorities. Health and safety governance, supported by the Health and Safety Advisory Group and the National Health and Safety Committee, meets every six to eight weeks to maintain compliance and strengthen wellbeing culture.



Independent oversight is provided by the Assurance and Risk Committee which meets quarterly under a refreshed charter to review Police's audit and assurance plans, monitor strategic risks, and liaise with external auditors. Specialist advisory groups, such as the Security and Privacy Reference Group, provide input on technology and privacy risks.

Police operates governance mechanisms to connect the organisation's direction and priorities within the operations of the organisation. We saw evidence of this through the use of the District Commanders Forum, which provide a good mechanism for regularly engaging with regional operational leaders on national context and priorities. It also provided a way in which operational leaders can provide direct and regular contact with the Commissioner and senior leadership across Police.

We heard of cases where previous governance arrangements had become unclear, making it difficult to get decisions quickly or where critical risks were not effectively managed where they needed to be at the Executive level. Staff reported to us that recent efforts have been made to streamline these arrangements so there is more clear line of sight on significant organisational issues to the Executive.

It is clear Police have some significant challenges ahead to lift core capability across the organisation. It needs to draw on a wider set of senior skills and capability, particularly in specialist areas, such as financial and asset management, to make sustained improvements. This includes drawing on external and sector-based expertise in these areas to oversee and govern.

Delivery

	Rating
<p>Services to customers, clients, and citizens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency understand the needs of customers, clients, and citizens, and use these to innovate and deliver better services and outcomes? • How well does the agency integrate services with its partners and providers to deliver value to customers, clients and citizens? 	
<p>Performance and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency use performance information to drive continuous improvement and accountability for results? 	

Recommendations

- **Deliver a modern customer-centered platform** – Accelerate Police’s digital transformation to deliver a modern, customer-centric service experience. This includes implementing real-time case tracking, proactive notifications, and self-service options for non-emergency interactions.
- **Expand District Command Assessments** – these should become a comprehensive tool for monitoring and driving both operational and organisational performance, integrating a strong performance framework with explicit measures for culture, conduct, and integrity.

Services to customers, clients, and citizens

Police deliver services to customers, clients, and citizens through their core policing functions: prevention, response, investigation and resolution. New Zealanders expect these services to deliver timely, efficient, and effective services.

Police use a range of tools to understand public views, such as the *Our Service, Your survey*, which captures feedback from people who recently had contact with Police. They also rely on the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS) Police Module, which tracks public trust, confidence, and satisfaction at a national level. Independent academic research provides additional insights into public attitudes and trust in specific contexts, such as pandemic policing. Police also engage directly with communities at the local level to understand their needs.

Recent surveys indicate that Police have been falling below many key public expectations. The 2025 *Our Service, Your Say* survey indicates that satisfaction varies widely across channels.²⁵ Only 67 percent of emergency callers were satisfied in 2024/25 which is the lowest result in five years. Roadside interactions (73 percent) and *555 calls (83 percent) perform well, while 105 online (52 percent) and written contact (59 percent) are the lowest-rated channels for user satisfaction.

While Police have tools to collect views from the community, the improvement loops – in other words, what Police do with this information – are not so clear. We heard about how the team at the Kāpiti Digital Centre has an ongoing continuous improvement approach to lift the responsiveness and caller satisfaction of the 105 non-emergency calling system. We also heard about how Police have heard and responded to the needs of retailers across communities through increased beat policing.

²⁵ New Zealand Police, *Our Service, Your Say | Ō Whakaaro, Ā Mātou Mahi: 2024–25 Annual Report*, Research New Zealand, Wellington, 2025. Available at: <https://www.police.govt.nz/about-us/publication/nz-police-our-service-your-say>.

With crime and community needs growing increasingly complex, it is critical for Police to improve its continuous improvement loop to ensure signals from the community rapidly translate into service improvement.

Police need to lift their user experience

New Zealanders increasingly expect public services to deliver the same seamless and transparent experience they receive in the private sector where they can log in, track progress, understand the next steps, and know when to expect resolution. However, Police, like many public sector organisations, does not yet meet this standard. When someone makes an enquiry to Police, they often need to call, wait on hold, and may still not receive a clear update. This is partly because staff themselves lack consistent visibility across multiple legacy systems, which limits their ability to provide timely and accurate information.

To meet user expectations while upholding operational, privacy, and safety obligations, Police will need a service model that provides timely updates, predictable next steps, and consistent communication. Reaching this standard is an aspiration across the public sector and will be a stretch for any organisation given legacy systems, statutory requirements, and public-safety risks. A modern, digitally enabled platform is the most likely path forward, strengthening public confidence, reducing call-centre demand, and supporting frontline staff with clearer information.

Mixed progress towards integrating services with partners

Police work alongside partner agencies such as Oranga Tamariki, Ministry of Social Development, Health NZ, and non-government organisations to deliver wraparound support for offenders and victims. However, collaboration remains inconsistent. Programmes like AWHI show strong potential for linking people to wellbeing services, but participation by service providers is voluntary. Because many providers do not use the platform, Police have fewer referral options for people in need.

Data-sharing among partner agencies is another significant factor that holds back Police's ability to deliver services. This is discussed in depth in the data section of this report.

Performance and accountability

Performance and accountability within Police are in the process of being strengthened. The Commissioner has made good progress in resetting expectations and priorities to drive improved performance within Police's core functions. This includes resetting and cascading these expectations across senior leaders.

The organisation maintains a strong focus on delivering core services effectively while ensuring that operational decisions are informed by evidence and community needs. This approach is supported by refreshed governance arrangements and enhanced performance monitoring at both national and district levels.

District command assessments play a central role in Police's accountability framework. These assessments provide a structured mechanism for evaluating local performance against national priorities, including crime prevention, emergency response, and community engagement. They incorporate quantitative measures such as response times, case resolution rates, and satisfaction with contact channels, alongside qualitative insights. This dual approach enables districts to identify service gaps, implement targeted improvements, and share best practice across the organisation. We understand that these have been received well by both the Executive and districts and should be embedded within Police's accountability and performance architecture.




Police maintain regular measurement of service delivery through monthly crime rate reviews, frequent performance discussions, and annual reporting mechanisms. These measures are complemented by quarterly reporting to the Executive and performance reporting to the Minister. Workforce performance is monitored every six weeks through reports to STCGG, covering indicators such as leave liability, attrition rates, overtime, and non-deployable staff. These reports provide detailed insights into regional and service centre performance, supporting proactive risk management and resource planning.

Police also conduct internal reviews, such as organisational learning assessments and health and safety audits, which inform governance discussions and continuous improvement

initiatives. Governance groups provide assurance that investment plans, operational strategies, and deployment models deliver expected outcomes. These forums enable Police to maintain visibility over both strategic and operational performance, ensuring decisions are evidence-based and aligned to organisational priorities. However, at times these are ad hoc and we could not see evidence that they have each been maintained to the same standard over time.

We acknowledge the positive steps taken to achieve greater alignment of strategic priorities at a national level across the organisation. However, at a more fundamental level, significant work remains to fully leverage performance and accountability as drivers of the cultural change Police requires. While many aspects of Police's operations are visible and measurable, the factors that truly shift cultural norms demand a more sophisticated approach to tracking and influencing progress. There are strong parallels with the findings in the Workforce section, particularly the need for leaders at all levels to consistently model the behaviours Police expects and to reinforce these through regular, robust performance management practices.

Engagement

	Rating
Engagement with Ministers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency provide advice and services to Ministers? 	
Māori-Crown relationship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency develop and maintain the capability to engage with Māori and to understand Māori perspectives to drive better outcomes? 	
Engagement with stakeholders <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency engage with stakeholders, in ways that are effective, open, transparent, and accessible? 	

Recommendations

Recommendations to improve policy and influencing capabilities in the Leadership section will also help improve Police’s ability to meet the needs of Ministers.

Engagement with Ministers

Police have demonstrated a strong commitment to supporting successive Government’s priorities, particularly in responding to gang-related harm and other areas of immediate concern. Ministers acknowledge and value Police’s operational focus and the contribution they have made in delivering on urgent priorities.

Ministers indicated that they would like to see Police engage more strategically with their justice system and wider government partners. Police’s current approach has been reactive and fragmented, with issues being escalated to Ministers for resolution (rather than being addressed collaboratively at the agency level). Ministers expressed concern that Police do not yet have the “heft” or influence required to strategically shape policy conversations, and that this absence is felt in forums where decisions with long-term impact are being made.

Ministers want Police to be a trusted partner that can join up thinking across agencies, rather than a participant that responds only when asked. Police will need to build its policy and influencing capabilities (we discuss this in-depth in the Leadership section of this report).

Māori-Crown relationship

Police are committed to being responsive to Māori and understanding the importance of the Crown-Māori relationship. There are several key strategies in place to support this. Most notably, Police’s core strategy, *Our Business*, places priority on working together with Iwi Māori to get better outcomes.

Police engage with Māori on culturally responsive policing, primarily through the Commissioner’s Māori Focus Forum which helps guide policing strategy regarding Māori and provides advice on current issues of concern to whānau, hapū, communities and iwi. The Māori Focus Forum helped develop and co-design Te Huringa o Te Tai (The turning of the Tide) with Police. Te Huringa o Te Tai is a key strategy which aims to improve Māori wellbeing and reduce their contact with the criminal justice system.

Each Police District has its own District Māori Advisory Board which assists Commanders in strategic issues at the local level. Police are also part of a joint venture with Te Puni Kōkiri on the Māori Warden Project which provides training and support to Māori Wardens.

Te Pae Oranga Iwi community panels (discussed in core functions resolution) are another initiative that have supported improved outcomes for Māori.²⁶ The programme has shown to be effective at reducing reoffending – with participants held accountable for their actions while also receiving the support they need to get their lives back on track.

²⁶ Taaka, S., Polaschek, D., & Taylor, R. (2021). *Te Pae Oranga Evaluation*. University of Waikato and Evidence Based Policing Centre.

Police also aim to improve their service delivery by enhancing the cultural competency of their people and as part of this offer several training programmes focussed on te ao Māori, tikanga, te reo Māori and the Treaty. Police also aim to reflect the proportion of Māori in the general population in its workforce.

Over the last five years, 571 Māori have graduated from the College, representing 18.2 percent of graduates in this time. This is above population proportions. However, Māori numbers at leadership levels are not as high. This number is increasing though, suggesting that more Māori officers are being promoted. Between 2020 and 2025, there has been a 32 percent increase of Māori at Sergeant and Senior Sergeant levels and a 21 percent increase at Inspector and above.

Many community groups, including Māori groups, said that out of all government agencies Police are the best to deal with and the most genuinely responsive to Māori perspective and aspirations.

There is a significant opportunity to deepen Māori–Crown relationships by making engagement with Māori visible and sustained at national and district levels, investing deliberately in cultural capability, and strengthening support for local iwi partnerships. Police already have strong foundations to build on—including the Commissioner’s Māori Focus Forum, which codesigned Te Huringa o Te Tai to improve Māori wellbeing and reduce contact with the criminal justice system, and District Māori Advisory Boards that help Commanders align local strategies to Māori perspectives.

Engagement with stakeholders

Police work collaboratively and productively with stakeholders. Community groups particularly reference Police’s understanding of issues at the local level and genuine engagement and willingness to be involved and to partner with other sectors. The community constable and iwi liaison roles are very effective in maintaining this community connection.

Operational partners such as Customs, Health, Oranga Tamariki and other first responders, report highly effective on-the-ground relationships with Police and note the mutual respect for each party’s role and contribution that characterises these relationships.

The Commissioner’s Focus Forums, covering Māori, Pasifika and Ethnic Communities, all work closely with Police and appreciate the Commissioner’s accessibility and openness, even when there may be concern or dissatisfaction expressed about Police responsiveness in particular areas. Community groups generally feel listened to, respected and understood. One theme was for the need for Police to keep reflecting the makeup of the general population in its own workforce.

Victims’ support and advocacy groups found Police to be good to work with but also raised issues of variability of practice, and at times, concerns with Police culture. Retail owner groups report very positive interactions with Police and were pleased with the increased response to retail crime and ram raids, noting that among other impacts it made people living in their localities feel safer.

Stakeholders who have a professional interface with Police reported a more mixed view. Public Health and Forensic Science (PHF) considered Police could do more to optimise the intellectual property held by PHF and that a less transactional approach to the relationship from the Police side would yield better investigative outcomes for Police. Police contribute effectively to joint Justice sector initiatives such as the Police Prosecution Uplift Programme and the District Court.

Workforce

	Rating
<p>Talent management and workforce development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency identify, develop and manage its talent? • How well does the agency anticipate and respond to future workforce capacity and capability requirements? 	
<p>Workforce performance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency encourage and drive high performance and continuous improvement in its workforce? • How well does the agency address performance that is not meeting expectations? 	
<p>Staff engagement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well does the agency develop and maintain a highly committed and engaged workforce? • How well does the agency manage its employee relations? 	

Recommendations for Workforce

- **Implement a comprehensive workforce strategy** – This strategy should address future capability needs, including career pathways and proportions of sworn and non-sworn roles, specialist skills (e.g. cybercrime), and continuous training. This strategy needs to address how Police balance their self-grown workforce with external talent through pathways such as lateral recruitment.
- **Refresh the performance and promotion framework** – The framework should clearly define behaviours and expectations for every role, anchor them in core organisational values, and embed integrity as a mandatory competency.
- **Improve managerial training and tools** – Develop a suite of training and practical tools to enable managers to hold regular performance conversations, address behavioral and technical skill issues (such as investigation skills), and use clear escalation steps when underperformance continues.
- **Implement a national skills audit and rapid response system** – Establish a national team that can deliver targeted training when poor skills are detected within districts. This team runs regular audits across the districts to detect skill issues.
- **Modernise Police College training** – Through the Police College improvement work already underway, Police should ensure that they introduce trainers with recent frontline experience and contemporary operational expertise to ensure training is practical, current, and aligned with the complex challenges of modern policing. The curriculum update should also emphasise tactical response, offender control, and decision-making under pressure.
- **Enhanced talent management and succession planning** – Introduce district and national level talent management and succession planning processes requiring regular talent reviews, clear development pathways, and high-potential individual tracking.
- **Bring back regular staff engagement surveys** – this offers an invaluable measure of engagement which will be critical going forward as Police implement changes to their operating model.

Talent management and workforce development

Police face several workforce challenges that they must address to ensure they can deliver core policing in an increasingly complex, digital, and transnational environment. Police need a comprehensive approach to recruit training and ongoing training throughout an officer's career; accessing and fostering specialist skillsets particularly in cybercrime, fraud, and transnational crime; and identifying and developing future leaders.

The Police College is driving change to ensure it better prepares recruits for operational realities of policing

We heard of instances where Police College recruits in the recent past have been underprepared for operational duties. While a pre-service programme cannot cover every element of policing, we also heard a sentiment of officers having to 'babysit' new Police graduates in a manner not suited to the demands of the frontline. Work to improve the requirements of recruits, as well as the course itself should continue to address this, as seen in some recent District Command Assessments. We heard feedback that some Police College graduates report a lack of confidence in their ability to perform their duties or manage threatening situations. We heard consistent concerns about the capability within the Police College, some describing it as a "landing zone" for some staff who had been promoted into training roles. Stakeholders questioned whether the current cohort of trainers reflect the operational realities of modern policing. For example, some trainers had not served on the frontline for over 20 years, raising doubts about their ability to deliver training that prepares recruits for today's environment.

Police have initiated a comprehensive review of the Police College, and its curriculum in response to these challenges. The first updated Recruit Curriculum is scheduled to launch with the January 2026 Wing. In addition, the Defensive Tactics training manual has been updated to introduce safer and more effective techniques for managing threatening behaviour. These are positive changes which need to be accompanied by a remedial programme for existing staff and regular refresher courses throughout careers.

Through this process, Police have an opportunity to ensure that recruit training emphasises practical skills such as tactical response, conflict de-escalation,

observation and note-taking, evidence preservation, and interviewing techniques.

Police need to consider the skills and qualities of their trainers alongside this curriculum refresh. These trainers need to bring current frontline experience to ensure they can pass on practical skills to ready recruits for the stresses of frontline operations. Police should also consider what support they can provide to their trainer workforce, for example, establishing a qualifications framework especially for police trainers similar to the one used in England and Wales.

Ongoing training needs to be available and effective throughout a Police career

Skill fade in foundational officer skills across all levels of seniority – particularly in investigations and case management – highlight the importance of ongoing and consistent training. Currently there is no clearly defined, nationally recognised mid-career capability framework (with standards, pathways and audit) to support officers throughout their careers. Mid-career training can often be moved online due to resourcing pressures or devolved to the districts which mean training and refresher courses are not nationally standardised.

Police can improve their ongoing training environment by offering a nationally standardised online training system, accessible by the districts. The system should include mandatory online modules that all staff need to complete yearly for key competencies such as ethics and integrity. Alongside these compulsory modules, the system should offer a range of best practice modules that officers can access if they need refreshers on foundational aspects of the job such as interview skills.

Police should also establish a national skills audit and rapid-response function to detect and address emerging capability issues across districts. This function would conduct regular, systematic audits across districts to identify capability issues, and then "drop in" and deliver critical operational training. As a national function, this will help standardise and maintain competency across Police.

These systems also need to be championed by leaders, supported by incentives that encourage staff to maintain and strengthen their skills. This creates an environment where continuous learning is normalised, leaders can confidently direct staff to relevant training, and individuals have clear pathways for upskilling before skill fade affects operational performance.

New career pathways are needed to secure specialist skills

Police currently face a significant shortage of specialists in areas such as cybercrime, digital forensics, data analytics, and forensic accounting. The pathway to becoming a sworn officer – attending Police College and completing general policing training – does not equip people with these technical skills. This pathway is also not particularly attractive for people with these skills. For example, a mid-career professional with digital forensic experience from the banking sector may be interested in working for Police but unwilling to undertake the required 20-week Police College programme to become sworn.

This leaves the non-sworn pathway which Police use today to fill these technical roles. However, these roles tend to exist as stand-alone positions rather than part of a clear, structured career pathway with standard training, qualifications, and opportunities for progression.

To meet the growing need for specialists, Police need to integrate recruitment, retention, and development approaches that are tailored to specialist skills into their overall workforce strategy. This includes drawing on lateral hires, strengthening partnerships with external expertise, and creating distinct career pathways for non-sworn professionals whose skills are essential to modern policing. Establishing clear progression, recognition, and development opportunities for these roles would help Police attract the required talent.

Police need to adopt active talent management to grow their future leaders

Police do not yet operate a strong or consistent approach to senior talent management which puts their pipeline of future leaders at risk. This challenge needs to be addressed urgently. Approximately 20 percent (2,000 constabulary staff) are over the age of 55, and attrition is projected to rise significantly over the next decade. Without a robust pipeline of skilled leaders ready to step into senior roles, Police will face a leadership vacuum that compromises operational effectiveness and public confidence.

Currently, Police rely heavily on traditional promotion pathways which often advance individuals into supervisory roles before they have the frontline experience and leadership capability required to effectively mentor others. This occurs particularly at the sergeant level (the first step into leadership) where there are high coaching expectations, but limited preparation or support to meet this expectation.

Police need to build a modern talent management framework anchored in clear expectations, systematic performance tracking, and active succession planning. This system needs to develop a shared understanding of future leaders as those who combine operational excellence with cultural competence, integrity, and the ability to navigate complex social and technological challenges.

At the District level, leadership teams need to hold regular, formal conversations about talent and progression, supported by clear frameworks and tools. These discussions need to focus on identifying high-potential individuals early, tracking performance, and planning development pathways.

At the National level, Police should actively manage talent for critical operational, senior leadership, and corporate roles. This national function needs to anticipate future leadership needs and build the leadership capability and succession pipelines necessary to full these roles, drawing on the talent identified by the Districts. It should organise structured programmes, rotational assignments, and mentoring to develop upcoming leaders. It is also critical for upcoming and current senior Police leaders to gain experience in roles within the wider Public Sector to broaden their leadership and understand of the government operating environment.

Ultimately, talent management should be treated as a core leadership responsibility. District commanders and national executives need to own this challenge and embed it into their business-as-usual processes. Building a capable and future-ready leadership cadre will require sustained focus and investment, but it is fundamental to ensuring Police can meet the complex demands of modern policing and maintain the trust and confidence of New Zealanders.

Workforce performance

We heard from a wide range of stakeholders, that poor performance management, compounded by the training challenges highlighted above, are contributing to this skill fade that has been reported across the organisation. Police's current performance management framework also lacks a focus on integrity, culture, and behaviours – aspects of policing which are fundamental to maintain public trust and organisational credibility.

Police's processes for dealing with internal employment and performance issues are also not fit-for-purpose. Managers are poorly equipped to have effective performance conversations. Police staff told us that tools and support needed to manage underperformance are not easily accessible. Furthermore, cultural norms that prioritise collegiality make these discussions difficult. When a formal employment or performance issues occurs, these cases can take months – and sometimes years – to resolve, while the involved employee remains on leave or some alternative work arrangement. These difficulties and delays undermine accountability and send a permissive signal across the organisation.

Police need a performance management reset, as it is one of the most effective levers to lift organisational capability, and improve integrity and culture. Police need to implement a performance framework that treats integrity as a core competency for all staff and is clearly aligned with the Police Code of Conduct. The framework should also define key frontline capabilities which will enable managers to apply performance expectations consistently across the Districts.

Police should also consider embedding regular, structured performance conversations as a core leadership practice. Guidance from HR would ensure this is delivered consistently across the organisation and leaders have the tools needed to perform their duties as managers effectively. Crucially, the system must place equal weight on behaviours and values as it does on technical outputs. Without this shift, the organisation will struggle to deliver the integrity and cultural change that is essential for public confidence and operational excellence.

Staff engagement

Police officers and non-sworn staff are proud of their work. Current sworn staff told us that the newfound leadership focus on the frontline is a breath of fresh air, and the perception of the leadership's support for the frontline has increased their motivation and engagement. Police have also recently refreshed their *Health, Safety and Wellness Strategy 2025-2028*, which encompasses a wide range of wellness success measures which aim towards a vision of "Be Safe, Feel Safe".

Staff engagement with unions in Police is strong. The addition of the Police Leaders Guild alongside the Police Association is a helpful way of ensuring that staff remain engaged throughout employment issues and investigations. Enabling managers and senior staff to have separate representation encourages fair process and staff engagement as they have a separate mechanism for raising complaints.

Despite these observations, we do not have any current quantitative data to measure Police staff engagement. The last staff engagement survey was undertaken in 2022. Police's self-assessment identified recruitment, retention, and workforce fatigue are straining their delivery capability which suggests some engagement challenges exist.

We recommend Police reinstate regular engagement surveys. Police need to monitor workforce engagement as they undergo demographic change (around 20 percent of constables are over 55). The former 'career for life' model no longer reflects workforce expectations: younger staff move roles more often, and the growing number of non-sworn employees requires an organisation-wide understanding of diverse needs.





Regular engagement insights will also help Police ensure that employment relations settings, including provisions in collective and individual employment agreements, continue to support a modern, committed workforce.

Bullying within Police needs to be addressed

Bullying is a very significant risk to Police engagement. Previous exit surveys suggest that some staff wait until leaving to disclose bullying. Some surveys of Police staff moving overseas also indicate that bullying influences their decisions to move (as well as a lack of career advancement opportunities and discrimination).

Police have several policies and systems in place to promote a safe workplace, which are managed by the National Integrity Unit and their People, Leadership and Culture group. However, the November 2025 IPCA report indicates that these functions are not completely effective. The report raised themes such as the inability to raise concerns to leadership, and a perception that when you do the complaints are not handled appropriately. We understand that Police are actively reviewing these reporting systems, and that they will be strengthened in response to the IPCA report. Given the risk that bullying poses to staff engagement and efforts to lift integrity and conduct, strong executive oversight is necessary to ensure efforts to improve the reporting system are successful.

Financial management, data, and risk

	Rating
<p>Investment and asset management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency manage its assets balance sheet, to support service delivery, reduce operational risks and drive performance management? 	
<p>Strategic financial management and accountability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency plan, direct, and control financial resources to drive efficient and effective delivery? How well does the agency integrate financial information into its decision-making and manage its cost drivers to achieve fiscal sustainability? 	
<p>Data, analytics and digital technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency manage and use data, analytics and digital technologies to drive decision-making and effective delivery? 	
<p>Risk and assurance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How well does the agency identify and manage agency, Crown, and system risks to integrate risk awareness into its current operations and future opportunities? How well does the agency use assurance to effectively manage organisational risks and prioritise improvements to the internal control environment? 	

Recommendations for Financial management, data, and risk

- Police Capability Plan** – Police need a forward looking 10-year view of the capabilities they need to deliver modern policing (factoring in workforce changes, population growth, demand trends, digital crime, transnational crime, and increasingly violent crime); outline the asset footprint (including equipment, property, infrastructure, and support systems) they need to deliver these capabilities; and outline how these investments will be phased over the next ten years. It should incorporate the Government’s policy intentions and direction for Police.
- Modern integrated finance system** – Over the longer term, Police should invest in a modern and integrated financial management system. This system should include a single source of truth for asset condition and lifecycle data across all Police assets.
- Financial literacy and leadership programme** – Deliver a targeted programme to lift financial literacy across Police, particularly at leadership levels, supported by a more sophisticated financial business partnering model and financial delegations to drive a stronger strategic approach to financial management.
- Enhanced budgeting and forecasting capability** – Implement enhanced enterprise wide budgeting and forecasting practices to enable a more active, forward looking approach to managing resource allocations and trade offs across Police.
- Advanced data and intelligence enablement** – Embed advanced data analytics (including AI), real-time intelligence capabilities, and streamlined data sharing protocols to modernise Police’s intelligence and operational tasking functions — enabling the organisation to leverage real time information across domestic and international partners to anticipate emerging threats and disrupt organised crime.
- Strengthened risk and assurance function** – Significantly strengthen the Police risk and assurance function so it operates as an authoritative, independent enterprise level capability, with Executive mandate to set standards, provide proactive oversight, and drive organisational performance.

- **Operational data sharing arrangements** - Police should lead work to operationalise real time data sharing agreements with key agencies and private partners, supported by strong privacy safeguards.

Investment and asset management

Police assets increasingly constrain service delivery. Properties, vehicles, operational equipment, and workforce systems are ageing and, in many cases, no longer fit-for-purpose. Years of reactive, project-based investment have resulted in an asset portfolio without clear upgrade or replacement pathways. Significant remedial investment will be required to stabilise critical assets, alongside a fundamental shift in funding and strategic planning to meet the evolving demands of modern policing.

A substantial proportion of Police’s 638 properties do not meet contemporary policing requirements. Many buildings are degraded, outdated (some more than 40 years old), and face seismic and accessibility issues. We observed stations in poor condition, with black mould requiring thermal fogging (a temporary measure that removes the mould costing approximately \$15,000 per station each month) and others close to losing water and toilet access. These conditions, combined with outdated layouts, create serious risks for both officers and detainees.

Police’s vehicle fleet and operational equipment are also deteriorating. Many vehicles operate well beyond their optimal lifecycle, while rising costs and deferred replacements make upgrades difficult. Equipping frontline staff with safe, effective tools is essential, yet global supply chain disruptions, exchange rate volatility, and rising standards add further pressure. Police advised that in 2025/26, limited capital funding meant the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) actively de-prioritised fleet renewal to prioritise operational equipment. While this does not address the root cause, it demonstrates active trade-off decisions and improved fleet management.

Legacy payroll, property, and HR systems are also struggling to keep up with workforce growth. Over the past decade Police have grown their FTE by over 4000 (from 11,800 in 2015 to 15,700 sworn and non-sworn staff today). While this has strengthened frontline capacity, this growth has strained supporting systems. Police have begun implementing improvements, including establishing a new Auckland training campus to increase capacity

for upper North Island recruits and reduce reliance on the Porirua Police College. The MyPolice HR and payroll platform has reached the end of its viable life and is being replaced through a multi-year upgrade to a modern enterprise resource management system.

Core workforce systems are also approaching end-of-life. The rostering and deployment system (Kronos) will lose all support by March 2027, and the Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) must be upgraded by 2030. These systems are not fit-for-purpose, rely on manual workarounds, and pose compliance and operational risks. Police have a programme of work underway to address these issues, and ministers are aware of the significant risk that failure could cause.

Remediation followed by a step-change in asset management systems and practices is necessary

Police’s approach to asset management has historically been reactive and underdeveloped. Decisions have been driven by immediate operational pressures rather than long-term planning, leaving the organisation without a complete and reliable view of asset condition, performance, and lifecycle. Information remains fragmented across systems, varies in quality between districts, and is not systematically integrated into national capital planning. This lack of visibility has constrained Police’s ability to prioritise investment and manage risk effectively.

Police have taken positive steps to address these issues such as appointing a Chief Infrastructure Officer and developing a Long-Term Property Network and Infrastructure Plan. The challenge now is implementation and ensuring that Police can move past stopgap measures (such as thermal fogging to manage mould or deferring vehicle replacements) towards a sustainable approach that address the underlying issues.

Funding constraints exacerbate the problem. Police currently lack the resources to de-risk and stabilise core assets over the next decade. Future-proofing across most asset classes is unaffordable under current settings. We heard that while Police hold \$600 million in depreciation on their balance sheet, their capital account is effectively zero - the depreciation having been spent on operational pressures. This highlights a lack of maturity in financial and capital management and underscores the need for systemic change.

Police are aware of these risks, and some interventions are underway. Fleet management has been centralised, and work is progressing on a national asset management system. These initiatives are important but insufficient given the scale of the challenge. A step-change in asset management capability is required.

Immediate priorities include cataloguing high-risk, service-compromising assets and outlining investments to stabilise degradation; defining the asset footprint required for modern policing, taking account of workforce changes, population growth, demand trends, and digital crime; and establishing a single source of truth for asset condition and lifecycle data across all Police assets. These foundations will enable Police to move from reactive fixes to proactive, strategic investment.

Implement a future focused Police Capability Plan

To ensure Police can meet the demands of modern policing Police should develop a Police Capability Plan.²⁷ This Plan should be forward looking over a 10-year horizon, providing a coherent framework that connects operational priorities, future service needs, asset condition, and long-term investment decisions. The Plan needs to incorporate government policy intentions for Police, and clearly outline investment requirements resulting from these intentions.

The Plan can help sequence and communicate the trade-offs across their investment pressures including technology modernisation (Computer-Aided Dispatch (CAD) replacement, 111 system uplift, digital and forensic capability, accelerating Police's digital transformation, modernising and integrating Police's finance system, advancing data and intelligence enablement etc), property uplift, corporate capability, workforce training, new specialist teams, and frontline enablement and officer safety initiatives. The Plan might also consider property consolidation to help support the overall investment programme. Consolidation would only be possible with broad community support, and assurances of service continuity.

To ensure sustainable asset management going forward, Police also need to implement an enterprise-wide asset management system that consolidates data, enables accurate forecasting, assesses risk, and integrates with financial planning. Without this transformation, the cost of inaction will continue to rise, service delivery will deteriorate, and Police will be unable to meet the demands of modern policing.

Strategic financial management and accountability

Police operate at a scale and complexity unmatched by most public sector agencies, with responsibilities spanning every community and an annual spend in the billions. This scale requires a financial management approach that is disciplined, integrated, and forward-looking. Historically, this has not been achieved, and significant financial management challenges remain.

Over the past two years, Police have faced significant financial pressures, including a \$111 million gap between funding and commitments in 2023/24 and at least \$156 million gap in 2024/25.²⁸ Police received funding through Budgets 2024 and 2025 to reduce these funding gaps. However, underlying structural pressures persist and continue to constrain Police's ability to plan and invest for the long-term.

As operational capability has expanded, financial management capability across the organisation has not kept pace. Investment in the frontline has delivered visible gains in service coverage and responsiveness, but the systems and governance that underpin efficiency and sustainability have lagged. The need to strengthen financial capability has been less visible, resulting in maturity levels that do not match the organisation's scale and complexity. Furthermore, Budget 2024 and 2025 savings targeted back-office and non-frontline roles, meaning financial and asset management capability likely went backwards during this period, widening the maturity gap.

This underinvestment has created systemic weaknesses. Core financial processes still rely on spreadsheets, and there is no integrated platform to support planning, reporting, or scenario modelling.

²⁷ This approach should be modelled on the Defence Capability Plan. See further <https://www.defence.govt.nz/our-work/equip/defence-capability-plan/>.

²⁸ Figures sourced from Martyn Dunne Police Independent Rapid Review: Final report for the Minister of Finance and Minister of Police (The Treasury, 5 April 2024).

The finance function is under-resourced and lacks the capability to provide robust analysis or strategic advice. The business partner model is immature, and financial numeracy across the organisation is low. Leaders often lack the skills to interpret financial information or manage budgets effectively, and structured training has been minimal. Financial management is still viewed as a compliance requirement rather than a strategic enabler.

This has resulted in short planning horizons, and decision-making which prioritises immediate operational needs over long-term sustainability. Police's capital position is concerning: while the balance sheet shows significant depreciation, the capital account is effectively zero, reflecting years of underinvestment in assets. The Office of the Auditor-General has highlighted weaknesses in procurement and financial controls, reinforcing the need for systemic improvement.

Structural cost pressures - driven by workforce expansion, rising personnel costs, and inflation - are compounded by constrained fiscal flexibility and weak financial discipline. Without a step-change in capability and governance, Police will remain reactive, with limited ability to make evidence-based trade-offs or optimise resource allocation.

Limited visibility of the organisation's true financial position makes it difficult to prioritise funding for critical initiatives or assess trade-offs between competing demands. Without accurate, timely information, Police cannot manage its budget dynamically - responding to emerging pressures or reallocating resources to where they are most needed. This lack of agility constrains operational effectiveness and increases the risk of inefficient spending. Our engagement with operational staff highlighted the consequences of the financial management challenges creating significant pressures to resource critical policing activity.

Police need a modern finance system, financial reporting, and better financial capability across the organisation

Police recognise these shortcomings and are progressing work to build a modern finance system that will enable integrated reporting, planning, and scenario modelling. This investment is critical to improving transparency, allowing the organisation to clearly articulate its financial position and monitor progress against budget. Without such

capability, Police cannot achieve the level of financial discipline and accountability required for long-term sustainability.

Police leadership must take a far more active role in owning the organisation's financial position. This responsibility cannot sit solely within the finance function - it needs to be embedded in the collective leadership mindset. This means leadership regularly engaging with financial performance, understanding the trade-offs between operational priorities and long-term sustainability, and setting clear expectations for disciplined budget management across all groups and districts.

Regular, transparent reporting to the leadership on budget performance and financial risks should become a core part of governance, supported by a culture where every senior leader is accountable for financial outcomes in their area. Without this shift, improvements in systems and capability will not translate into the organisational discipline required to manage structural cost pressures and enable strategic investment decisions.

Closing these gaps requires a fundamental uplift in financial capability. The immediate priority is the successful implementation of the new finance system, replacing spreadsheet-based processes with an integrated platform that delivers real-time insights for planning and decision-making. Police must adopt comprehensive budgeting and forecasting practices that enable dynamic resource allocation and evidence-based trade-offs.

Alongside this, Police must invest in building financial literacy at all leadership levels and develop a mature business partner model that connects financial advice to operational priorities. Governance frameworks need to be strengthened so financial discipline becomes central to strategic planning rather than an afterthought.

Data, analytics and digital technologies

Police's digital environment spans a vast portfolio of systems, including the National Intelligence Application (NIA), Incident Management Tool (IMT), Real-Time Intelligence Operations Dashboard (RIOD), Automated Biometric Identification System (ABIS), and the 111 emergency call platform. Data is also increasingly held by third parties such as Auror, and government partners, which supports core policing.

These systems are often fragmented, difficult to integrate, and increasingly misaligned with policing workflows. Officers often rely on manual workarounds to bridge gaps between systems, slowing down processes and creating inefficiencies. The challenge is compounded by volume of digital evidence Police needs to manage. Every investigation from retail theft to transnational crime involves large volumes of CCTV footage, encrypted messages, social media content, and forensic files. Current storage and processing capabilities are struggling to keep up, and legacy systems cannot deliver the speed or flexibility required for modern policing.

Data-sharing barriers amplify these challenges. Even when Police have the right tools, internally outdated legislation and a risk averse information sharing culture slows the flow of information from partner agencies. The Law Commission has stated that the Search and Surveillance Act 2012 has not kept pace with digital technology.²⁹ The Privacy Commissioner further adds “Nine times out of ten, it’s organisational culture or systems issues that stop effective and needed information sharing from taking place, not the law.”³⁰

Police are not unique in this respect: similar obstacles exist across the justice and social sectors which slow the flow of data that could prevent harm and improve the effectiveness of government interventions. Until a system steward is in place, and data-sharing protocols are agreed, this slow data sharing environment will continue to limit Police’s ability to anticipate threats and respond effectively.

Modern policing depends on timely, accurate, and actionable information. Without integrated systems and streamlined data-sharing, Police cannot anticipate emerging risks, deploy resources effectively, or deliver justice efficiently. Delays in accessing data can mean missed opportunities to prevent harm, disrupt organised crime, or protect vulnerable communities. This is particularly acute in cybercrime, where investigations often hinge on rapid access to electronic evidence before it disappears or moves offshore.

The recent review of Police’s cybercrime capability by the Australian Federal Police highlighted gaps in structure, skills, and strategy. It found that Police lacks a formal cybercrime strategy, clear performance indicators, and sufficient specialist capability to investigate high-level cyber-dependent crime. Digital literacy across the organisation is low, and training is inconsistent, leaving frontline officers reliant on ad hoc support from technology enthusiasts or specialist units.

Police recognises these challenges and has begun laying the foundations for change. The Enterprise Resource Management (ERM) programme is a cornerstone of this transformation, replacing outdated finance, human resource, and asset management systems with a unified platform aligned to All-of-Government digital standards. This is not just an administrative upgrade – it is the backbone for a future where data flows seamlessly across Police and its partners.

Beyond ERM, Police is working to modernise investigative technology, digitise case files, and explore automation tools that reduce administrative burden. AI and advanced analytics offer significant potential to identify patterns of offending, predict hotspots, and inform deployment decisions in real time. These technologies can free frontline officers to focus on core policing tasks while improving accuracy and speed in investigations.

If Police succeeds in this transformation, the benefits will be profound. Integrated data systems will enable faster investigations and better victim support. Predictive analytics will allow Police to anticipate harm and deploy resources where they are needed most. Digital platforms will streamline case management across the justice pipeline, reducing delays and improving outcomes. Enhanced cyber capability will position New Zealand as a credible partner in global efforts to combat transnational crime. These changes are not about adding complexity – they are about creating a policing model that is fit-for-purpose in a world where crime is increasingly digital, and where public trust depends on Police’s ability to keep pace.

²⁹ Law Commission. Review of the Search and Surveillance Act 2012: Questions and Answers. Retrieved from <https://www.lawcom.govt.nz/assets/Publications/Supplementary/NZLC-Search-Surveillance-QA.pdf>.

³⁰ Quoted in Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime (2025). TSOC-MAG 25/05: Information Sharing – July Report. 6 August 2025.

Risk and assurance

Police are good at managing operational risks – this is core to keeping New Zealanders safe. However, their enterprise risk management capabilities do not align with the scale and complexity of Police’s operations. They fall short of what is required to manage strategic and systemic risks effectively.

A strong risk and assurance framework is not optional for Police given its size, complexity, and statutory authority. This framework is the backbone of integrity, the safeguard for public money, and the mechanism that ensures fairness and accountability in dealings with suppliers, partners, and the public. While we did not undertake a detailed review of the internal control environment, our observations raise serious concerns about the adequacy and maturity of the current approach.

The internal audit function is strikingly small – one internal auditor and approximately 35 assurance staff – for an organisation with 16,000 employees and a major operating budget. This level of resourcing is insufficient, falling well below resourcing expectation for an agency of this scale and complexity. Although Police report that their assurance function has matured and now operates with a clear programme of work, this progress is not matched by a broader organisational mindset. Risk and assurance across Police at an enterprise level remains fragmented, reactive, and largely compliance-driven.

We encountered examples that illustrate systemic weaknesses. Internal audit and assurance functions face challenges in engaging across the organisation. There is a risk of selective focus – prioritising areas where they are welcomed rather than where issues may lie. For instance, we heard that new managers tend to be more receptive to audit activity, presumably because issues will not be attributed to them.

Conversely, we were told that known problem areas have historically been off-limits for audit. This signals a lack of independence and transparency that is inconsistent with best practice for an organisation of Police’s scale and public accountability.

More fundamentally concerning, risk and assurance are not consistently owned by the Executive. While operational leaders demonstrate awareness of risk within their immediate context, there is limited understanding of organisational risk relating to capability, performance, and delivery. We saw an inconsistent understanding of how risk and assurance operate across Police.

We saw evidence of operational leaders understanding risk in a narrow operational sense, but far less awareness of risks associated with organisational performance, capability, and delivery. Leaders need clarity on their responsibilities for identifying, managing, and escalating organisational risks, supported by effective governance and reporting channels. Without this shift, Police will remain vulnerable to risks that could and should be anticipated and managed at an enterprise level.

Police leadership need to own this function: actively monitoring, challenging, and governing risk and assurance. The risk and assurance function needs a strong line to the Executive, and the risk and assurance committee needs to be supercharged with a mandate to drive more effective oversight and assurance.

There needs to be a cultural shift in how Police leaders think about risk and assurance. They need to see this function as part of sustaining and delivering public value. The organisation must recognise that risk is inherent in its operations and adopt a proactive approach to defining risk appetite, communicating it clearly, and embedding risk thinking into decision-making at all levels.

Appendix 1

Agency and

Environmental

Context

About New Zealand Police

New Zealand Police is responsible for preventing crime, law enforcement, and enhancing and maintaining public safety. Police's vision is for New Zealand to be the safest country. Its mission and purpose is to prevent crime and harm, so everyone is safe and feels safe.

Police is a government department and instrument of the Crown. It is not classified as a public service department under the Public Service Act 2020. However, while operating outside the core Public Service, Police remains accountable to the principles of the Public Service Act and is subject to the Public Finance Act 1989.

Police operates under a broad legislative framework that defines its powers, responsibilities, and obligations. Core legislation includes the Policing Act 2008, which sets out Police's purpose and functions; the Crimes Act 1961, which is the primary enactment for defining criminal offences, though not the only one (for example, the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975 and Land Transport Act 1998 also create offences central to Police's work). The Summary Offences Act 1981 covers a range of lower-level offences, including, but not limited to, public order matters; it also includes forgery and fraud offences. Notably, the Crimes Act itself spans both serious and lower-level public order offences, such as riot and breach of peace.

Operational powers are shaped by the Search and Surveillance Act 2012, Evidence Act 2006, and Land Transport Act 1998. The New Zealand Bill of Rights Act 1990 ensures individual rights are upheld during Police interactions. Police must also comply with the Privacy Act 2020 and the Official Information Act 1982, which govern personal data handling and public access to Police-held information.

Additional legislation includes the Arms Act 1983, Coroners Act 2006, Child Protection (Child Sex Offender Government Agency Registration) Act 2016, and the Criminal Records (Clean Slate) Act 2004, each guiding specific aspects of Police work.

Current Police strategy

New Zealand Police's current strategy is defined in Police's Our Business, which focuses on delivering three core goals: Service, Safety and Trust. These goals shape how Police operates, engages with communities, and delivers value for the public.

Commissioner Richard Chambers has also outlined four organisational priorities that underpin this strategy:

- **Focus on core policing** – Enforcing the law through prevention, response, investigations, and resolutions. This includes disrupting organised crime and gang activity through targeted operations such as Highwater, Embargo, and Cobalt, which reinforce Police's commitment to core policing and public safety.
- **Supporting the frontline** – Enhancing staff safety, wellbeing, and capability. Police are recruiting 500 new constables, expanding tactical training, and establishing the Auckland Police College campus to strengthen frontline readiness and ensure staff are equipped to meet operational demands.
- **Visible and accountable leadership** – Fostering leadership that is connected, supportive, and responsible. Police are working to reduce District Court case backlogs and improve prosecution services, demonstrating leadership responsiveness to justice system pressures and public expectations.
- **Fiscal responsibility** – Identifying opportunities to reinvest in core frontline services and manage resources effectively. This includes expanding Community Beat Teams and retail crime prevention programmes, which deliver high-impact outcomes while maintaining cost-efficiency.

Together, these priorities reinforce Police's commitment to core policing, operational excellence, and public confidence.

Operational Independence

New Zealand Police maintains operational independence to uphold the rule of law and police impartially. Under section 16 of the Policing Act, the Commissioner of Police must act independently in all operational matters. This includes the maintenance of order, enforcement of law, investigation and prosecution of offences, and decisions about individual Police employees.

While operationally independent, the Commissioner is accountable to the Minister of Police for administrative matters. These include the overall conduct of Police, effective, efficient and economical management, providing advice to the Minister and implementing any lawful ministerial directions.

Organisational structure

Police operate 12 Districts across New Zealand, with support and oversight from a national headquarters in Wellington and national service centres. Each District is led by a District Commander and a District leadership team that includes Area Commanders, District Prevention, Operations, and Investigations Managers who oversee daily operations. A map of district locations is available on the [Police website](#).

Police's executive structure consists of the Commissioner of Police, two Deputy Commissioners, and a Chief Operating Officer (COO). The Deputy Commissioners are appointed by the Governor-General on advice of the Prime Minister and hold office at the pleasure of the Governor-General.

The Deputy Commissioners support the Commissioner to lead and manage the performance of the organisation, support good governance, and enhance the culture, integrity, and reputation of New Zealand Police. Each Deputy has responsibility for the oversight of specific operational and strategic areas as assigned by the Commissioner.

The COO provides a focal point for driving capability at the strategic level. The COO is a single point of accountability for building corporate enabling services and specialist support. The COO is responsible for overseeing specific functions and portfolios designated by the Commissioner, such as, policy and planning, financial management, human resources, information and communications technology, other infrastructure and capability needs, and legal services.

Workforce

Police employ over 15,700 staff across the country. This workforce comprises of constabulary Police officers, authorised officers (who are able to exercise a limited set of policing powers) and other employees. This combination helps Police deliver its functions effectively and respond to a wide range of operational needs.

Between 2015 and 2024, the New Zealand Police experienced significant growth in both constabulary staff and other employees. Constabulary numbers increased by 1,733 FTEs (a 19.4 percent rise), reaching a peak of 10,757 in 2023 before slightly declining to 10,656 in 2024. Meanwhile, other employee numbers grew by 1,853 FTEs (a 63.2 percent increase), rising steadily from 2,932 in 2015 to 4,785 in 2024. The ratio of other employees to constabulary staff also increased.

Constabulary employees hold the Office of Constable under the Policing Act 2008, which gives them legal powers to arrest and enforce the law. They carry out frontline duties such as responding to emergency incidents, preventing crime, investigating offences, and resolving cases. All constabulary recruits train at the Royal New Zealand Police College and swear an oath to the Crown.

Other employees support Police in roles across the organisation, including in policy, administration, intelligence and emergency call centres. Their skills and expertise help Police operate efficiently and deliver specialist services. Most other employees do not have enforcement powers, with the exception being those who the Commissioner authorises by warrant under section 24 of the Act to exercise any power of a constable, or perform one or more policing role. In this scenario, an employee becomes an **Authorised Officer**. In practice, Authorised Officers can carry out limited constabulary powers that are relevant to the duties they perform, such as managing people in Police custody, enforcing transport regulations, or conducting specialist investigations. However, they do not hold the powers to arrest.

Specialist units within Police hold a distinct purpose, and include, but are not limited to, the National Organised Crime Group, National Intelligence Centre, Armed Offenders Squad, Special Tactics Group, Dive Squad and the Financial Crime Group. Police also participate in multi-agency initiatives such

as Puāwaitahi, New Zealand’s first child protection multi-agency centre, based in Auckland.

Police deliver a range of programmes aimed at enhancing resolution and prevention through alternative justice pathways. These include Te Pae Oranga, a community-based initiative that offers non-judicial responses to low-level offending, and Fast Track, which supports timely interventions for young people who offend.

To strengthen internal capability and frontline readiness, Police have also implemented the Tactical Response Model, which expands tactical training, improves equipment, and enhances support for frontline staff in high-risk situations.

International

Police work internationally, through Interpol and key liaison posts, to prevent crime before it reaches New Zealand, supporting national security and public safety. Police Liaison Officers are deployed in key global locations to strengthen cooperation with foreign law enforcement, facilitate intelligence

sharing, support investigations into transnational organised crime, and assist with extraditions and international security matters.³¹ Their work enables early intervention in cross-border threats and ensures New Zealand benefits from global policing expertise.

Closer to home, the Pacific Policing Programme (PPP) supports improved security outcomes across several Pacific Island nations through effectively upholding the rule of law. The Officer Safety Pacific (OSP) Programme is embedded within the PPP and enhances policing services through tailored training and the implementation of Tactical Options Frameworks. Active in several Pacific nations, OSP aims to certify over 150 trainers and train 3,000 frontline staff. The Pacific Detector Dog Programme (PDDP), based in Wellington and supported by NZ Customs, has deployed 16 dogs across four countries, contributing to major drug seizures, including nearly four tonnes of methamphetamine in Fiji in 2024. These initiatives are vital to strengthening regional security, building capability, and supporting international policing partnerships.

Vote Police funding breakdown for 2025/26:

Category	Amount (Millions NZD)	Share of Total
Investigations and Case Resolution	\$971.0	30.6 percent
Primary Response Management	\$880.0	27.7 percent
Crime Prevention Services	\$613.0	19.3 percent
Road Safety Programme	\$466.0	14.7 percent
Capital Expenditure	\$154.0	4.9 percent
Arms Safety and Control	\$77.0	2.4 percent
Policy Advice and Ministerial Services	\$12.0	0.4 percent
Search and Rescue Activities	\$1.1	<0.1 percent
Third Party Crime Prevention & UN Drug Control	\$0.561	0.1 percent
Compensation for Confiscated Firearms	\$0.01	<0.1 percent

³¹ Liaison Officers are based in London, The Hague, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Hong Kong, Beijing, Canberra, Melbourne, Sydney, Suva, Los Angeles, Washington DC.

Funding

New Zealand Police is primarily funded through Vote Police, which is appropriated by Parliament via the annual Budget process. For Police, cost pressures have escalated since 2021/22, to a point where Police could no longer manage within existing baselines without risking service and staffing levels. For example, property-related costs rose 39 percent from \$78.5 million in 2021/22 to \$112.4 million in 2024/25, with only \$3.6 million in funding received to offset this increase. In Budget 2025, Police sought \$207.1 million annually to cover cost pressures, including \$70.9 million for unfunded FTE growth since 2021. Ultimately, \$120 million per annum was approved and cost savings options were explored.

Police's role within the System

New Zealand Police operates within a deeply collaborative framework, partnering across government, iwi, and community sectors to address complex social and criminal challenges. Achieving its mission of keeping people safe requires collaboration across multiple sectors.

Police also contributes to governance bodies such as the Justice Sector Leadership Board (JSLB) and plays a key role in achieving Government Targets 3 and 4 to reduce youth offending and violent crime.³² Beyond enforcement, Police maintains over 250 Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) across sectors including emergency management, law enforcement, health, iwi and community prevention, security and intelligence, and international cooperation. These agreements underpin extensive stakeholder engagement with iwi Māori, Pasifika and ethnic communities, NGOs, and victims' advocacy groups. Initiatives like Te Pae Oranga Iwi Community Panels exemplify restorative justice in action, offering culturally grounded alternatives to prosecution that focus on rehabilitation and accountability. Police also works closely with Victim Support under a longstanding MOU to ensure victims receive emotional and practical assistance. This broad network of partnerships ensures policing in New Zealand remains prevention-focused, inclusive, and responsive to diverse community needs.

Upstream, social agencies address drivers of harm before they escalate into criminal offending. Oranga Tamariki focuses on child protection and youth

justice, while the Ministry of Social Development provides income support and welfare. Health, housing, and education agencies also play critical roles in reducing vulnerability and promoting wellbeing. These agencies partner with Police through initiatives such as the Oranga Tamariki Action Plan and joint child protection protocols, which aim to prevent harm and support families at risk. Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) operate nationally and locally to drive better outcomes and avoid criminal proceedings. Police steps in when there are concerns of criminal activity or imminent threats.

Downstream, Police is embedded within the criminal justice system alongside the Ministry of Justice, the Courts, Crown Law, and the Department of Corrections. While Police holds powers of arrest and manages most prosecutions, it does not set policy; rather, it implements legislation developed by the Ministry of Justice, such as firearms and gang laws. Coordination occurs through governance bodies like the JSLB, which brings together Chief Executives from Police, Justice, Corrections, Oranga Tamariki, Crown Law, and the Serious Fraud Office to drive system-wide priorities.

Within the justice pipeline, the Police Prosecution Service (PPS) manages most category 1–3 prosecutions in District Courts, from first appearance through trial (except jury trials, which are handled by Crown Law). PPS also oversees bail decisions and diversion schemes, balancing accountability with restorative outcomes. After Police's role concludes, cases where an individual is convicted and sentenced are typically handled by Corrections or the Courts. Initiatives such as the Criminal Process Improvement Programme (CPIP) further integrate Police with Courts and Corrections to reduce delays and improve case progression.

Beyond justice, Police contributes to national security through intelligence and threat assessment, working alongside the NZ Security Intelligence Service and the Government Communications Security Bureau under the framework led by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet. This interconnected landscape reflects a whole-of-government approach where Police maintains strong partnerships with other agencies to prevent harm, respond to crime, and uphold public safety.

³² Note: Police also have a role within other Targets, however these are the ones that require the most attention.

Commissioner's Focus Forums

Community, iwi, and sector partners play an integral role in Police's ability to deliver on its strategic goals. The Commissioner's Focus Forums provide an invaluable place for the Commissioner to seek advice on issues, risks and opportunities facing the organisation. The purpose of the Commissioner's Māori Focus Forum is to provide guidance and advice to the Commissioner to:

- enable Police to meet its obligations under the Treaty of Waitangi and the Māori-Crown relationship
- contribute to building a safer New Zealand through strategic leadership of issues relevant to improving wellbeing outcomes for whānau Māori, hapū, and iwi
- support Police to develop and maintain mutually beneficial and collaborative relationships with iwi Māori to improve the overall wellbeing of New Zealand communities.

Similarly, the Commissioner's Pasifika Focus Forum and the Commissioner's Ethnic Focus Forum also provide culturally-specific guidance and advice to the Commissioner. Both forums contribute to building a safer New Zealand and improving the trust, confidence and overall wellbeing of New Zealand communities.

These forums allow for direct engagement on the risks and opportunities for preventing crime and harm in New Zealand's Māori, Pasifika and Ethnic communities. The insights and feedback gained from these Forums are an important input into the strategic planning, tasking, and coordination functions of Police.

Oversight of Police

New Zealand Police operates within a comprehensive regulatory framework that promotes accountability and public trust. This includes independent bodies such as the Independent Police Conduct Authority (IPCA), which investigates complaints, monitors detention conditions under OPCAT, and conducts thematic reviews like its inquiry into the 2022 parliamentary protests. Additional scrutiny comes from the Office of the Ombudsman, the Auditor-General, the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, WorkSafe New Zealand, and the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), which reviews potential miscarriages of justice. The Independent Children's Monitor (ICM) also assesses Police engagement with tamariki and rangatahi under the Oversight of Oranga Tamariki System Act 2022. Police performance is further examined through formal inquiries such as the Waitangi Tribunal's Mana Wāhine and Justice System Kaupapa Inquiries.

Police also actively supports and contributes to several Royal Commissions of Inquiry (RCOIs), which provide independent, in-depth reviews of systemic issues. These include the RCOI into Historical Abuse in State Care and Faith-based Institutions, the RCOI into Lessons Learned from New Zealand's COVID-19 Response, and the Government Inquiry into the North Island Severe Weather Events. Police involvement typically includes supplying information, participating in interviews, and supporting the implementation of recommendations. This engagement ensures that inquiry findings are informed by operational realities and contributes to cross-agency reforms. The ongoing nature of these inquiries—such as Phase Two of the COVID-19 RCOI—highlights Police's evolving role in supporting national accountability and shaping future policy and practice.

Recently announced, Police will soon have an Inspector-General of Police to strengthen systemic oversight and executive-level accountability.

Emerging Policing Environment

Enduring demand for core policing

Core policing refers to the foundational responsibilities of Police – such as responding to violent crime, theft, maintaining public order, focusing on victims and working to support NZTA in their leadership of enforcing road safety. Crime rates in New Zealand tend to go through cycles – but crime types never disappear.³³ Targeted policing interventions can reduce particular offences, but new forms of harm continue to emerge. Looking across the next five-year horizon, the mix of offending may differ, but the overall demand for these core policing services likely endures.

Family Harm

Between 2019 and 2023, Police recorded a steady rise in Family Harm Investigations (FHIs), peaking at 178,113 in 2023, up from 153,500 in 2019. Although 2024 saw a slight decline to 171,610, volumes remain historically high, underscoring sustained demand for frontline Police intervention. Reported victimisations involving other violent offending such as assault, sexual assault, or aggravated robbery also climbed, reaching 50,089 in 2023. These figures highlight both the complexity and persistence of family harm, requiring ongoing investment in prevention and support services.

Youth crime

Youth offending has remained relatively stable over the past six years, with 13,774 proceedings recorded in 2024. This was similar to previous years except for a spike in 2023 (15,047). Most proceedings result in Non-Court Actions, such as Youth Aid interventions or Alternative Action Plans, reflecting a strong emphasis on rehabilitation over prosecution. However, an average of 3,587 cases annually proceed to Court Action, which by law is a last resort following consultation with Oranga Tamariki.

Reoffending remains a challenge for Police, with approximately 36 percent of youth offending classified as ‘historic,’ meaning the offender committed a similar offence within the previous 36 months.

Violent crime

Serious and violent crime in New Zealand has fluctuated over the past decade. According to the New Zealand Crime and Victims Survey (NZCVS), approximately 185,000 adults were victims of violent crime in 2023, including physical assault, sexual assault, and robbery. This represented a 51 percent increase in violent crime since 2018, before dropping by 2 percent in 2024 – the first decrease in six years. Serious assaults resulting in injury make up the largest share of violent offences, accounting for around 62 percent of all assault victimisations between 2015 and 2023.

Over the past decade, New Zealand’s homicide rate has remained relatively stable, averaging around 1.1–1.5 homicides per 100,000 people (equivalent to approximately 11–15 per 1,000,000). Between 2007 and 2022, there were 1,174 homicide victims in total, with males comprising 66 percent of victims and Māori and European ethnicities each accounting for roughly one-third. About three-quarters of these cases were murders rather than manslaughter, and 15 percent were linked to intimate partner violence, disproportionately affecting women (75 percent of victims in this category). Children under five represented 10 percent of total homicide victims.

Despite population growth of approximately 17 percent over the past decade (from 4.5 million in 2015 to 5.32 million in mid-2025), the homicide rate has remained broadly consistent. In an international context, New Zealand’s rate of 1.46 per 100,000 (2025 estimate) is significantly lower than the OECD average and well below countries such as the United States (5.76 per 100,000) and Canada (1.98 per 100,000), but slightly higher than Australia (0.85 per 100,000).

Theft

Theft and related offences remain among the most prevalent crimes in New Zealand, imposing significant social and economic costs. In 2023, property offences accounted for 28 percent of all reported crime, with burglary, retail crime, and motor vehicle theft driving much of the increase. Burglary continues to rank among the top three reported offences, with 43 percent of incidents reported to

Police in 2023, likely due to the need to report such crime for insurance purposes.

Retail crime alone costs businesses an estimated \$2.6 billion annually, with media coverage of ram raids and shoplifting surging in recent years. Targeted Police operations have slowed growth, yet theft from retail premises rose 11 percent in 2024. Motor vehicle theft has also escalated sharply, increasing 47 percent between 2022 and 2023, with links to both organised crime and more opportunistic offending. These trends highlight the need for coordinated prevention strategies across communities and industries.

White collar crime

White-collar crime, encompassing fraud, deception, and cyber-enabled financial scams, poses a growing threat to individuals and businesses. In 2021, around 8 percent of adults, approximately 318,000 people, reported being victims of fraud or deception, making it the most common offence type ahead of burglary and harassment. Offences range from benefit and insurance fraud to sophisticated online scams, with cyber-enabled crime presenting unique enforcement challenges due to offshore offenders and the emergence of under-regulated cryptocurrency markets. While the Crimes Act 1961 prescribes penalties of up to seven years for serious cases, detection and prosecution remain difficult. Agencies such as the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Financial Markets Authority, and Inland Revenue focus on systemic or high-value corporate crime, while Police address everyday fraud affecting households and small firms. The rise of digital platforms has amplified risk, underscoring the need for enhanced cyber-security measures and cross-border cooperation.

Road safety offences

Alcohol remains a leading factor in serious crashes. Police data shows fluctuating enforcement levels, with breath tests sometimes falling below deterrent thresholds. The 2024–2027 Road Policing Investment Programme (RPIP) aims to increase roadside alcohol breath tests to 3.3 million annually, with 65 percent conducted during high-risk times. Convictions for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs have declined overall since 2014, but remain substantial at over 15,000 convictions in 2024, with men accounting for nearly 80 percent of offenders. Despite enforcement efforts, alcohol/drug involvement was recorded in 138 fatal crashes and 293 serious injury crashes in 2023, causing 155 deaths and 413 serious injuries.

Drug-impaired driving has become a significant contributor to road trauma. Between 2019 and 2022, crashes involving drug drivers claimed an average of 105 lives annually, accounting for roughly 30 percent of all road deaths. Enforcement has historically lagged behind alcohol testing, but recent policy changes have introduced roadside drug testing targets of 50,000 tests per year under the RPIP. The first of these tests began its pilot in Wellington in December 2025. This reflects a growing recognition of drug impairment as a major safety risk.

Road deaths have shown variability over the last six years but remain high. In 2023, 341 people died on New Zealand roads, with 155 deaths linked to alcohol or drugs and 94 deaths involving speed. Year-to-date figures for 2025 suggest a slight improvement compared to 2023, but fatalities remain above 240 by mid-November. The social cost of crashes continues to rise, reflecting not only fatalities but also serious injuries and long-term impacts on small and rural communities in particular.

Expanding digital environment

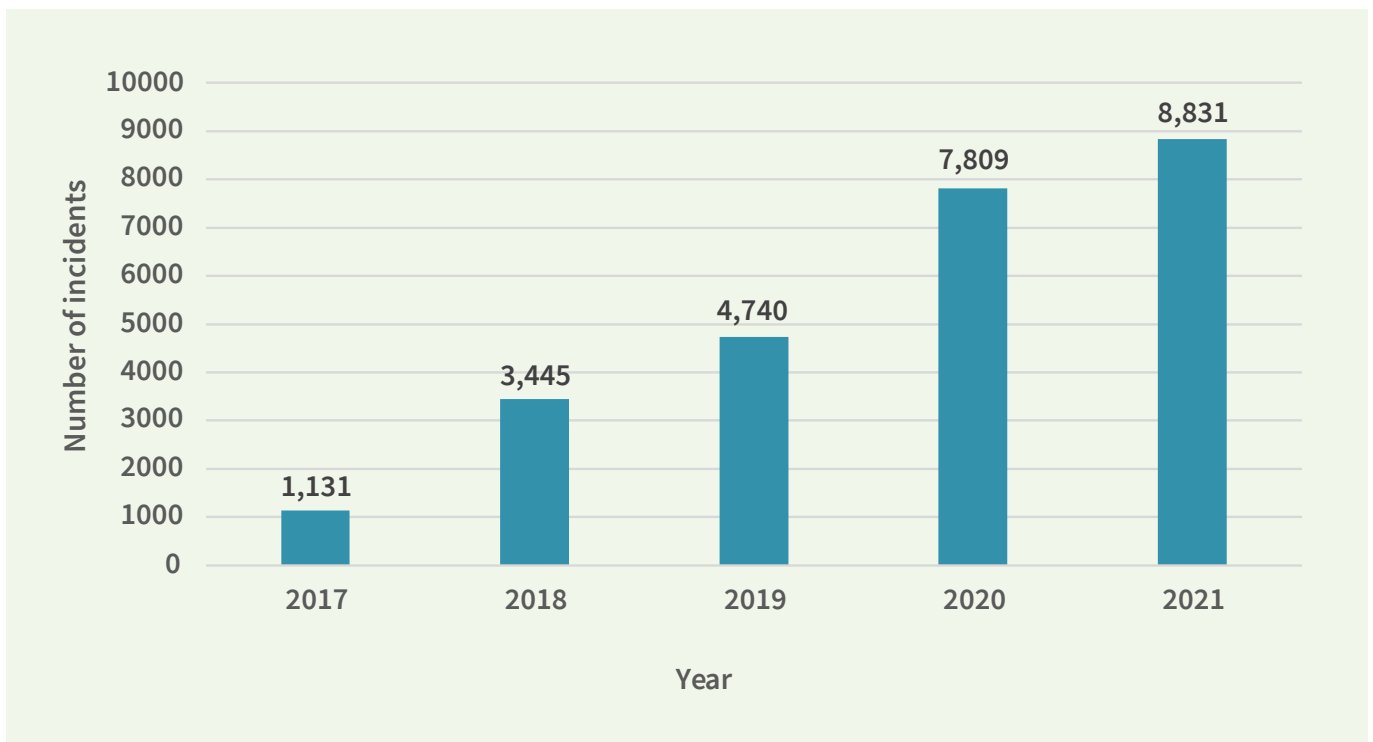
Digital technologies are increasingly used to commit, facilitate, conceal, and amplify harm. This trend has already advanced to the degree that New Zealanders are currently more likely to suffer fraud or cybercrime than interpersonal violence. Police report that most crimes today now have a digital technology component. In coming years, this trends towards increasing digital crime will continue.

CERT NZ data documents the rapid rise in digital crime in recent years. There were approximately 1,100 digital incident reports in 2017 rising to a peak of 8,831 in 2021 (incident reports have remained at these elevated levels ever since). Phishing, credential

harvesting, scams, and fraud makes up the majority of harms faced by New Zealanders.

Official reporting likely understates the scale and impact of these digital incidents. MBIE analysis of data from large financial institutions estimated actual scam losses at NZ\$198 million in 2023 – nearly eleven times greater than the \$18.3 million recorded by CERT NZ in that same year.³⁵ The NZCVS suggests that only 10 percent of fraud and cybercrime incidents were reported to the Police. Given this underreporting, the true cost of digital crime could easily run into the hundreds of millions.

CERT NZ reported incidents³⁴



³⁴ CERT NZ. (2022). 2021 Report Summary. Wellington: CERT NZ.

³⁵ Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment. (4 December 2024). All-of-government approach to online financial scams (Proactive release). <https://www.mbie.govt.nz/dmsdocument/29933-all-of-government-approach-to-online-financial-scams-proactiverelase-pdf>.

Digital technology as a harm multiplier

Digital technology is a force multiplier amplifying the scale, speed, and reach of criminal activity, which causes greater harm and re-victimisation. This trend will continue as the capabilities and applications of digital technologies continue to expand (see table below detailing the layers of digital crime). At the same time, accessibility is improving through widely available toolkits and crime-as-a-service platforms, enabling even non-specialist actors to carry out sophisticated digital offences.³⁶

Layers of digital crime

Layer	Description	Examples
1. Attacks on Systems (Cyber-dependent crimes)	These are direct technical attacks on digital systems and infrastructure. The goal is to disrupt, take control of, or damage systems.	Hacking into networks, Distributed Denial of Service (DDoS) attacks, ransomware (locking systems for payment), malicious software (malware), and compromising software supply chains.
2. Attacks on Assets (Cyber-enabled crimes)	These crimes use digital tools to steal money, data, or other assets. They often scale up traditional crimes using technology.	Online fraud, stealing identities, tricking businesses via email (business email compromise), cryptocurrency scams, digital blackmail, and sharing illegal content online.
3. Attacks on People (Digitally-mediated crimes)	These involve manipulating or influencing people through digital platforms. Technology is used to amplify harmful behaviour.	Phishing (tricking people into giving up information), online grooming, fake investment schemes, crimes organised with help from artificial intelligence (AI) and large language models (LLMs), and online coercion.
4. Attacks on Trust (Digital-integrity crimes)	These crimes aim to damage public trust in information, media, or institutions by spreading false or misleading content.	Deepfakes (realistic fake videos), disinformation using synthetic media, fake records, and tampered evidence.
5. Enabling Technologies (Infrastructure that supports digital crime)	These are technologies that support or enable all the other types of digital crime. They help criminals hide, scale up, or automate their activities.	Encryption tools and anonymous networks, networks of infected devices (botnets), software that helps exploit systems (exploit kits), automation using AI and LLMs, online marketplaces for criminal services (Crime-as-a-Service), misuse of Internet of Things (IoT) devices and industrial systems, manipulation of data flows, and spoofing using quantum or biometric technologies.

As digital tools reshape the criminal landscape (we comment on organised crime and transnational applications in the following sections), public expectations for faster and more transparent responses to digital harm will continue to grow. This will pressure policing, as traditional investigative models built around physical evidence rapidly adapt to complex, technology-driven environments. At the same time, digital evidence is becoming increasingly fragmented across formats, jurisdictions, and platforms, which complicates prosecution efforts.

³⁶Europol. (2024). Internet Organised Crime Threat Assessment (IOCTA) 2024. Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

Increasing scale and scope of organised crime

Organised crime has always been a part of New Zealand’s criminal landscape. However, in recent years, organised crime and associated violence and drug-related harms have increased across communities.

Police have seen gang membership double in New Zealand since 2011. We have also seen new gangs such as the Comancheros and Mongols establish themselves in New Zealand because of Australian “501” deportations.³⁷ These gangs have introduced more violent tactics, which have raised tensions with legacy New Zealand gangs. Smaller, agile networks have also started to emerge, often structured around family, cultural, or online ties rather than territorial control.

Recent efforts to address organised crime – including the implementation of the Gangs Act 2024 and sustained Police operations targeting organised criminal groups – respond directly to this trend of intensifying organised crime. While Police cannot predict what gang membership numbers may be in five years’ time, Police expect to see layers of criminal groups undertaking increasingly sophisticated and wider ranges of criminal activity, enabled by digital technologies, corporatisation, and transnational integration.

Growth of the digitally enabled, internationally networked criminal enterprise

Organised criminal groups are becoming increasingly structured, strategic, and internationalised (we discuss this theme in the next section). Many groups have moved from informal collectives to structured enterprises using company fronts, professional advisers, and digital tools to organise, conceal, and expand their activity.

These developments have increased criminal infiltration into the formal economy. Front companies, false invoicing, and complex ownership structures are being used to launder profits. Hybrid models where front companies operate alongside legitimate businesses further disguise criminal revenue. Construction, real estate, and hospitality

will remain high-risk sectors for money laundering and criminal infiltration, due to high cash flow and complex ownership structures.

Technology is accelerating this transformation. Encrypted communication, cryptocurrency, and digital marketplaces enable coordination and money movement across jurisdictions with minimal traceability. The growth of “crime-as-a-service” models allows access to hacking tools, identity data, and fraud capabilities on demand, extending the reach of organised crime into financial and cyber domains.

The use of technology and corporate structures also expands the opportunities for criminal activity. Drugs will remain a primary area of activity, but we can expect increases in money laundering, firearms trafficking, migrant and labour exploitation, and cyber-enabled fraud. Single criminal networks will also increasingly diversify their activity, trafficking drugs, committing cyber-enabled fraud, and laundering proceeds through local businesses and offshore accounts simultaneously.

Rising transnational threats

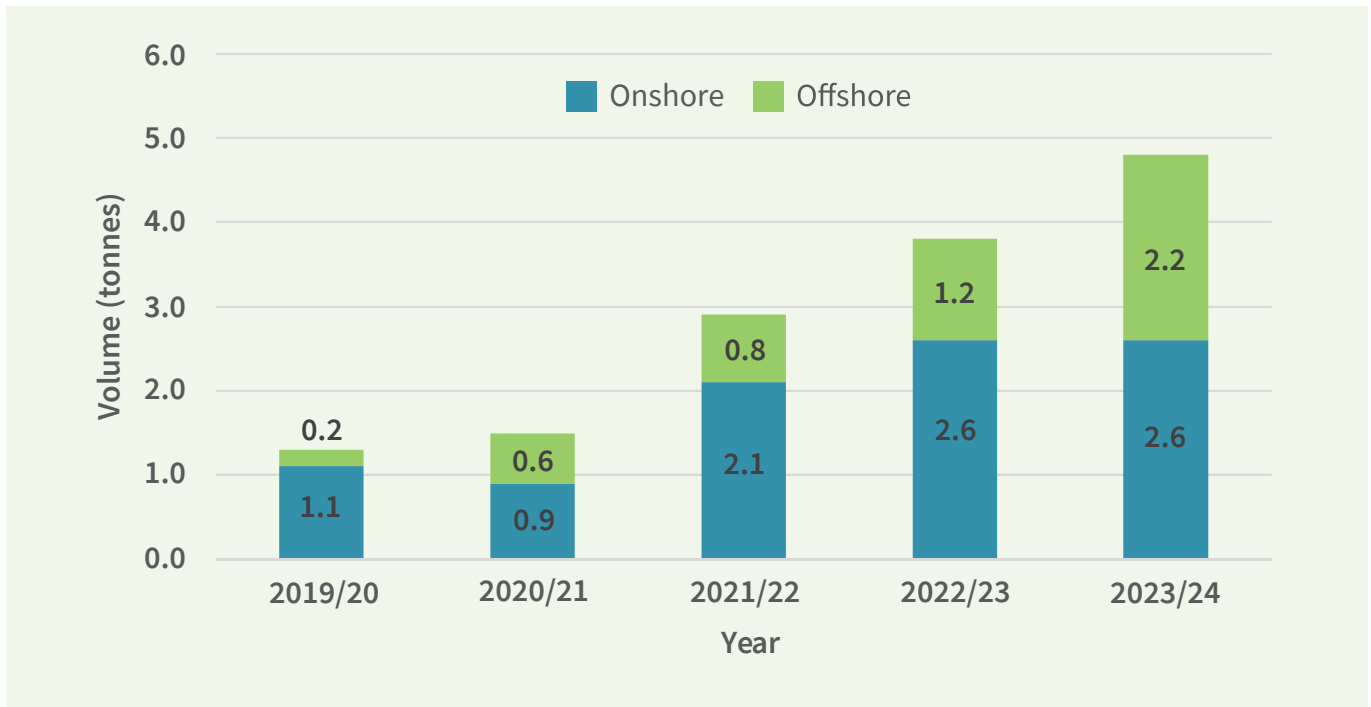
Organised crime in New Zealand increasingly originates from overseas.³⁸ As organised crime continues to expand in New Zealand, Police expect offshore actors to increasingly impact our criminal environment.

Historically, New Zealand has been viewed as a remote and small market with limited interest from global organised crime groups. However, this is changing as criminal groups from China and Southeast Asia and Latin America establish their presence in New Zealand. These groups are integrating New Zealand into the international drugs supply chain (see figure 2 below). Despite growing drug seizures, drug consumption is not decreasing which indicates that these supply chains are resilient in the face of onshore and offshore disruption activity. Going forward, New Zealand will continue to be an end point for criminal supply chains, with transnational organised crime groups continuing to view New Zealand as the “golden nugget” due to the high prices users are willing to pay for illicit drugs at the street level.

³⁷ Gilbert, J. (2024). The Gang Influence on New Zealand Prisons. Research Solutions / Department of Corrections.

³⁸ Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime. (2025, March 31). TSOC-MAG 25/01: March Report – Combatting Transnational, Serious and Organised Crime. New Zealand Customs Service.

Methamphetamine seizures by Customs and offshore partners



Going forward, criminal groups will increasingly exploit the fragmented regulatory and enforcement environment that exists across various countries. We will see scenarios where criminal groups communicate through one country, finance through another, and physically ship criminal goods through a third. Digital tools such as cryptocurrencies, online remittance channels, and digital assets further facilitate the flow of criminal funds in ways that are hard to detect and recover.

Crime and security concerns are overlapping

The boundaries between criminal activity and national security risk will continue to blur in the coming years. Organised crime groups, cybercriminals, and foreign state actors increasingly use the same tools and ecosystems and share targets. For example, a ransomware attack gained control of the Waikato District Health Board’s hospital IT systems in 2021, disrupting surgeries and patient care. This attack was orchestrated by an offshore ransomware group.

With increasing geopolitical tensions, and the rising use of hybrid warfare, state actors may increasingly conduct cyber intrusions, data theft, and market manipulation using criminal techniques that offer plausible deniability. Responding to these threats effectively will require even stronger international co-operation.

Constantly evolving foundations of public trust and confidence

Police draws its mandate from the public’s trust and confidence. This trust is built on perceptions of safety, responsiveness, and strong community partnerships. While these foundations remain constant, the way Police upholds them is continually evolving. Rapid social, political, and technological change means expectations of policing are becoming more complex, demanding, and diverse.

Integrity is the cornerstone of trust and confidence. For Police, this means consistently demonstrating honesty, acting ethically, and operating within the law while upholding organisational standards. Integrity also requires transparency in decision-making, avoiding conflicts of interest, and meeting the Commissioner’s expectations for professional conduct. Through these commitments, Police remain a trusted institution that the public can rely on for fairness and justice.

Police also have a constitutional and operational responsibility to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi. This commitment is expressed through genuine partnership with Māori, enabling participatory decision-making and co-design of strategies that affect iwi, hapū, and whānau. Police work to ensure equitable access to justice for Māori and to reduce disparities in outcomes, guided by the

Treaty principles of partnership, participation, and protection. Initiatives such as the Commissioner’s Māori Focus Forum, cultural competency programmes, and strategies like *Te Huringa o Te Tai* demonstrate efforts to embed Te Ao Māori perspectives into policing. By honouring the Treaty, Police strengthens trust with Māori communities and contributes to a safer, more inclusive Aotearoa.

Public expectations of Police effectiveness are also shifting. Communities increasingly expect Police to go beyond traditional enforcement roles and address broader social challenges—from mental health to youth offending. Looking ahead, expectations will include greater cultural competence, particularly toward Asian communities, which are projected to become New Zealand’s second-largest demographic. Transparent and ethical use of advanced technologies, such as surveillance tools, facial recognition, and algorithmic decision-making, will further redefine what effectiveness means in policing.

The rise of multiple ‘publics’ adds another layer of complexity. Distinct and often divergent groups, shaped by identity, political beliefs, and lived experience, hold different views on policing. The COVID-19 response highlighted this fragmentation: even within households, opinions varied on whether Police had overstepped their authority or failed to enforce lockdowns strongly enough. Social media and alternative information sources will continue to amplify these differences, influencing perceptions of policing effectiveness, legitimacy, and authority.

Appendix 2

Methodology

Process and

Results

About this Review

This Performance Improvement Review was undertaken in late 2025 and assessed all aspects of New Zealand Police's performance. This report presents the findings of the Review which draws on Police's self-review, corporate documents, and insights from interviews and workshops with ministers, Police staff, partner agencies, stakeholders, and central agency officials.

Purpose of Performance Improvement Reviews

The Performance Improvement Review Programme (the Programme) is an initiative to lift agency and system performance across the Public Sector, advance the Government's priorities, drive value for money, and achieve better results and outcomes for New Zealanders.

The key feature of the Programme is the independent future-focused reviews that inform the direction and performance of public sector

agencies and drive a culture of continuous improvement. These reviews are sequenced to complement other performance initiatives, and to support chief executives when they are relatively new to an agency. As more reviews are completed, the Programme will also provide robust insights on where system-level improvements are required.

Performance Improvement Reviews are undertaken by experienced independent Lead Reviewers (mostly former chief executives and governance experts), who bring a deep understanding of the Public Service operating environment and expertise in building high-performing organisations. Reviews drive discussions on an agency's desired future state, identify capability gaps impacting on its performance, and highlight opportunities to address these gaps over the medium term. They also provide a lever for ministers to shape the long-term direction, focus, and performance of their agencies.

Performance Improvement Review Model

Future Excellence Horizon

What is the contribution that New Zealand needs from the agency and what is its performance challenge?

Results

Government priorities How well positioned is the agency to deliver on the Government’s priorities?

Core functions For each of the agency’s core functions:

- What does the core function need to deliver to achieve the Future Excellence Horizon?
- What is required for the core function to be effectively and efficiently delivering what is needed?

Organisational management

Leadership and direction	Purpose, vision and strategy	1	How well do the agency’s staff and stakeholders understand and support its purpose, vision and strategy?
		2	How well does the agency use long-term thinking and its strategy to plan and drive delivery?
	Leadership	3	How well does the senior leadership team collectively lead the agency and implement change?
		4	How well does the agency take accountability for and lead the improvement of relevant system or sector level results?
	Values, behaviour and culture	5	How well does the agency develop and promote the organisational culture it needs to achieve its strategic direction?
	Governance	6	How well does the agency use governance arrangements to drive performance and deliver value-for-money?
Delivery	Services to customers, clients and citizens	7	How well does the agency understand the needs of customers, clients, and citizens, and use these to innovate and deliver better services and outcomes?
		8	How well does the agency integrate services with its partners and providers to deliver value to customers, clients and citizens?
	Performance and accountability	9	How well does the agency use performance information to drive continuous improvement and accountability for results?

Engagement	Engagement with Ministers	10	How well does the agency provide advice and services to Ministers?
	Māori-Crown relationship	11	How well does the agency develop and maintain the capability to engage with Māori and to understand Māori perspectives to drive better outcomes?
	Engagement with stakeholders	12	How well does the agency engage with stakeholders, in ways that are effective, open, transparent and accessible?
Workforce	Talent management and workforce development	13	How well does the agency identify, develop and manage its talent?
		14	How well does the agency anticipate and respond to future workforce capacity and capability requirements?
	Workforce Performance	15	How well does the agency encourage and drive high performance and continuous improvement in its workforce?
		16	How well does the agency address performance that is not meeting expectations?
	Staff engagement	17	How well does the agency develop and maintain a highly committed and engaged workforce?
		18	How well does the agency manage its employee relations?
Financial management, data and risk	Investment and asset management	19	How well does the agency manage its assets and balance sheet, to support service delivery, reduce operational risks and drive performance management?
	Strategic financial management and accountability	20	How well does the agency plan, direct, and control financial resources to drive efficient and effective delivery?
		21	How well does the agency integrate financial information into its decision making and manage its cost drivers to achieve fiscal sustainability?
	Data, analytics and digital technologies	22	How well does the agency manage and use data, analytics and digital technologies to drive decision making and effective delivery?
	Risk and assurance	23	How well does the agency identify and manage agency, Crown, and system risks to integrate risk awareness into its current operations and future opportunities?
		24	How well does the agency use assurance to effectively manage organisational risks and prioritise improvements to the internal control environment?

Performance ratings framework

Ratings help to clarify relative strengths and highlight the priority areas on which to focus, given the challenges, risks, and opportunities in the medium term. Ratings are applied in terms of the future the agency is preparing for (the Future Excellence Horizon) and how well positioned it is to deliver against this over the medium term.

Indicator/level	What it indicates
<p>LEADING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Best practice/excellent • High level of capability and sustained and consistently high levels of performance • Systems in place to monitor, forecast and build capability to meet future demands • Organisational learning and external benchmarking used to continuously evaluate and improve performance • Strong capability to deliver on the Future Excellence Horizon.
<p>EMBEDDING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capable • Delivering to expectations with examples of high levels of performance • Comprehensive and consistently good organisational practices and systems in place to support effective management • Evidence of attention given to identifying and addressing current and future demands and capability needs • Mostly aligned to delivering the Future Excellence Horizon.
<p>DEVELOPING</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Needing development • Adequate current performance but concerns about future performance • Areas where there is underperformance and/or capability gaps are recognised by the agency • Some current and future capability gaps are not clearly identified • Concerns for the agency having the ability to deliver on the future state.
<p>WEAK</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unaware or limited capability • Significant area(s) of critical weakness or concern in terms of delivery and/or current capability • Agency has limited or no awareness of critical weaknesses or concerns • Strategies or plans to respond to areas of weakness are either not in place or not likely to have sufficient impact • Very limited or no view of future opportunities and challenges for the agency.
<p>UNABLE TO RATE /NOT RATED</p> 	<p>There is either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evidence on which a judgement can be made; or • The evidence available does not enable a credible judgement to be made.

Stakeholders interviewed

Ministers

- Minister of Police
- Minister of Justice
- Minister for the Public Service
- Associate Minister of Police

Police staff at all levels throughout:

- Auckland City
- Counties Manukau
- Kāpiti Digital Centre
- Police National Headquarters
- Tasman
- Waitematā
- Wellington

Government Agencies

- Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Ministry of Justice
- New Zealand Security Intelligence Service
- NZ Customs Service
- Oranga Tamariki
- Treasury

Representatives from:

- Australia New Zealand Policing Advisory Agency
- Chief Victims Advisor
- Commissioner's Ethnic Focus Forum
- Commissioner's Māori Focus Forum
- Commissioner's Pasifika Focus Forum
- Independent Police Conduct Authority
- Meredith Connell
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Retail Crime
- Ministerial Advisory Group on Transnational and Serious Organised Crime
- Police Leaders Guild
- Police Association
- PHF Science
- Tūhoe Tribal Authority
- Victim Support NZ

Summary of Recommendations

Core function: Prevention

- **Establish a Digital Harm Prevention and Response Unit** – Scale current pilots such as the Anti-Scam Alliance and retail crime platforms into a permanent unit with specialist hires and tools to combat digital harms.
- **Implement offshore harm disruption strategy** – Police should formalise their harm disruption strategy for the Pacific (and other high-risk areas), with clear priorities, resourcing, and joint taskforce arrangements. Disruption metrics including seizures and time from intelligence to action should be reported through existing governance channels.

Core function: Response

- **Unify dispatch and enable real time deployment** – Replace the two Computer Aided Dispatch platforms with one national CAD. Enable automatic vehicle location (AVL) for all cars and secure location for officers, with “nearest capable unit” dispatch and live status of specialist resources (e.g. dog teams). Predictive analytics to position units when incident clusters emerge should also be considered.
- **Implement frontline-response scope and handover protocols** – Police should make their frontline policing scope explicit and apply it consistently nationwide. This includes establishing firm handover protocols with related services (such as family harm, social work, and mental health providers) to ensure Police can withdraw from non-core policing demand without leaving vulnerable people at risk.
- **Critical tools to support officer safety and tactical depth during high-risk operations** – Police need to identify priority investments and advance business cases for critical futureproofing capabilities. Police may wish to explore capabilities such as ATAK and BWC.
- **Investigate options for a modern, integrated 111 emergency communications platform** – Police, in partnership with relevant agencies, should assess options for upgrading the 111 system to meet future needs. This includes exploring solutions that support voice, text, video, location sharing, and real-time data exchange across agencies, while ensuring

resilience and strong governance.

- **Clarify responsibilities and operating arrangements for evolving areas of crime** – Lead work with justice, intelligence, defence, and regulatory agencies to clearly assign lead responsibilities for crime types where there are overlapping accountabilities, such as fraud, cybercrime and human trafficking. The framework should include a more unified operating model for transnational crime, enabling joint tasking, rapid intelligence sharing, and streamlined legal gateways so agencies can act collectively and at speed against serious threats.

Core function: Investigation

- **Deliver a targeted remedial training programme for supervisory ranks** – Roll out a staged, one-off training programme for Sergeants and Senior Sergeants to fill gaps in investigative skills and ensure consistent use of protocols and methods. Include practical modules on evidence handling, interviewing, and case continuity.
- **Embed an ongoing career-stage training framework** – Introduce a structured refresher programme at key career milestones – from recruit stage through to senior supervisory roles – to keep investigative skills current and reinforce best practice.
- **Strengthen forensic and digital evidence capability** – Expand forensic training for frontline officers so evidence meets scientific standards (e.g., fingerprints, DNA). Increase specialist training for cybercrime and fraud investigations, supported by better technology tools and international partnerships.
- **Strengthen foundational investigation training** – Focus Police College on core skills (scene observation, note taking, interviewing, evidence handling) with monitoring to ensure effectiveness.
- **Resource long and complex investigations** – Establish a dedicated, sustained resourcing model to support long and complex investigations and cases
- **Invest in technology to support investigations** – Deploy transcription and translation software to improve accuracy and efficiency in recording and processing interviews, especially in cases involving multiple languages.

Core function: Resolution

- **Lift courtroom and pre-trial capability** - Introduce mandatory, practice-based training for disclosure and courtroom presentation, including mock trials and role plays co-designed with Crown prosecutors, defence counsel, and judges. Certification should be required for investigators and supervisors to ensure consistent standards and uphold justice system integrity.
- **Reinforce end-to-end case ownership** - Redesign case management so officers maintain full accountability for a minimum number of complete files annually, supported by structured mentoring and clear performance expectations. This will reduce fragmentation caused by current processes while preserving efficiency and improving case quality.
- **Strengthen specialist response for sexual violence** - Expand specialist units and mentoring for sexual violence cases, embed trauma-informed practice, and upgrade interview audio quality to meet evidential standards. These steps will improve victim confidence and ensure Police meet obligations to vulnerable communities.
- **Standardise sensitive interview protocols for sexual violence cases** - Review and strengthen protocols for interviewing victims of sexual violence to ensure investigations are trauma-informed and gather enough evidence for prosecution. Provide specialist training for officers on these interviews.
- **Establish an independent oversight group to review Police's response to sexual violence victims** - This needs to have an external chair and members. This group should review and approve training materials for sexual violence investigations.
- **Embed smarter resolution pathway decisions** - Implement a decision-support tool for selecting Court, Te Pae Oranga, or Diversion pathways, incorporating victim input, risk assessment, and cultural considerations. Establish quality assurance for alternative pathways to maintain integrity and deliver better outcomes for victims, offenders, and communities.

Organisational Management

Leadership and Direction

- **Ensure the Integrity Action Plan is comprehensive** - The Plan should coordinate all integrity improving interventions from the immediate response to the November 2025 IPCA report through to addressing longer-term integrity risks such as insider threat, and information leaking. An independently chaired Integrity Advisory Group should be established to support development of the Plan and provide implementation and effectiveness monitoring.
- **Mandatory ethics training** - Develop and implement ethics and values training in the form of online modules that all staff must complete every year.
- **Independent Oversight in Senior Recruitment** - Mandate independent oversight in senior recruitment by requiring external members on interview panels for all senior leadership appointments (Inspector level and above). External member dissent to hiring decisions need to be noted and escalated to independent parties.
- **Structured exit interviews** - Conduct exit interviews with departing senior leaders to identify drivers of turnover and potential cultural risks.
- **Review pre-entry vetting processes** - This should include consideration of reintroducing home visits and closer vetting of applicants' social media
- **Establish ongoing vetting** - Police need to establish a programme of ongoing vetting throughout the career of officers to ensure active risks to integrity are managed and updated
- **Develop a policy outcomes strategic roadmap** - Police need to outline the policy outcomes they need to achieve to support modern policing, accompanied by a roadmap outlining how they will achieve these outcomes. A member of the executive leadership team needs to own and drive this initiative.

Delivery

- **Deliver a modern customer-centered platform** – Accelerate Police’s digital transformation to deliver a modern, customer-centric service experience. This includes implementing real-time case tracking, proactive notifications, and self-service options for non-emergency interactions.
- **Expand District Command Assessments** – These should become a comprehensive tool for monitoring and driving both operational and organisational performance, integrating a strong performance framework with explicit measures for culture, conduct, and integrity.
- **Modernise Police College training** – Through the Police College improvement work already underway, Police should ensure that they introduce trainers with recent frontline experience and contemporary operational expertise to ensure training is practical, current, and aligned with the complex challenges of modern policing. The curriculum update should also emphasise tactical response, offender control, and decision-making under pressure.
- **Enhanced talent management and succession planning** – Introduce district and national level talent management and succession planning processes requiring regular talent reviews, clear development pathways, and high-potential individual tracking.

Engagement

- No recommendations, noting that the recommendation to improve policy and influencing capabilities in the Leadership section will also help improve Police’s ability to meet the needs of Ministers.

Workforce

- **Implement a comprehensive workforce strategy** – This strategy should address future capability needs, including career pathways and proportions of sworn and non-sworn roles, specialist skills (e.g. cybercrime), and continuous training. This strategy needs to address how Police balance their self-grown workforce with external talent through pathways such as lateral recruitment.
- **Refresh the performance and promotion framework** – The framework should clearly define behaviours and expectations for every role, anchor them in core organisational values, and embed integrity as a mandatory competency.
- **Improve managerial training and tools** – Develop a suite of training and practical tools to enable managers to hold regular performance conversations, address behavioral and technical skill issues (such as investigation skills), and use clear escalation steps when underperformance continues.
- **Implement a national skills audit and rapid response system** – Establish a national team that can deliver targeted training when poor skills are detected within districts. This team runs regular audits across the districts to detect skill issues.




Financial management, data and risk










- **Police Capability Plan** – Police need a forward looking 10-year view of the capabilities they need to deliver modern policing (factoring in workforce changes, population growth, demand trends, digital crime, transnational crime, and increasingly violent crime); outline the asset footprint (including equipment, property, infrastructure, and support systems) they need to deliver these capabilities; and outline how these investments will be phased over the next ten years. It should incorporate the government’s policy intentions and direction for Police.
- **Modern integrated finance system** – Over the longer term, Police should invest in a modern and integrated financial management system. This system should include a single source of truth for asset condition and lifecycle data across all Police assets.
- **Financial literacy and leadership programme** – Deliver a targeted programme to lift financial literacy across Police, particularly at leadership levels, supported by a more sophisticated financial business partnering model and financial delegations to drive a stronger strategic approach to financial management.

- **Enhanced budgeting and forecasting capability** - Implement enhanced enterprise wide budgeting and forecasting practices to enable a more active, forward looking approach to managing resource allocations and trade offs across Police.
- **Advanced data and intelligence enablement** - Embed advanced data analytics (including AI), real-time intelligence capabilities, and streamlined data sharing protocols to modernise Police's intelligence and operational tasking functions — enabling the organisation to leverage real time information across domestic and international partners to anticipate emerging threats and disrupt organised crime.
- **Strengthened risk and assurance function** - Significantly strengthen the Police risk and assurance function so it operates as an authoritative, independent enterprise level capability, with Executive mandate to set standards, provide proactive oversight, and drive organisational performance.
- **Operational data sharing arrangements** - Police should lead work to operationalise real time data sharing agreements with key agencies and private partners, supported by strong privacy safeguards.
















Summary of Ratings

The Future Excellence Horizon in this report sets out New Zealand Police’s performance challenge for the future. These ratings indicate the preparedness to meet that future challenge.

Key  Leading  Embedding  Developing  Weak

	Rating	Rating
Government Priorities		
	Effectiveness	Efficiency
Core function 1: Prevention		
Core function 2: Response		
Core function 3: Investigation		
Core function 4: Resolution		

Organisational Management

	Rating
Leadership and Direction	
Purpose, vision and strategy	
Leadership	
Values, behaviour and culture	
Governance	
Delivery	
Services to customers, clients, and citizens	
Performance and accountability	
Engagement	
Engagement with Ministers	
Māori-Crown relationship	
Engagement with stakeholders	
Workforce	
Talent management and workforce development	
Workforce performance	
Staff engagement	
Financial management, data and risk	
Investment and asset management	
Strategic financial management and accountability	
Data, analytics and digital technologies	
Risk and assurance	



Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa
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