



National Audit Office

An Overview of the **Home Office** 2024-25

October 2025

The background of the slide is a photograph of a police officer from behind, wearing a black helmet and a high-visibility vest with 'POLICE' written on it. The officer is standing in a crowd of people, which is blurred in the background. The entire image has a teal/cyan color overlay.

OVERVIEW



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Home Office summary



C&AG introduction

In 2025, we set out our [new five-year strategy](#). In delivering our statutory responsibilities, we aim to maximise our contribution to two outcomes – more productive and resilient public services and better financial management and reporting in government.

Our overviews summarise the key information and insights from our examinations of departments and from their annual report and accounts, and explore departments' progress against these crucial outcomes, highlighting positive examples and opportunities to improve.

If you would like more information about our work, or to arrange a briefing with me or one of my teams, please contact our Parliamentary Relations team at parliament@nao.org.uk.

Objectives	
Vision	Safer, fairer, and more prosperous United Kingdom.
Core objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Increase control and fairness in the Migration and Borders System to strengthen border security.● Deliver safer streets, prevent crime, reduce serious harm, and increase confidence in policing and the criminal justice system.● Reduce homeland security risks to the UK's people, prosperity and freedom.
Safer streets mission	Aims to halve knife crime and the prevalence of violence against women and girls in the next decade (2024-2034) and put an additional 13,000 police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables into neighbourhood policing roles by the end of this Parliament (2029).
Asylum accommodation	End the use of hotels to accommodate people seeking asylum by the end of this Parliament (2029). As of March 2025, 30% of asylum seekers who received support from the Home Office were housed in hotels.
Financial management and reporting	
Total spending in 2024-25	£27.8 billion. This was £0.36 billion more than the previous year. Net expenditure (£20.5 billion) was £1.1 billion less than the previous year.
Income in 2024-25	£7.3 billion. This was 25% more than the previous year.
Spending Review settlement	Expected decrease in day-to-day spending in real terms by 1.7% per year from 2025-26 to 2028-29.
Asset clearing account balance	The amount of spending yet to be categorised into asset classes was £961 million as of the end of March 2025. This has increased in each of the last two years.
Productivity	
Efficiency targets	£533 million in annual savings by 2028-29, including by reducing reliance on external contractors and improving productivity through the use of artificial intelligence.
Spending on hotel asylum accommodation	The Home Office spent £2.1 billion on hotels in 2024-25, compared to £3.0 billion in 2023-24.
Neighbourhood policing	There has been a continued decrease in people reporting seeing police officers or PCSOs on foot patrol in their local area once a week or more, since 2011.
Risk and resilience	
National risks	The Home Office is the lead department for planning response to, and recovery arrangements from, domestic terrorist attacks, public disorder, and disruption to policing services.
New critical risks since 2023-24	Small boat crossings facilitated by organised immigration crime; data quality; and harmful online content that may incite violence were added to the Home Office's risk register set out in its Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025.
Risk maturity standard	Approximately three-quarters of directorates assessed themselves at or above the Home Office standard for risk maturity, compared with approximately two-thirds in 2023-24.

The Home Office states that its vision is for a safer, fairer and more prosperous United Kingdom. Its priority outcomes and activities are detailed in its latest Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025.

Figure 1
Home Office priority outcomes for 2024-25

The Home Office has assessed its performance against its priority outcomes in areas such as border security, harm prevention and homeland security

Home Office priority outcome in 2024-25	Summary of what the Home Office set out to achieve in 2024-25	Examples of the Home Office's description of activities in 2024-25
Increase control and fairness in the Migration and Borders System to strengthen border security	Establish a new Border Security Command to reduce small boat crossings. Improve asylum decision making to reduce the backlog and work towards ending the use of hotels as accommodation for people seeking asylum. Remove individuals with no legal right to be in the UK. Reduce illegal employment and net migration.	Launched a new Border Security Command and introduced the Border Security Asylum and Immigration Bill to improve measures to detect, disrupt and deter organised immigration crime. Reduced the number of asylum cases awaiting an initial decision by 5% from December 2023 to December 2024. Redeployed 1,000 staff from the Migration and Economic Development Partnership with Rwanda to uplift returns and enforcement activity, increasing returns of individuals with no legal right to be in the UK by 25% from 2023 to 2024. Increased illegal working visits by 40% between July 2024 and March 2025 and increased arrests by 42% compared with the same period in 2023.
Deliver safer streets, prevent crime, reduce serious harm, and increase confidence in policing and the criminal justice system	Halve knife crime and violence against women and girls within a decade. Improve confidence in police and local response to crime, with an additional 13,000 personnel working in neighbourhood policing roles by the end of this Parliament (2029). Deliver police reform and improve police performance, oversight, capability and tools.	Introduced new measures to protect victims of domestic abuse and to reduce the supply of knives and dangerous weapons. Introduced new powers and measures to tackle anti-social behaviour and street crimes such as shoplifting. Closed 842 drug dealing lines between April and September 2024 through the County Lines Programme. Established a Joint Police Reform Team to drive forward a comprehensive policing reform agenda.
Reduce homeland security risks to the UK's people, prosperity and freedom	Reduce the risk to the UK from terrorism and from foreign states' actions that threaten UK security, interests, prosperity, and values. Strengthen the response to economic crime by delivering a whole-system response. Reduce the risks from cyber-crime.	Continued to implement the National Security Act 2023 and set out details of the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme. Announced the Southport Inquiry to ensure lessons are learnt from how the case was handled, appointed the Independent Commissioner of Prevent, and implemented a new Prevent Assessment Framework. Secured agreement between 38 countries and international cyber insurance bodies for new guidance on ransomware attacks.

Notes

- 1 Since publishing the Outcome Delivery Plan: 2021 to 2022, the Home Office has revised its outcome titles. The outcome titles included here are taken from the Home Office, Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025, published July 2025.
- 2 In April 2025, a new Permanent Secretary of the Home Office was appointed. At the time of our work, the Permanent Secretary was making a number of structural changes to the department, with the aim of better aligning the department to deliver the government's agenda. As at September 2025, the initial changes include the consolidation of strategic and corporate functions into a Director General Chief Operating Officer Group; and the consolidation of the science and digital functions into a Director General Digital and Innovation role. Further changes are planned.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of Home Office, *Outcome Delivery Plan: 2021 to 2022* and Home Office, *Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025*

Where the Home Office spends its money



Spending in 2024-25

The Home Office spent a total of £27.8 billion in the financial year 2024-25 and received an income of £7.3 billion. Most of its spending was within the Public Safety Group, which includes the police service.

Changes in spending

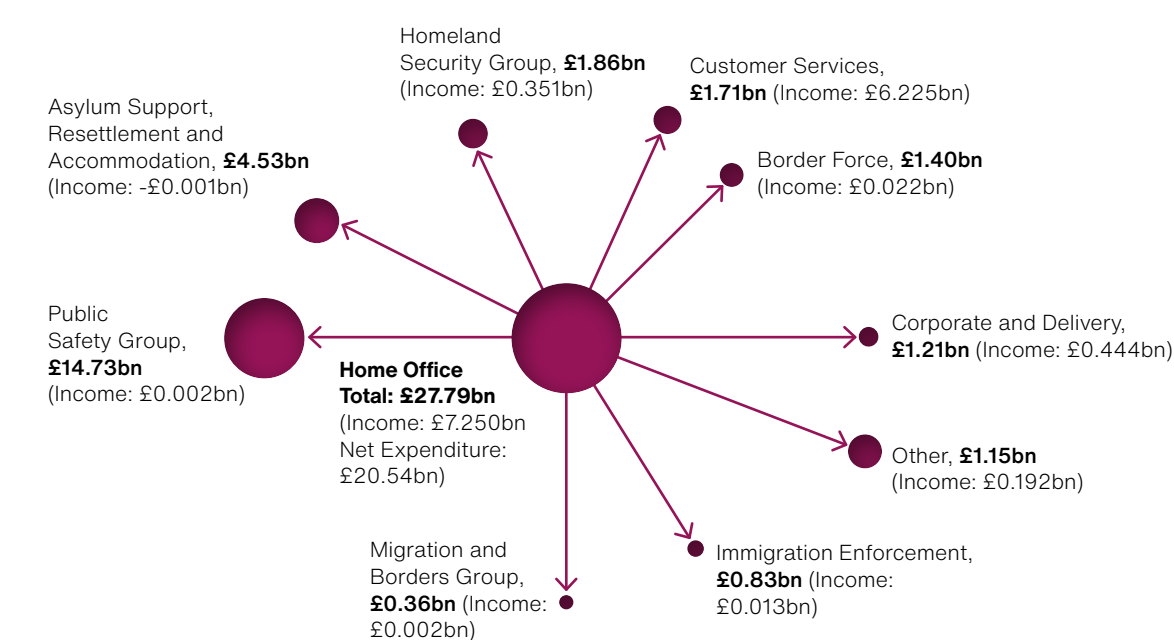
In 2024-25, the Home Office spent £0.36 billion (1%) more than the previous year. However, total income increased by £1.4 billion (25%) between 2023-24 and 2024-25, while net expenditure (£20.5 billion) was a net £1.1 billion less than the previous year.

Increases in income relate to fees from visa and passport applications. For example, the Immigration Health Surcharge is a mandatory fee that most individuals applying for a UK visa for more than six months must pay to access the National Health Service (NHS). The Home Office increased the fee by 66% in February 2024, and the standard annual rate rose from £624 to £1,035 per year.

Figure 2

Home Office departmental group total spending 2024-25

In 2024-25, the Home Office spent £27.8 billion and received an income of £7.3 billion



Notes

- 1 This figure includes income and expenditure for the Home Office departmental group, which includes the core department and six arm's-length bodies.
- 2 Total spending refers to gross expenditure.
- 3 'Other' includes: Border Security Command; Strategic Operations for Illegal Migration; Digital, Data and Technology; Science, Technology, Analysis and Research; Strategy; Legal Advisors; and Communications.
- 4 The Public Safety Group spending includes the main police grants of £9.7 billion.
- 5 Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of the Home Office, *Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025*

Home Office spending patterns



Total budget

The Spending Review settlement in 2021 was recognised as insufficient to manage demand on the asylum system. Since then, the Home Office and HM Treasury have worked together to manage additional costs through the process of supplementary estimates.

Through the supplementary estimate, the Home Office received net additional day-to-day (Resource DEL) funding of £2.5 billion for 2024-25. This includes funding to:

- alleviate pressures within the asylum system; and
- deliver new policies to tackle illegal migration, including the creation of the Border Security Command and investment in Asylum and Returns Transformation.

Total spending

The Home Office's net expenditure (Resource DEL) was £18.15 billion compared with a budget of £18.55 billion in 2024-25. This means it underspent by 2% of its budget (around £400 million).¹

Around £330 million of the underspend within the Corporate and Delivery area relates to lower-than-expected depreciation costs for the year.



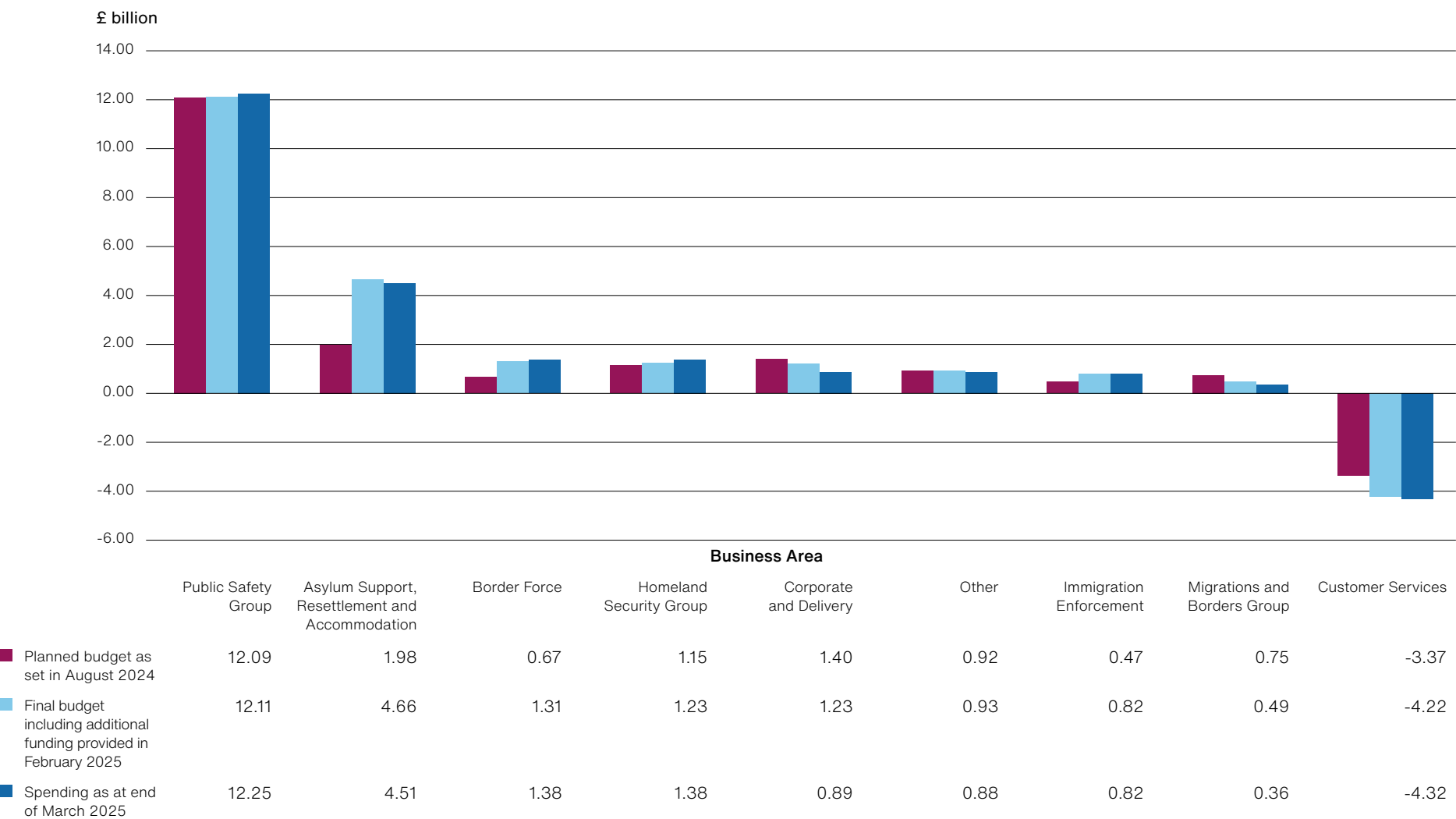
¹ Departments build safety margins into their budgets to avoid overspends and potential financial issues later in the budget cycle; therefore, an underspend of this nature is reasonable.

Continued Home Office spending patterns



Figure 3
Home Office budgeting and spending by business area, 2024-25

As part of the supplementary estimate, the Home Office was provided around £2.68 billion additional funding for asylum support, of which it spent £2.53 billion in 2024-25



Source: National Audit Office analysis of Home Office *Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025* and HM Treasury, *Main Supply Estimates 2024 to 2025*

Continued

Home Office spending patterns



Notes

- 1 Planned budgets are decided through the main estimates, which cover all departmental budgets for the financial year. They form the legal basis for government spending and are updated later in the year through supplementary estimates if needed.
- 2 Additional funding is decided through the supplementary estimate, which is a formal request submitted to Parliament for additional funding changes to existing budgets during a financial year. It allows departments to adjust their spending plans in response to unforeseen needs or policy changes. These happen annually, typically in February.
- 3 This graph shows Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) budgets and spending, this includes money that is spent on day-to-day resources and administration costs.
- 4 The Home Office's overall spending was within budget. Spending differs from final budgets because the Home Office can reallocate spending that is not ringfenced across different business areas to account for underspends and overspends.
- 5 The Customer Services business area shows a negative budget and spending because it generates more income than expenditure.
- 6 'Other' includes: Border Security Command; Strategic Operations for Illegal Migration; Digital, Data and Technology; Science, Technology, Analysis and Research; Strategy; Legal Advisors; Arm's-length bodies; and Communications.
- 7 Minor discrepancies in values are due to rounding of original source data.



How the Home Office works with other government departments



Cross-government working

The Home Office needs to work closely with other government departments and bodies to deliver many of its policy objectives, as the following examples show.

- **Reducing crime:** Our November 2022 report on [Progress combatting fraud](#) highlighted the large number of cross-government stakeholders that the Home Office needs to collaborate with to reduce fraud, including, but not limited to, the National Crime Agency; the Department for Culture, Media & Sport; HM Treasury; and the Financial Conduct Authority.
- **Harm prevention:** Our October 2023 report on [Reducing the harm from illegal drugs](#) found that the government had established a cross-government working group to support collaboration, including, but not limited to, the Ministry of Justice; the Department for Health and Social Care; the Department for Education; and the Department for Work & Pensions; as well as the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.
- **Securing the border:** Our May 2024 report on [The UK border Implementing an effective trade border](#) emphasised the number of government bodies with responsibility for implementing and operating border controls, including, but not limited to, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs; Border Force; the Cabinet Office; the Food Standards Agency; and HM Revenue & Customs.

Safer streets mission

The Home Office is responsible for leading one of the government's five national missions: safer streets. It requires the commitment of multiple departments, public bodies and wider stakeholders to deliver targets such as halving knife crime and violence against women and girls (VAWG) in the next decade (2024-2034), as well as putting an additional 13,000 police officers, police community support officers and special constables into neighbourhood policing roles by the end of this Parliament (2029).

Our January 2025 report on [Tackling violence against women and girls](#) highlighted the scale of the challenge and emphasised the need for the Home Office to lead a whole of government response, including coordinating efforts with those working to prevent individuals becoming perpetrators, to achieve long-term change.

Our report found that the Home Office had lacked buy-in from other government departments and did not have a full understanding of the scale of resources committed to tackling VAWG across government.

Our October 2023 report on [Reducing the harm from illegal drugs](#) highlighted the benefits of the Home Office establishing a cross-government team - the Joint Combating Drugs Unit - to lead delivery and a joint spending review bid.

As part of the safer streets mission, the Home Office will need to consider the capacity that exists within the rest of the criminal justice system to meet demand if police-recorded crime rates increase due to a greater emphasis on tackling crime.

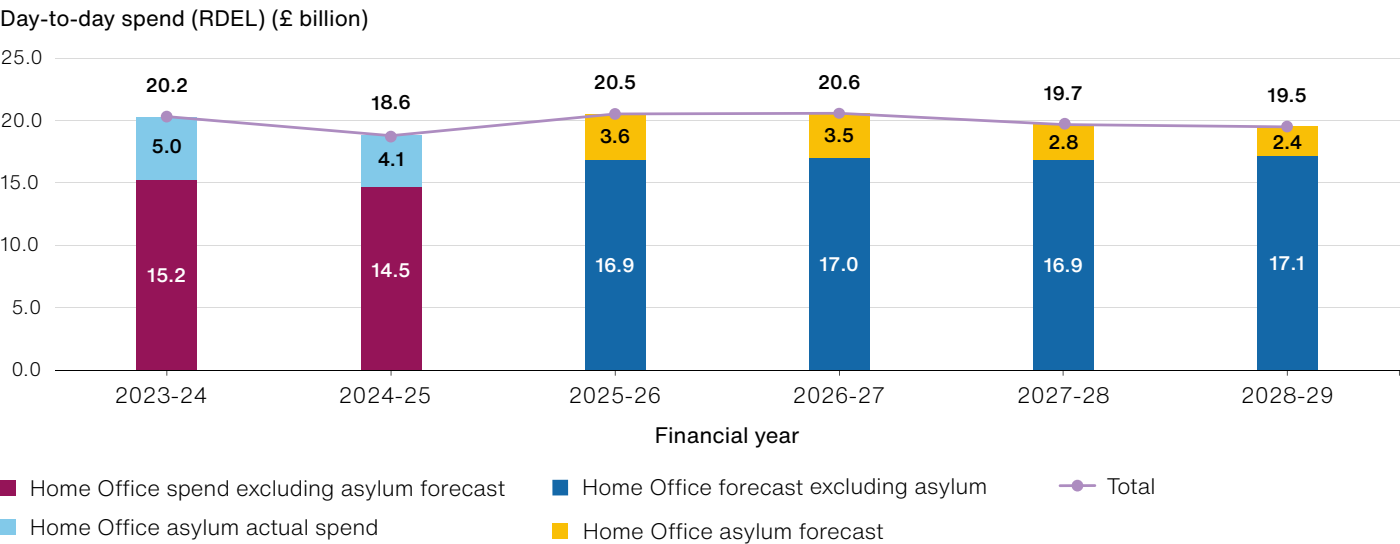
Outcome of the Spending Review

In June 2025, the government announced each department's funding settlements for 2025-26 to 2028-29. The Home Office's day-to-day (Resource DEL) spending is expected to decrease by an average of 1.7% a year in real terms during this period. This is partly because the Home Office expects to spend less on supporting people seeking asylum year-on-year until 2028-29. Excluding asylum support costs, the Home Office expects day-to-day spending (Resource DEL) to increase by an average of 0.4% a year in real terms between 2025-26 and 2028-29.

Figure 4

The Home Office's budget for day-to-day spending in real terms (2025-26 prices) between 2023-24 and 2028-29

The Home Office's total day-to-day spending is expected to decrease from around £20.5 billion to £19.5 billion in real terms between 2025-26 and 2028-29, with the amount spent on supporting people seeking asylum also due to decrease in real terms



Notes

- 1 The graph above follows the announcement of the Home Office's Spending Review 2025 settlement for the period 2025-26 to 2028-29.
- 2 The graph uses Resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (RDEL) to demonstrate the expected change in Home Office spending in this period, in real terms. RDEL spending includes money that is spent on day-to-day resources and administration costs.
- 3 Data for 2023-24 and 2024-25 show actual outturn as reported in the Home Office's 2023-24 and 2024-25 accounts, adjusted to 2025-26 prices.
- 4 Using the published Spending Review settlements, data have been adjusted to represent the value of budgets in 2025-26 prices, using GDP index data that were released on 30 June 2025.
- 5 Figures have been inflated or deflated from rounded versions of original data.
- 6 Numbers may not sum due to rounding.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of Departmental Settlements: Outcome of Spending Review 2025

The Home Office published its accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025 on 17 July 2025 (before Parliamentary recess). The Comptroller & Auditor General (C&AG) gave an unqualified opinion on the financial statements of the Home Office. This means that the accounts give a true and fair view of the Home Office's affairs and have been properly prepared in accordance with the government Resources and Accounts Act 2000; that total spending has not exceeded amounts voted by Parliament; and that the income and expenditure recorded have been applied to the purposes intended by Parliament.

Figure 5
Significant risks identified in the Comptroller and Auditor General's audit of the Home Office's 2024-25 financial statements

Our 2024-25 audit identified a material adjustment to the Home Office's police and fire authority pension liabilities

Significant risk	Key observation
<p>The Migration and Economic Development Partnership (MEDP) with Rwanda</p> <p>Following the general election, the incoming government confirmed that it was terminating the MEDP with Rwanda. The Home Office has paid £290 million to the government of Rwanda between April 2022 and April 2024. As it is of high parliamentary and public interest, this loss is required to be disclosed in the Parliamentary Accountability Report.</p>	<p>The Home Office's initial losses statement did not include the MEDP payment, as a constructive loss,¹ but after further conversations with the NAO and HM Treasury, the Home Office decided to include the payment. We obtained sufficient assurance over this risk from our substantive testing.</p>
<p>Asset clearing account</p> <p>Home Office teams record individual items of spending in an 'asset clearing account' rather than categorising them into specific asset classes straight away. Finance then reviews and categorises the spending later on and at year-end calculates an estimate of depreciation to be applied. This increases the risk associated with the resulting numbers in the financial statements.</p>	<p>Finance has been unable to review all spending in the asset clearing account, and the balance has increased in each of the last two years, creating risks and inefficiencies. The closing balance at 31 March 2025 was £961 million (£695 million at 31 March 2024 and £694 million at March 2023). The Home Office estimated that there was a depreciation of £100 million associated with assets in this account. Audit testing in this area did not identify any material misstatements.</p>
<p>Government Actuary's Department: pension accrual</p> <p>The Home Office's year-end accruals include a material liability of £329 million relating to the police and fire pensions top-up grant. As in 2023-24, this is a result of legal measures to address the age discrimination that arose when legacy pension schemes were closed to certain members in 2015.² The police and fire authorities are not able to forecast the cash deficit in relation to this, and so the Home Office commissioned the government Actuary's Department to estimate this element of the accrual. This was a significant risk as there are a number of complex assumptions and models that feed into this accrual, and an expert is required to calculate this estimate.</p>	<p>Our testing identified that the department had received additional information about the likely value of its pensions accruals from returns provided by police and fire authorities in June 2025 which had not been factored into its initial valuations. This required a material adjustment to reduce the liability by £289 million, which is reflected in the final financial statements. In addition, we found that the department received similar information in June 2024, before the 2023-24 accounts had been certified. This indicated that net pension accruals reported at 31 March 2024 were overstated by £285 million. This updated information was not drawn to our attention at the time nor reflected in the certified financial statements for 2023-24. We consider this to be a material error, and this required an adjustment to the prior year's financial statements.</p>

Notes

- 1 *Managing Public Money* defines a 'constructive loss' as a loss where the procurement action itself caused the loss, for example where an item was correctly ordered then no longer required due to a change in policy.
- 2 In 2018, following the Fire Brigade Union's legal challenge, the Court of Appeal ruled in the case *Ms R Sargeant and Others v London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority and Others* that the transitional protection offered to firefighters as part of the 2015 public sector pension reforms was unlawfully discriminatory. This protection, which allowed some members to remain in their old, final salary pension schemes, was found to discriminate against younger firefighters who were moved to a new scheme.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of Home Office, *Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 25*

Continued Financial management and reporting



Financial management within the Home Office's Departmental Group

On 7 July 2025 the C&AG disclaimed his audit opinion on the College of Policing's 2023-24 financial statements as he was unable to obtain sufficient audit evidence to form an opinion. This was due to the College failing to properly manage a transition to new accounting and payroll systems, creating risks of unauthorised transactions, data breaches and misuse of sensitive information. The poor financial management resulting from the inaccurate information in the College's financial systems led to an overspend of £1.3 million against the College's delegated budget from the Home Office for 2023-24. The College also provided late and incomplete annual report and financial statements to the NAO – eight months after the year end.

Monitoring spending against budgets

Our January 2025 financial management good practice guide on [Monitoring and forecasting](#) highlighted the importance of using high-quality data and information to enable better financial monitoring and more accurate forecasting, and to help decision makers respond to events quickly and effectively. Difficulties with legacy systems and managing data from different sources can result in a lack of real-time information and delay decision making. Finance leaders should understand the limitations of the data and how this can affect monitoring and forecasting accuracy.

Our January 2025 report on [Tackling violence against women and girls](#) (VAWG) found that, between 2021-22 and 2023-24, the Home Office underspent by £22 million against its total £149 million budget (15%) for tackling VAWG. The Home Office stated that underspends were caused by the late confirmation of budgets; in-year changes to budgets; new projects being scaled up; and being unable to repurpose underspends before the final budget was confirmed.

Making risk-based financial decisions

Our December 2024 financial management good practice guide on [Allocating resources](#), emphasised the need for informed resource allocations that balance immediate demands with long-term priorities. Financial leaders should collaborate with risk management teams to integrate scenario-modelling into the allocation process. This would enable a better understanding of the implications of different options and key areas of uncertainty that need to be reassessed in future.

Our June 2020 report on [Asylum Accommodation and Support](#) described the difficulty of accurately forecasting demand for asylum accommodation. In March 2025, 30% of asylum seekers who received support from the Home Office were housed in hotels. Within the Spending Review, the government announced its plan to end the use of hotels in this Parliament (2029). Well-informed, risk-based financial decision making will be essential to achieving this.

Achieving value for money from commercial relationships

Our February 2025 good practice guide on [Managing the commercial lifecycle](#) highlighted the importance of appropriate capability within procurement and contract management. In November 2024, we reported on the [Home Office's acquisition of the Northeye site for asylum accommodation](#) and found that the Home Office relied on contracted staff to take forward the acquisition without having the expertise in-house to quality-assure contractors' decisions.

In our May 2025 briefing on the [Home Office's asylum accommodation and support contracts](#), we found that the Home Office had approximately doubled the number of employees managing the contracts since 2023 and that it had launched an independent audit to verify suppliers' reported performance and profit figures. This audit will help determine how much profit should be returned to the Home Office under the contracts' profit share clauses, which had been triggered seven times between September 2019 and August 2024.

Productivity – workforce planning



Workforce changes

Since 2021-22, the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in the Home Office Departmental Group has grown by 37% (from 41,700 in 2021-22 to 57,030 in 2024-25). The biggest increase was in the Customer Services business area, which handles visa, passport and asylum applications.²

In 2024-25 the Home Office spent around £325 million on consultancy services and temporary staff who have been retained primarily as a flexible resource to deal with seasonal demand in passport and visa applications, as well as backlogs in asylum applications. Spending in this area has reduced by 38% compared to the previous year (2023-24: £524 million).

Efficiency saving plans

As part of its spending review settlement, the Home Office is required to deliver £533 million in annual efficiency savings by 2028-29.³ It is intended that around 70% of these savings will be achieved through organisational and strategic workforce changes, including modernising the way the Home Office works by using automation and artificial intelligence (AI), and streamlining the workforce by reducing duplication in non-frontline roles.

Since 2011, we have reported on the government's lack of strategic workforce planning, with departments often focusing on headcount rather than skills. Defining the future size and shape of the workforce in alignment with projected supply and demand is essential for maintaining operational capacity and critical skills within the Home Office.

Assessing the cost and feasibility of integrating AI is crucial to understanding its potential to achieve savings. While the Central Digital and Data Office estimates over £45 billion in potential annual savings from digitisation, these figures do not take into account feasibility or implementation costs. Our March 2024 report on the [*Use of artificial intelligence in government*](#) highlighted that modernising legacy systems and improving data quality are essential to realising AI benefits, and that successful integration of AI will require strong cross-government coordination.

The Home Office intends that around 30% of savings will be achieved through reducing spending on external contractors by recruiting digital expertise internally to achieve the same output at lower cost. However, our March 2023 report on [*Digital Transformation in government: addressing the barrier to efficiency*](#) found that the digital skills gap was worsening, with departments struggling to recruit due to market competition.

² The increase in staff within the Customer Services business area was partly due to existing staff moving from the Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation business area between 2022-23 and 2023-24.

³ Efficiency plans align with the *Departmental Efficiency Plans*, published 11 June 2025, available here: [Departmental Efficiency Plans - GOV.UK](#). The eventual composition of the total efficiencies may vary from the figures set out above, as more detailed plans are developed for different areas of activity and upfront investments to enable efficiencies are confirmed.

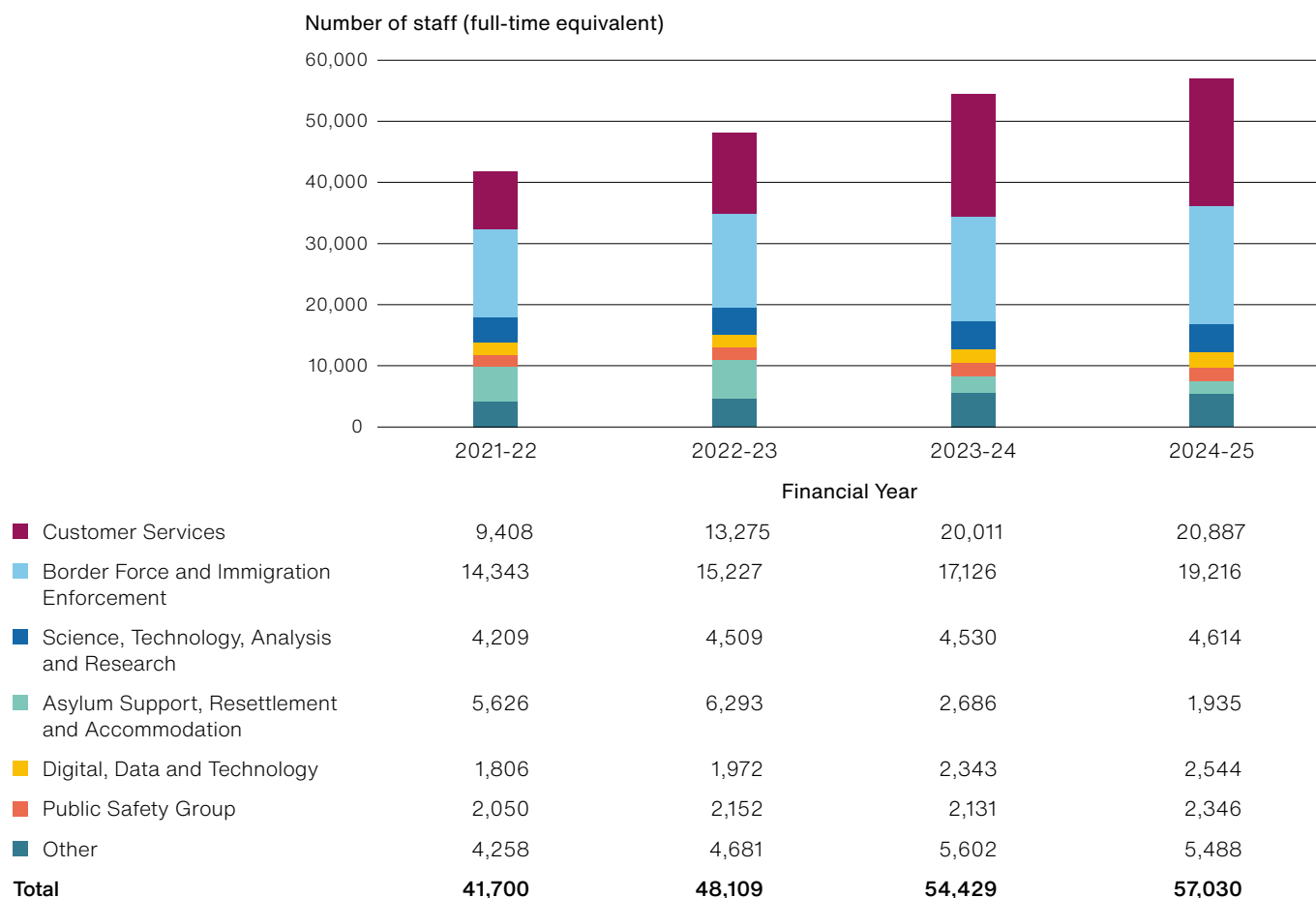
Continued Productivity – workforce planning



Figure 6

Average number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff in the Home Office Departmental Group by business area, between 2021-22 and 2024-25

The average number of FTE staff has increased by around 15,000 between 2021-22 and 2024-25



Notes

- 1 This figure includes workforce data for the Home Office departmental group, which includes the core department and six arm's-length bodies.
- 2 The six categories listed represent the business areas that employ the most staff (full-time equivalent (FTE)) as an average across 2024-25.
- 3 The Science, Technology, Analysis and Research category includes all FTE staff in the Home Office's arm's-length bodies in addition to all Home Office FTE staff in the Science, Technology, Analysis, and Research business area.
- 4 The 'Other' category includes Migration and Borders Group; Homeland Security Group; Corporate and Delivery; Strategic Operations for Illegal Migration; Strategy; Communications; and Border Security Command.
- 5 Between 2022-23 and 2023-24 staff were redeployed to the Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation business area to the Customer Services business area.
- 6 Since 2023-24, the Border Force and Immigration Enforcement business areas have been separated. For consistency, these data have been summed to allow for comparison with previous financial years.
- 7 Since 2023-24, the Asylum and Protection Group was renamed the Asylum Support, Resettlement and Accommodation group. Staff numbers reported against the Asylum and Protection Group have been used for 2021-22 and 2022-23.
- 8 Since 2023-24, the Delivery Group has been combined with the Corporate Enablers group to create the Corporate and Delivery Group. Since staff numbers are included within the 'Other' category of the graph, this does not impact reporting above.
- 9 Since 2023-24, new business areas Strategic Operations for Illegal Migration; Strategy; and Border Security Command were added to the list of business segments against which staff numbers are reported in the Annual Report and Accounts. These categories are included within 'Other' from 2023-24 onwards.
- 10 The Home Office introduced a new organisational structure in April 2022. The 2021-22 staff numbers were restated in the Annual Report and Accounts 2022 to 2023 for comparison purposes. The restated data have been used in the graph.

Source: National Audit Office, analysis of Home Office Annual Report and Accounts 2021 to 22, 2022 to 23, 2023 to 24 and 2024 to 25

The Home Office is undertaking various digital transformation projects aimed at improving productivity across the organisation; for example, it is working to migrate all police data systems and services out of its Hendon data centre, a project expected to be completed by spring 2027. Digital transformation and the replacement of legacy systems is both costly and complex, with challenges typically increasing with the scale of operations. Like the rest of government, the Home Office has struggled to deliver digital change to time and budget.

Figure 7

Examples of the Home Office's ongoing digital transformation projects

The National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) has rated all three examples of the Home Office's digital transformation projects as 'Amber'

Digital transformation project	Estimated completion date			Description
	Original	Latest	NISTA rating	
Emergency Services Mobile Communications Programme (ESMCP)	2019	2029	Amber	The programme aims to replace the Airwave communications system used by emergency services with a new Emergency Services Network (ESN). We reported on the risks associated with the programme's ambitious technology and timetable, and its commercial approach, which have created significant delays and additional costs. Motorola's role as a provider of both the legacy and replacement system contracts created a structural conflict of interest. In December 2022, the Home Office agreed to pay Motorola £45 million, and that Motorola would leave ESN early. This included payments to have elements of ESN available for testing until December 2023 and payments to ensure that ESN works with Airwave. The Home Office forecasted that, by 31 March 2023, it would have paid Motorola a total of £304 million, for software and systems it will not use. The Home Office delayed the shutdown of Airwave from December 2026 to December 2029, incurring £1.1 billion in costs. In December 2024 the Home Office appointed IBM to replace Motorola as the new user services supplier; it must actively manage this contract to prevent further delays.
Home Office Biometrics (HOB)	2019	2026	Amber	The HOB programme is delivering capabilities to establish identity using fingerprint, DNA, and facial image data which is used by border security, law enforcement, and the criminal justice system. It will provide services which establish a distinct, digitised and verifiable identity from an individual's biometric data that can then, subject to permission, be reused across the Home Office, its partner agencies in the UK, and internationally. The timeline of HOB has been extended, and costs have increased by £47.8 million. This is due to addressing security vulnerabilities and technology obsolescence within the existing national law enforcement biometric system, IDENT1, as well as supplier delivery challenges. In 2021 the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA) rated the delivery approach of the Home Office's strategic biometric matcher supplier as unachievable; in July 2023, the Home Office awarded a new supplier. In 2024, the IPA rated the programme 'Amber' and expressed concern about the ability of suppliers elsewhere in the programme to support programme delivery.
Law Enforcement Data Service (LEDS) programme	2020	2026	Amber	The programme was launched in 2016 to replace the Police National Computer (PNC) and Police National Database (PND). In 2020 Home Office removed the PND from the programme scope. We reported that a succession of delays and resets increased the cost of the programme significantly and that continued reliance on the legacy technology was limiting effectiveness and creating security risks. The Home Office reported that, since 2021, it has adopted a product-centric approach to develop and deploy IT services that achieve parity with the PNC, ensuring business continuity while replacing it entirely.

Notes

- 1 The National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority (NISTA) was formed in April 2025 through the merger of the National Infrastructure Commission (NIC) and the Infrastructure and Projects Authority (IPA).
- 2 NISTA ratings are from the NISTA annual report 2024-25, released August 2025. Available at: [NISTA Annual Report 2024-2025 - GOV.UK](#)
- 3 NISTA ratings are categorised into three groups, 'Red', 'Amber', and 'Green', and indicate the likelihood of successful delivery and the level of associated risks. A rating of 'Amber' means successful delivery appears feasible, but significant issues already exist, requiring management attention. These appear resolvable at this stage and, if addressed promptly, should not present a cost/schedule overrun.

Productivity – supporting people seeking asylum



The Home Office aims to end of the use of hotels to house people seeking asylum by the end of this Parliament (2029).

People in the asylum system who would otherwise be destitute are legally entitled to receive support from the government, including accommodation. At the end of March 2025, there were 106,771 individuals in receipt of asylum support, up from 50,091 in December 2019. Of these 106,771 individuals, 30% (around 32,300) were in hotel accommodation. The Home Office spent £2.1 billion on hotels in 2024-25 out of a total £4.0 billion on asylum support. This compared with £3.0 billion spent on hotels in 2023-24, out of a total £4.7 billion spent on asylum support.

To end the use of hotels, the Home Office will need to reduce the backlog of asylum claims waiting to be processed, whilst continuing to process new claims and adopt an agile approach to managing other sources of accommodation. The overall number of people awaiting an initial decision peaked at around 134,000 in June 2023. By the end of March 2025, around 79,000 asylum claims were awaiting an initial decision.

Reducing the backlog will require continued focus on improving caseworker productivity and sustained investment in capability. Our June 2023 report on [*The asylum and protection transformation programme*](#) reported that the Home Office increased staffing and streamlined the asylum decision making processes. It highlighted early progress in increasing decision making but noted low levels of productivity. It found that by April 2023 only around half of caseworkers were deciding claims (650 out of 1,270), and only around 140 of those were fully trained and working independently.

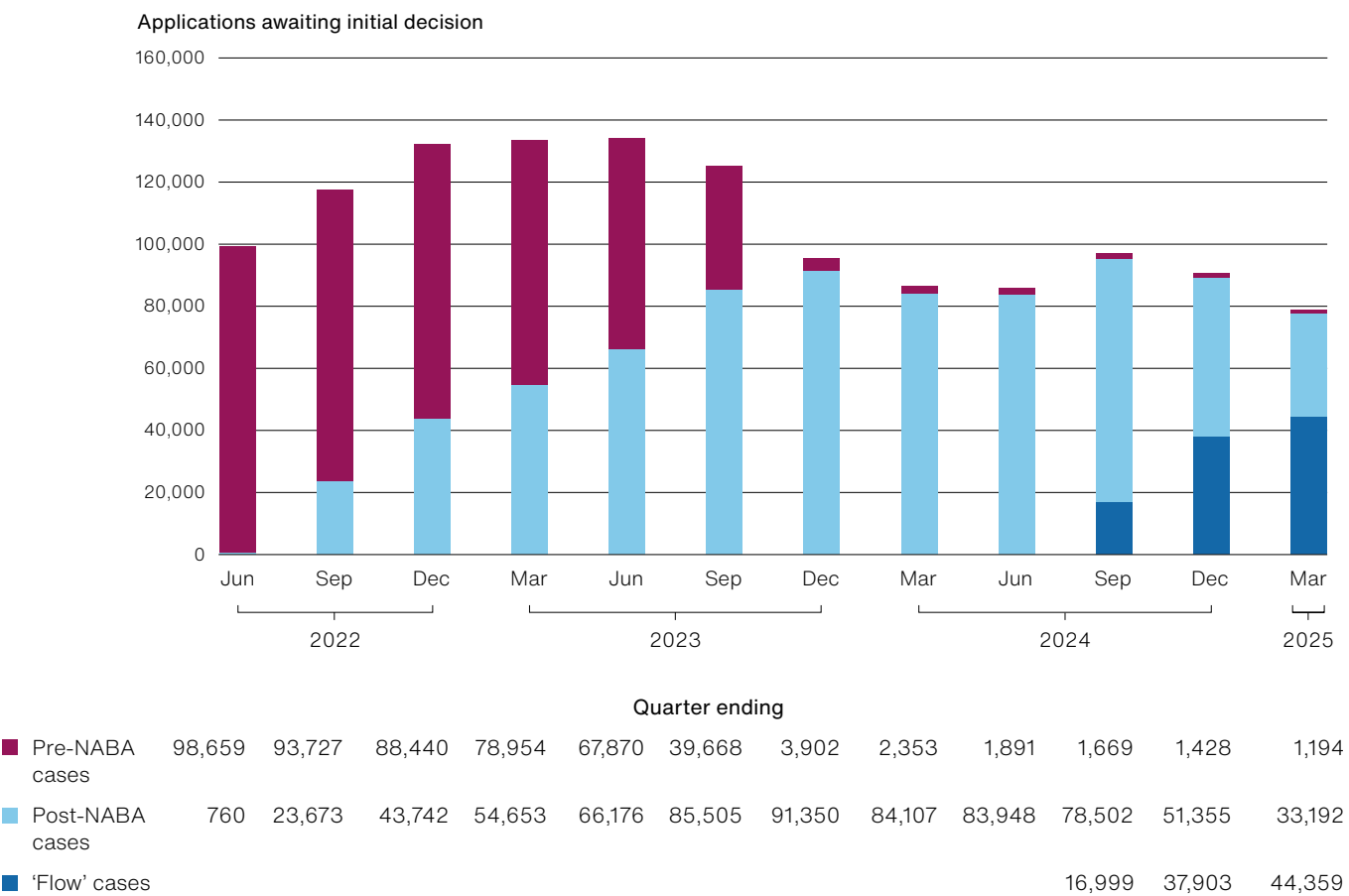
Our upcoming work [*An analysis of the asylum system*](#) (due winter 2025-26) will identify the causes and constraints that need to be addressed to improve productivity across the asylum system, reduce unnecessary cost and secure value for money.

Continued Productivity – supporting people seeking asylum



Figure 8
Asylum applications awaiting an initial decision, June 2022 to March 2025

By March 2025, there were nearly 79,000 asylum claims awaiting an initial decision, down from the recent high of around 134,000 in June 2023



Source: National Audit Office analysis of Home Office immigration system statistics

- Notes**
- 1 The Home Office has processed asylum claims under different pieces of legislation, aspects of which have been changed over the last few years.
 - 2 The Home Office launched the New Plan for Immigration in March 2021 and set out a new framework for asylum decision making, including treating people seeking asylum differently depending on how and when they arrived in the UK. This became law on 28 April 2022 through the Nationality and Borders Act (NABA), which then came into effect from 28 June 2022.
 - 3 Pre-NABA asylum cases therefore refer to applications made before 28 June 2022, whereas post-NABA cases are applications made on or after 28 June 2022.
 - 4 In July 2023, the Illegal Migration Act was introduced, placing a duty on the Home Secretary to remove adults who arrived in the UK via various irregular routes. In July 2024, the government made amendments to the Act and promised to resume processing asylum decisions for those previously deemed inadmissible and subject to the removal provisions under the Act.
 - 5 'Flow' cases are claims made after the Home Secretary made this amendment in July 2024.

Productivity – policing



Following the 2024 general election the Home Secretary announced that she expected policing in England and Wales to become more efficient and effective through police reform. This included:

- a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee (NPG) that aims to put an additional 13,000 police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables into neighbourhood policing roles by the end of this Parliament (2029);
- a Police Efficiency and Collaboration Programme (PECP) to deliver savings through national procurement frameworks and greater economies of scale through improved commercial approaches;
- a Police Performance Unit, based in the Home Office, to oversee performance and drive up standards; and
- a National Centre of Policing, to coordinate and support local police forces to raise standards and improve efficiency.

In its 2024 manifesto commitment, the government outlined that the NPG would be funded by efficiency savings achieved through the PECP. In January 2025, the Home Office announced £200 million of funding for the NPG in 2025-26.

HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary's 2024 annual report highlighted key areas that would help improve police forces' productivity, including the following.⁴

- **Underuse of data and technology:** Many forces are relying on outdated systems and struggling with poor data management. They are not keeping pace with technological advancements which could help them operate more efficiently and effectively.
- **Workforce challenges:** Forces are struggling to recruit and retain the right people, especially in specialist roles, and forces are dealing with high levels of inexperience in the workforce.
- **Low public trust and confidence:** Previous reports in 2022 and 2023 highlighted that forces were under pressure to rebuild public trust, especially following high-profile cases of misconduct and poor service to victims. In 2024, the Chief Inspector reported that the decline in public confidence in the police may be levelling out.
- **Outdated funding formula:** Since 2013, government grants have been allocated to forces using the same formula and an increasing proportion of funding is being raised from council tax. The areas that need the most funding can struggle to raise this money through increasing council tax, which increases inequality between forces.



⁴ HM Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services, [State of Policing: The Annual Assessment of Policing in England and Wales 2024](#), September 2025.

Continued Productivity – policing

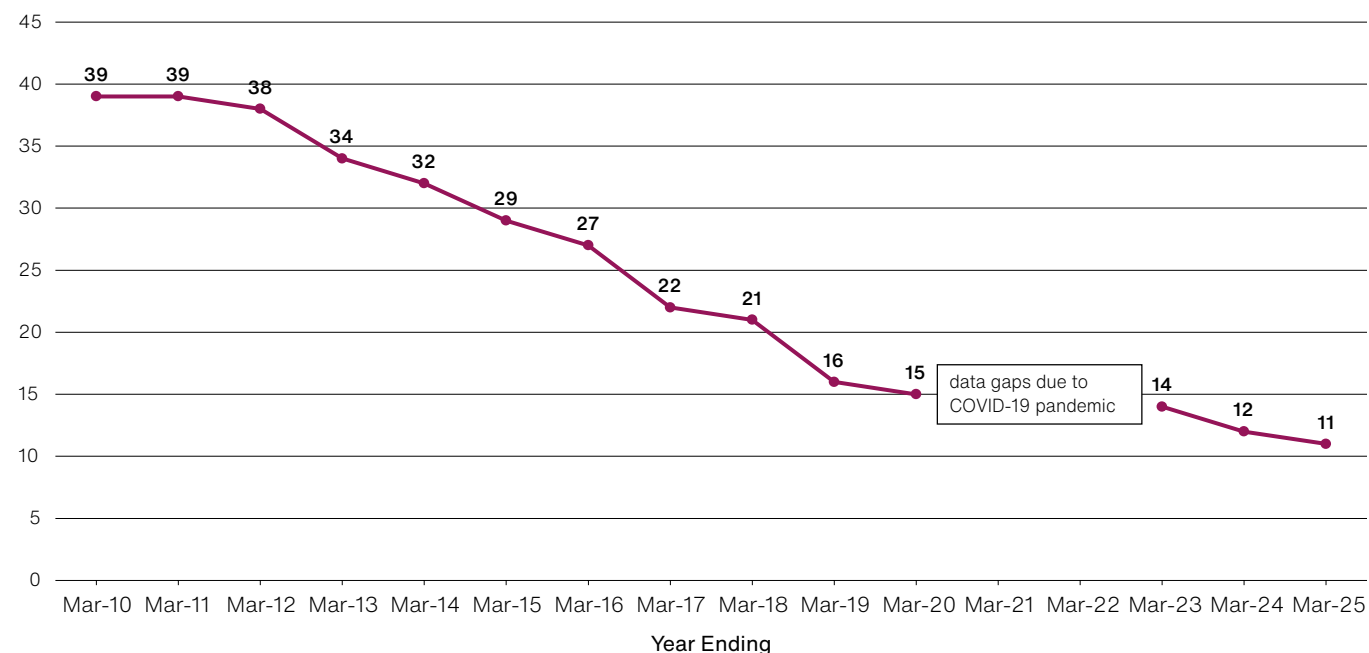


Figure 9

Visibility of the local police in England and Wales, March 2010 to March 2025

Since 2011 there has been a continued decrease in people reporting seeing police officers or police community support officers (PCSOs) on foot patrol in their local area once a week or more

Percentage of survey respondents reporting high police visibility



Notes

- 1 The Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) asks a sample of people aged 16 years and over how often they see PCSOs on foot patrol in their local area (within about a 15-minute walk).
- 2 High police visibility refers to respondents seeing officers or PCSOs on foot patrol in their local area once a week or more.
- 3 Data gaps in the CSEW during 2021 and 2022 were primarily due to disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Face-to-face interviewing, the core method of data collection for the CSEW, was suspended in March 2020 and replaced with a temporary telephone-based survey, which ran until March 2022. This shift in methodology meant that questions around visibility of police officers were temporarily removed.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of the Office for National Statistics, Crime Survey for England and Wales data, August 2025 release

Risk and resilience – risk management approach



National security risks

The Home Office is responsible for reducing national security risks to the UK's people, prosperity, and freedoms. It sets the strategic direction for government and leads the UK's crisis response for risks from terrorism, state threats, fraud and other economic crime, and cyber-crime. Threats of this nature are constantly evolving.

Through the National Risk Register, the Home Office is the lead department for planning the response to, and recovery arrangements from, domestic terrorist attacks, public disorder and disruption to policing services, for example, disruption caused by cyber-attack, major software failures or supply chain disruption.

Taking a forward-looking approach

Our December 2023 good practice guide on [*Overcoming challenges to managing risks in government*](#) highlighted the importance of continually scanning the horizon for future threats; drawing on a diverse range of viewpoints including subject matter experts; and making use of scenario planning in response to unexpected shocks. Adopting such an approach would enable the Home Office to be better prepared for, and more agile in, responding to emerging threats, such as, an increase in public disorder and protests.

Our November 2022 report on [*Progress combatting fraud*](#) outlined that the threat from fraud was increasing and evolving and that there were significant gaps in the Home Office's understanding of threats. It did not have a complete or up-to-date estimate of the cost of fraud to the economy and had a limited understanding of the perpetrators of fraud or of those who enable it by their action or inaction.

Since then, the Home Office has published a new Fraud Strategy, in May 2023, which sought to address some of these challenges. The strategy set a clear ambition to cut incidents of fraud by 10% from 2019 levels by the end of the last Parliament. In February 2024, the government launched a new communications campaign – 'Stop! Think Fraud' – to provide anti-fraud advice to the public. The 2024 Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that there had been 3.2 million incidents of fraud in the year to March 2024, meeting the 10% reduction target.

Our January 2025 report on [*Tackling violence against women and girls*](#) highlighted that the societal landscape against which violence against women and girls is committed has evolved in complexity in recent years, with online harms (such as revenge porn) being recognised as crimes in themselves. In May 2025, the Public Accounts Committee concluded that it was concerned that government departments' approach to tech-enabled violence against women and girls was not sufficiently agile to address the threats posed.

Leadership and culture

The Home Office reported on improvements to its risk management approach, including strengthening principles of ownership and accountability and integration with cross-organisation responses. The Home Office Executive Committee also reviewed its principal risks and quarterly strategic risk reporting and discussions.

The government Internal Audit Agency (GIAA) provided a 'limited opinion' on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Home Office's risk management, control and governance arrangements. It highlighted systemic weaknesses in the Home Office's approach, including ambiguity in roles and accountabilities, a lack of risk management capability, and poor data quality.

The Home Office reported that approximately three-quarters of directorates assessed themselves at or above the Home Office standard for risk maturity, compared with approximately two-thirds in 2023-2024.

The GIAA reported that there must be a collective mindset and shared commitment to develop and embed the foundations of risk management, control, and assurance into business as usual where these considerations and behaviours are ingrained.

Risk and resilience – principal risks



Figure 10

National Audit Office summary of the risks identified by the Home Office in 2024-25

The Home Office has responsibility for managing risks in many challenging policy areas

Risk areas	Description	Risk level in 2023-24	Risk level in 2024-25
Existing risks			
Artificial intelligence (AI)	There is a risk that the department fails to adequately understand and respond to harm from AI adoption.	Critical	Critical
Threat to life in the border process	There is a risk of serious harm, injury or death to individuals.	High	Critical
Disruption at the border	There is a risk of system outages or reduced border capabilities impacting the Home Office's operating model.	High	High
Threat to life in asylum accommodation	There is a risk that people harm themselves, or others.	High	High
Criminal justice system (CJS)	There is a risk that the CJS reform programme fails to deliver the changes required to deliver for victims, putting pressures on the policing system.	High	High
Cyber threats across the Home Office	There is a risk that cyber threat actors could compromise Home Office data, disrupt services, or leak sensitive information.	High	High
Health & Safety and fire	There is a risk that the Home Office's Health & Safety and fire management systems are inadequate.	High	High
Failing to transform	There is a risk that failure to deliver transformational change will prevent implementation of the Organisational Strategy.	Medium	High
New risks since 2023-24			
Small boat crossings facilitated by organised immigration crime	There is a risk that the organised immigration crime gangs facilitating small boat crossings to the UK will continue to grow in strength.	N/A	Critical
Data quality	There is a risk of operational or insight failure due to poor data quality.	N/A	Critical
Harmful online content and narrative	The department risks failing to protect vulnerable individuals, especially children, from content that may incite violence.	N/A	Critical
Insider risk	There is a risk that insiders misuse knowledge of the Home Office, causing harm to its people, information, or assets.	N/A	High
Loss in public confidence	There is a risk of declining public confidence in the Home Office due to negative perceptions, poor service, or policy concerns.	N/A	High
Climate security	Major Home Office policy areas may be affected by increasingly severe weather events that disrupt the UK and global economy, environment, and communities.	N/A	High

Notes

- 1 The table does not include all principal risks identified by the Home Office in 2024-25. It presents all 'critical' and 'high' risks in the *Annual Report and Accounts 2024 to 2025*, and all new risks disclosed in those accounts since 2023-24.
- 2 'Data quality' was identified as a high risk in 2022-23, but since it was not identified in 2023-24, here it is presented as a new risk since 2023-24.
- 3 The Home Office listed 16 principal risks for 2024-25. The Home Office assesses the risks following a qualitative methodology, and ratings used are indicative only to evaluate the level of remaining risk (or residual risk) the department is exposed to by end of March 2025.

Source: National Audit Office analysis of risks to the Home Office, *Annual Report and Accounts 2023 to 2024 and 2024 to 2025*

Risk and resilience – supporting resilience



Managing risk to deliver longer-term resilience

Resilience refers to the ability to endure or swiftly recover from crises, as well as proactively address risks before they occur. Our December 2023 good practice guide on [Overcoming challenges to managing risks in government](#) highlighted the need for departments to balance immediate and competing demands with long-term value for money.

Moving away from a crisis-centric mindset to one where risks and issues are identified and prioritised earlier would enable the Home Office and its partners within government to tackle existing issues and adapt to emerging threats more effectively, to achieve long-term resilience.

Effective risk management can also act as a strategic enabler in the pursuit of innovation and transformation. Identifying and mitigating risks early supports an environment where experimentation is encouraged, and failure is managed constructively.⁵

Our November 2024 [Investigation into the acquisition of the Northeye site for asylum accommodation](#) found that the pressure to acquire the site quickly, in order to meet increased demand, led the Home Office to cut corners and make a series of poor decisions. In this instance, the Home Office believed that it had to acquire the site swiftly, or else risk losing the opportunity.

Our report found that this resulted in the Home Office purchasing a site that was unsuitable for the original purpose and paying more for it than it needed to.

In 2020, the government introduced the Skilled Worker visas route to mitigate the impacts of EU Exit on the labour market and attract skilled workers to the UK. Our March 2025 report on [Immigration: Skilled Worker visas](#) found that more people had used the route than the Home Office initially expected. The number of people applying for a Skilled Worker visa each year increased significantly, from 127,300 in 2021 to 256,300 in 2024, with a peak of 509,100 applications in 2023.

The Home Office successfully processed a large proportion of applications between 2023 and 2025; however, our report found that the Home Office made changes to the Immigration Rules and Guidance without a detailed understanding of the potential impacts across different sectors and regions. For example, it did not produce an impact assessment and did not manage increased risks (such as non-compliance) when it added care workers to the list of eligible applicants in February 2022.

From 2023, the Home Office strengthened its approach to tackling non-compliance with visa and sponsorship conditions. It introduced digital audits; a Risk Hub; new checks to identify and target high-risk cases; and technology to check suspicious payments.

Taking a whole-system approach to support resilience

Without a whole-system perspective, clear accountability, and alignment with risk appetite, risks arising in one part of the system can have knock-on effects elsewhere, placing disproportionate strain on areas such as local government and frontline delivery. This could affect the sustainability of systems and limit their resilience.

- Our March 2024 [Investigation into asylum accommodation](#) found that by rapidly progressing plans to establish large sites to house people seeking asylum, the Home Office had incurred nugatory spending and increased risk. The Home Office used emergency planning regulations and engaged with local authorities after it had negotiated agreement to use sites. It faced legal challenges against the use of short-term, emergency planning regulations for Scampton and Wethersfield, and, in September 2023, it received notification to cease all works at Scampton.
- Our March 2022 report on [The Police Uplift Programme](#) found that the Home Office's lack of joined-up planning meant that its understanding of the likely impact of an additional 20,000 officers was still developing. While the Home Office recognised that the uplift would likely put pressure on an already strained criminal justice system, it admitted it had more to do to understand the downstream impacts.

⁵ The National Audit Office provides an [assessment template](#) to assist organisations in assessing the strength of their risk management

Immigration white paper

The white paper *Restoring control over the immigration system*, published in May 2025, set out the government's plans to create a controlled and managed immigration system which promotes growth. There is no timeline for when the white paper proposals will be implemented. An initial reduction to the list of jobs eligible for a new Skilled Worker visa was published in July 2025, with a revised list expected to be in place by the end of 2026. Overseas recruitment of care workers ended in July 2025. By the end of 2025, the Home Office plans to have implemented changes to English language standards, an increase in the immigration skills charge, a new policy framework for family visas, and to have run a consultation on the proposal to extend the qualifying period for indefinite leave to remain.

Police funding settlement and white paper

The government announced that police spending 'power' will increase by 1.7% in real terms on average annually for the period 2024-25 to 2028-29. This reflects the government's commitment to put an additional 13,000 police officers, police community support officers (PCSOs) and special constables into neighbourhood policing roles over this Parliament. Alongside this investment, the government will deliver a programme of police reform. As part of this, the government intends to publish the police reform white paper later this year. The aims are to raise standards, harness technology, increase efficiency, and improve accountability. There is an upcoming NAO report which will examine how the Home Office is supporting police forces to improve their productivity and financial sustainability. It examines the financial and operational pressures facing the police; the Home Office's approach to monitoring and improving financial sustainability; and identifies the barriers to improving police efficiency and productivity, to ensure that value for money is obtained from police funding.

Safer streets mission

The Home Office is responsible for leading the safer streets mission - one of the five new missions that are part of the government's Plan for Change. The safer streets mission aims to reduce serious harm and increase public confidence in policing and in the criminal justice system. As part of this, the government has outlined an ambition to halve violence against women and girls (VAWG) and knife crime in the next decade (2024-2034). The new VAWG strategy setting out the Home Office's plans to achieve this was due to be published in September 2025. Through the safer streets mission, the government also aims to put 13,000 additional police officers, PCSOs, and special constables into neighbourhood policing roles.

Supporting people seeking asylum

The Home Office has set an ambition to end the use of hotels by the end of this Parliament (2029). As part of this, the Home Office has introduced the Border Security Command, to lead on border security work as well as new offences for immigration crime to target people smugglers. In July 2025, the Home Office agreed a pilot scheme with the French Government to return people arriving via small boats to France and to allow an equal number of migrants to come to the UK from France through a new legal route, subject to strict security checks.

About the NAO



The National Audit Office (NAO) is the UK's independent public spending watchdog and is responsible for scrutinising public spending for Parliament. We audit the financial accounts of all departments, executive agencies, arm's-length bodies, some companies and charities, and other public bodies. We also examine and report on the value for money of how public money has been spent.

The NAO is independent of government and the civil service. The NAO's wide remit and unique access rights enable us to investigate whether taxpayers' money is being spent in line with Parliament's intention and to respond to concerns where value for money may be at risk.

We support all Members of Parliament to hold government to account, and we use our insights to help those who manage and govern public bodies to improve public services.

We produce reports:

- on the annual accounts of government departments and their agencies;
- on the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which government has spent public money; and
- to establish the facts where there are concerns about public spending issues.

We do not question government policy objectives. We look at how government has spent money delivering those policies and if that money has been used in the best way to achieve the intended outcome.

How the NAO supports Parliament

Through our website or our Parliamentary Relations team, MPs, peers and staff can:

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- make general queries about public spending, or raise concerns with us about value for money; and
- request advice on understanding and scrutinising departments' annual reports and accounts.

Our dedicated Parliamentary team can offer you support and put you in touch with our experts on subjects of interest to you and your constituents. If you would like more information about our work, or to arrange a briefing, please contact our Parliamentary Relations team at parliament@nao.org.uk.

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About this report

This report has been produced to provide an overview of the NAO's examination of the spending and performance of the Home Office.

It is intended to support the Home Affairs Select Committee and Members across the House in their examination of the Home Office.

This report updates our previous report, *An Overview of the Home Office for the new Parliament 2023-24* published in October 2024.

How we have prepared this report

The information in this report draws on the findings and recommendations from our financial audit and value for money work, including the annual report and accounts of the Home Office and its partner organisations. In some cases, to provide the most up to date information, we have drawn on information from publicly available documents. We have cited these sources throughout the guide to enable readers to seek further information if required.

Where analysis has been taken directly from our value for money or other reports, details of our audit approach can be found in the Appendix of each report, including any evaluative criteria and the evidence base used. Other analysis in the guide has been directly drawn from publicly available data and includes the relevant source as well as any appropriate notes to help the reader understand our analysis.