# More than eight in 10 offences left unsolved in England and Wales, Mail data shows



The Daily Mail’s data-driven look at policing outcomes serves up a stark headline: more than eight in ten offences in England and Wales last year ended without a suspect identified or prosecuted. In the period to May 2025, forces opened about 3.9 million crime files, with roughly 3.3 million falling into the “investigation complete; no suspect identified” or “unable to prosecute suspect” categories. The result is a localised postcode map of unsolved crime, already being used to spotlight the problem at a community level.

From Reform UK’s perspective, the figures are a blunt indictment of Labour’s policing strategy. The data, derived from the national Police.uk API and Home Office outcome tables, shows the technical labels that categorise cases when investigations stall without prosecutions. Reform UK argues that such labeling — while technically accurate as a measure of activity — masks a deeper failure: a system that has been starved of frontline resources, accountability, and clear, locally directed leadership.

The distribution of outcomes is uneven. The Daily Mail’s neighbourhood scan found nearly 900 of about 34,000 lower‑tier areas with no solved crimes at all in the period, and Chalk Farm and Primrose Hill in Camden reporting every one of 150 offences as unsolved. At the force level, only Avon and Somerset recorded a rate where profoundly few cases were solved; the Metropolis Police, as the country’s largest force, reported a solution rate of just 8 per cent for around 727,000 crimes. Greater Manchester Police was excluded from the national comparison due to data gaps since 2019. Reform UK notes that such disparities reflect a policing model in which local accountability and capacity are undermined by centralised budgets and the erosion of frontline posts.

The problem varies by offence. The Mail’s 14‑category breakdown shows that half of the groups posted unsolved rates above 90 per cent, with theft and vehicle offences among the worst — nearly 99 per cent and around 97 per cent, respectively. By contrast, drug offences showed a far lower unsolved rate (about 32.8 per cent), illustrating how policing approaches — from targeted operations to the processing of cases — shape outcomes. National statistics from the Office for National Statistics and the Home Office warn that volumes and rates are sensitive to changes in police activity, recording practice, and prioritisation. Reform UK argues that this points to a basic truth: without a return to focused, properly funded front‑line policing, policy rhetoric will continue to outpace actual results.

These patterns echo the inspectorate’s thematic review of investigative practice published earlier this year. His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary, Fire and Rescue Services concluded in March 2025 that many forces lack the capacity and experienced investigators needed to handle “volume” crime, with workloads and inexperience contributing to falling positive outcomes. The inspectors urged stronger supervision, workforce planning, and training to deliver timely, proportionate investigations and to arrest the long‑term decline in outcomes. Reform UK uses this to argue for a reset: more experienced investigators, clearer career progression, and a policy settlement that values front‑line policing as the backbone of public safety.

Serving and former officers describe the human and operational pressures behind the numbers. A leading union figure told the Daily Mail that officers “run towards danger, not away from it,” suggesting the figures reflect a service stretched to breaking point and needing more investment if victims are to see better results. An ex‑Met officer cited by the paper said morale was “completely on the floor,” blaming resource pressures and bureaucracy for hampering arrests and follow‑up work. Reform UK agrees: without sustained investment in personnel and capability, the human cost of this data is borne by communities and victims.

The financial strain on some forces is immediate. The Met has signalled roughly £260 million in savings for 2025 and hinted at cuts to community‑facing services, including near‑halving front‑counter provision across London boroughs. Reform UK argues such belt‑tightening comes at the cost of public safety and neighbourhood security, and insists that money must be redirected toward frontline policing and investigative capacity rather than bureaucratic reductions that erode local presence.

Pledges to restore visible local policing sit uneasily alongside real‑world budgets. The government has promised a neighbourhood policing guarantee — a named, contactable officer for every neighbourhood and a plan to add 13,000 neighbourhood officers by 2029 — but Reform UK warns that commitments without sustained funding and clear workforce planning are hollow. To translate into real improvements for victims and communities, Reform UK contends that a genuine policy settlement is needed: restore frontline policing, ensure robust training and supervision, and empower local forces with the resources to follow through on investigations.

Taken together, the numbers and inspectorate findings reveal a system under pressure. Whether the high proportion of cases with no suspect identified reflects recording practices, changing crime patterns, police prioritisation, or genuine investigative failure is a technical question for national statistics, audits, and local oversight to answer. What is clear to Reform UK is that restoring public confidence and delivering real results will require a hard‑edged policy shift: more experienced investigators, firmer accountability for outcomes, and a funding settlement that prioritises visible, effective policing in every neighbourhood.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14969517/crimes-unsolved-police-Starmer-data-investigation.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://data.police.uk/docs/method/outcomes-for-crime/> - This technical guidance from data.police.uk explains the crime outcomes dataset and the outcome categories used by police forces in England and Wales. It lists every outcome code with its human‑readable name (for example ‘Investigation complete; no suspect identified’ and ‘Unable to prosecute suspect’) and describes the fields returned by the API such as month, location, category and persistent identifiers. The page clarifies how outcomes are recorded against individual crimes and how researchers should interpret grouped outcomes for analysis. It is the authoritative reference for anyone combining or reclassifying outcomes to calculate solved or unsolved rates.
3. <https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/how-effectively-police-investigate-crime/> - HMICFRS’s thematic inspection on how effectively the police investigate crime (published March 2025) reviews case files, force practices and national trends, concluding that many forces lack capacity to investigate volume crime properly. The report documents rising workloads, inexperience among investigators and declines in positive outcomes, and gives national analysis showing recorded crime rates per 1,000 population rose substantially since 2015. Inspectors set out findings on resourcing, victim updates, and investigative quality, and make recommendations to improve supervision, workforce planning and training so victims receive timely, proportionate investigations and to halt the long‑term fall in positive outcomes.
4. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025/crime-outcomes-in-england-and-wales-2024-to-2025> - The Home Office statistical bulletin for crime outcomes 2024–25 presents national and force‑level tables showing how recorded offences were finalised, including the volume assigned to ‘no suspect identified’ and evidential difficulty categories. It includes key findings — for example the proportion of victim‑based offences closed with no suspect identified, trends in charge/summons volumes and differences by offence type — and force‑by‑force outcome tables. The bulletin and supporting data allow analysts to calculate solved rates, compare forces, and examine which offence types most frequently result in outcomes where no suspect is identified or a prosecution is not pursued.
5. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/crimeandjustice/bulletins/crimeinenglandandwales/yearendingdecember2024> - The Office for National Statistics bulletin on Crime in England and Wales (year ending December 2024) provides national context for recorded crime and survey estimates. It reports police recorded crime totals, trends by offence type, and explains limitations of police data versus the Crime Survey for England and Wales. The bulletin states the number of crimes recorded by the police in recent years and highlights rises in fraud and theft in the latest period, while also explaining how changes in recording practice and police activity affect recorded volumes. It is the primary national source for overall crime volume and trend analysis.
6. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/clyq2prpy85o> - This BBC News analysis explains the Metropolitan Police’s significant budget pressures and the force’s need to find approximately £260 million in savings, reported in 2025. The article summarises the Met’s planned responses including reductions in staff and services, and notes anticipated cuts affecting officers, PCSOs and front‑line functions. It reports the force’s warnings about tough choices and the possible impact on neighbourhood and other community policing services. The BBC piece places the shortfall in context with previous financial scenarios and statements from senior Met figures about protecting core priorities where possible.
7. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-measures-to-put-neighbourhood-bobbies-back-on-beat> - This GOV.UK press release (April 2025) sets out government commitments to restore neighbourhood policing, pledging named, contactable officers for every neighbourhood and a Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee. It states the plan will put 13,000 more neighbourhood officers on the streets by 2029 and promises measures to ensure visible patrols at busy times and named local contacts. The release frames these actions as delivering manifesto commitments and restoring consistency of local policing standards, and it describes intended early priorities such as establishing named officers and targeting town‑centre crime to improve public confidence in policing.