

# The Police Foundation Polling Headlines

June 2026

## Headlines

### Executive Summary

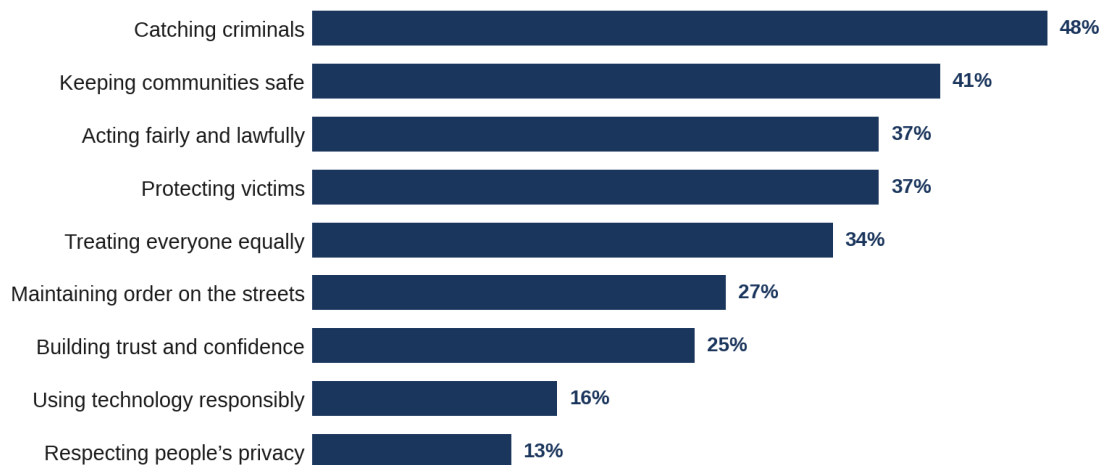
- The public sense the police are losing the technology race - **34%** think criminals are better than the police at using technology, against just **19%** who think the police have the edge.
- Londoners are wary of police AI in the abstract - only **33%** support it in general and **40%** oppose - yet back almost every specific use once it's described. The key condition is human oversight: **56%** want AI used only to assist officers with important decisions left to humans, only **6%** would rule out its use entirely.
- On crime, Londoners want the police focused above all on catching criminals (**48%**) and lean firmly tough-on-crime, with **63%** saying Britain isn't tough enough and **55%** favouring punishment over rehabilitation in prisons. These attitudes harden sharply with age and split by party - Reform and Conservative voters are the most punitive, while Green voters and the under-25s are consistently more liberal and more sceptical of police power.
- Trust in the Metropolitan Police is moderate (**net +24**), placing it in a middle tier well below the NHS and military but ahead of central and London government. It is driven far more by politics than ethnicity, with Labour and Conservative voters the most trusting and Green voters the only group to distrust the force on balance.

## Priorities, Media and Connection

- Asked to choose the most important priorities for policing in London, Londoners pick catching criminals (**48%**), keeping communities safe (**41%**), protecting victims (**37%**), acting fairly and lawfully (**37%**) and treating everyone equally (**34%**). Using technology responsibly (**16%**) and respecting privacy (**13%**) rank lowest.

### What Londoners want the police to prioritise

"Which of the following should be the most important priorities for the police service in London?" Select up to three.



Source: Public First poll for the Police Foundation · 1,041 adults in London, 19–22 June 2026 · weighted by age and gender, education and borough.

- Catching criminals is overwhelmingly the top priority for older Londoners (**71%** of over-65s) and is far less salient for under-25s (**38%**), who instead prioritise protecting victims (**48%**).
- Television remains the most common source of news (**52%**) for Londoners, ahead of news organisations' own websites and apps (**27%**), radio (**25%**) and social media (**35%**). Among under-35s, however, social media (around **48%**) and video-sharing sites such as YouTube and TikTok (over **30%**) rival or overtake television.
- Londoners are fairly attuned to what's happening in their local areas: **54%** are members of a local WhatsApp or equivalent messaging group, and **13%** say they have attended a protest in the past year - rising to **21%** of 18-24s.
- Awareness of the technology firms now linked to policing and AI is mixed. Amazon (**97%**) and Apple (**96%**) are near-universally known, and OpenAI is recognised by **81%**. But Anthropic (**52%**) and Palantir (**48%**) are unknown to around half of Londoners.

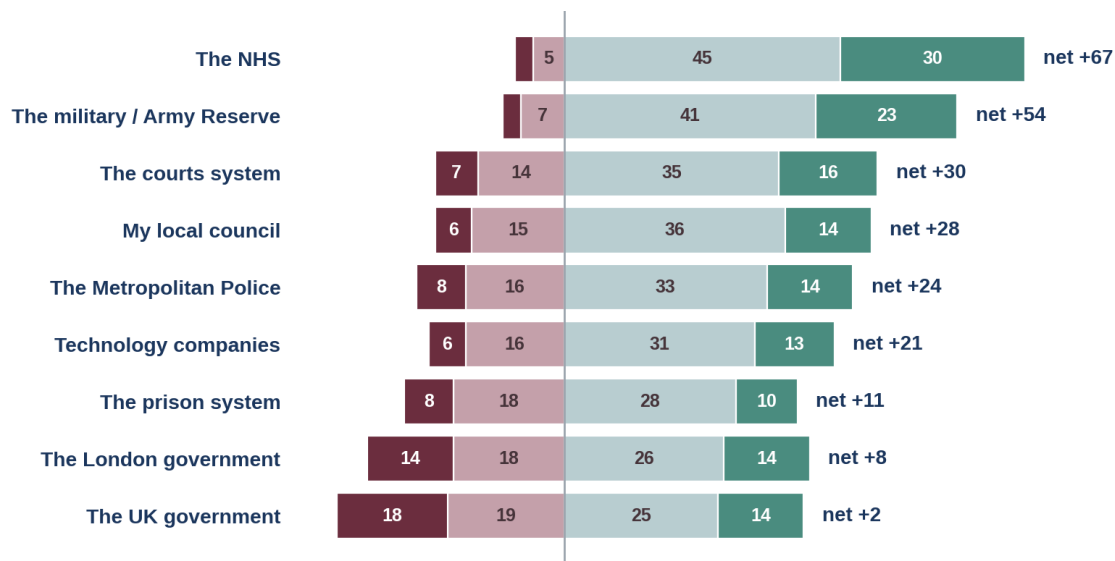
## Trust in Institutions

- Londoners place most trust in the NHS (net **+67**) and the military (net **+54**). The courts (net **+30**), local councils (net **+28**) and the Metropolitan Police (net **+24**) form a middle tier.

## How much Londoners trust each institution

"To what extent do you agree or disagree that the following are organisations that you can trust?" Net = % agree minus % disagree.

Strongly disagree Tend to disagree Tend to agree Strongly agree



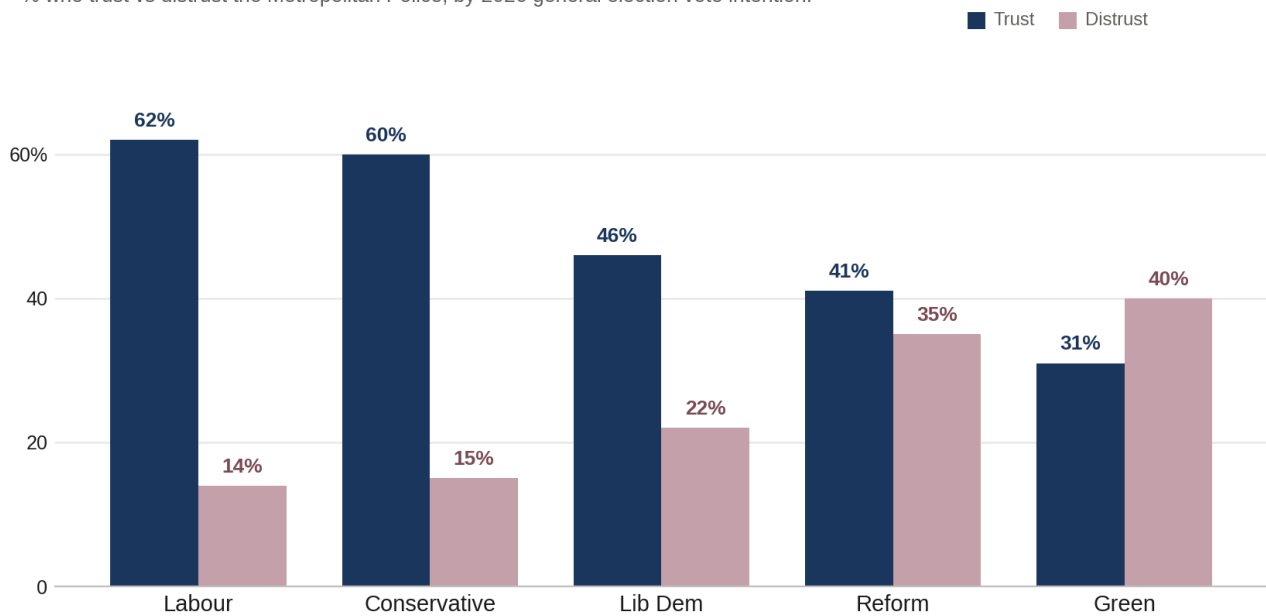
Source: Public First poll for the Police Foundation - 1,041 adults in London, 19-22 June 2026 - weighted by age and gender, education and borough - 'neither' responses (17-36%) not shown

- Trust is lowest for the institutions of government and punishment: the prison system (net **+11**), the London government (net **+8**) and the UK government (net **+2**) are the least trusted of those tested.
- Notably, technology companies (net **+21**) are trusted by more Londoners than the UK government, the London government or the prison system.
- Trust in the Met is shaped largely by politics. It is highest among those intending to vote Labour (**62%** trust) or Conservative (**60%**), and lowest among Green voters, who are the only group to distrust the force on balance (**31%** trust vs **40%** distrust). Reform voters are narrowly net-positive but divided (**41%** vs **35%**).



## Trust in the Met divides along party lines

% who trust vs distrust the Metropolitan Police, by 2026 general election vote intention.



Source: Public First poll for the Police Foundation - 1,041 adults in London, 19–22 June 2026 · weighted by age and gender, education and borough.

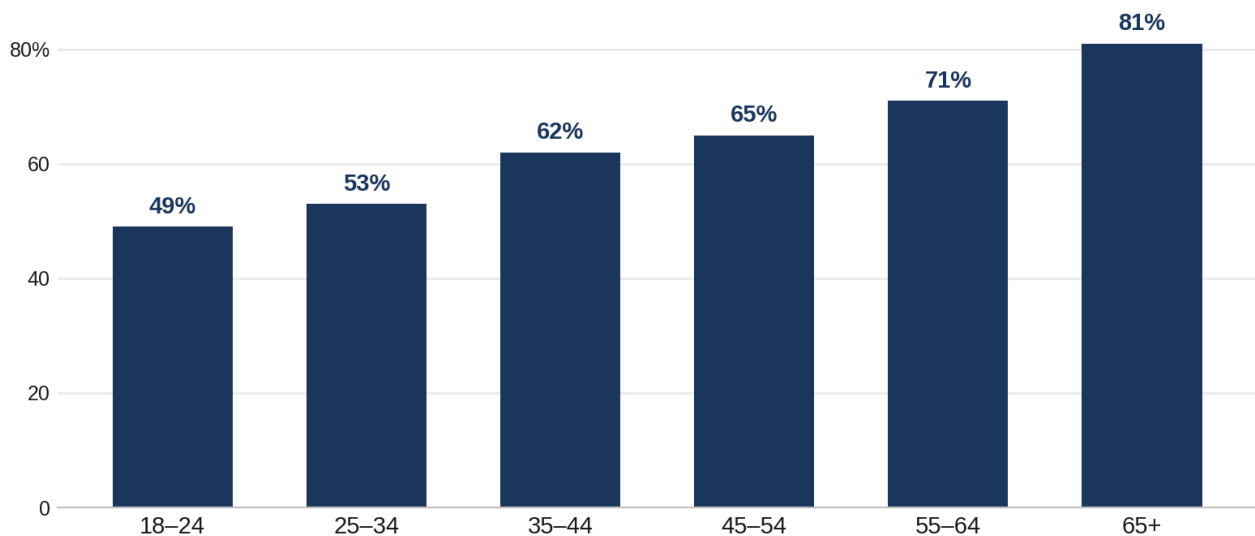
- Differences by ethnicity are smaller than the political divide: White Londoners trust the Met slightly more than ethnic minority Londoners (**50%** vs **46%**), and those born outside the UK are marginally more trusting than average (**52%**).

## Crime, Punishment and the Law

- **63%** of Londoners agree Britain is not tough enough on criminals (**35%** strongly). This is heavily influenced by age - agreement runs from **49%** among 18-24s to **81%** among the over-65s, where a majority (**54%**) agree strongly.

## Older Londoners are far more likely to say Britain is too soft on crime

% who agree that "Britain is not tough enough on criminals", by age.



Source: Public First poll for the Police Foundation - 1,041 adults in London, 19-22 June 2026 - weighted by age and gender, education and borough.

- The same question splits sharply by party - from **80%** of Reform voters and **71%** of Conservatives down to **54%** of Labour and **50%** of Green voters - and by ethnicity, with White Londoners (**71%**) far more likely to agree than ethnic minority Londoners (**55%**).
- **62%** think the death penalty is appropriate in some cases, against **29%** who say it can never be justified. Support peaks among Reform voters (**81%**); Green voters are the only group evenly divided (**45%** appropriate vs **46%** never).
- On police powers, **43%** think the police do not have enough power and **32%** think they have too much. But the balance flips among younger and minority Londoners: 18-24s lean towards 'too much' (**39%** vs **34%**), as do ethnic minority Londoners (**39%** vs **32%**) and Green voters (**41%** vs **28%**).
- **55%** want prisons to focus on punishing and deterring offenders, against **34%** who prioritise rehabilitation. Green voters are the only group to favour rehabilitation (**49%** vs **37%**); Reform voters are the most punitive (**71%**).
- **65%** agree there is no excuse to break the law, and **42%** agree a good person would never commit a crime (against **33%** who disagree).
- Stated willingness to report crime is strong - **46%** say they would report every crime they were a victim of, and only around **6%** say there are circumstances in which they generally would not.
- **15%** of Londoners say they have been the victim of a crime in the past year. This is concentrated among the young (**21%** of under-35s vs just **5%** of over-65s) and among those born in London (**19%**, compared with **5%** of those born elsewhere in the UK).



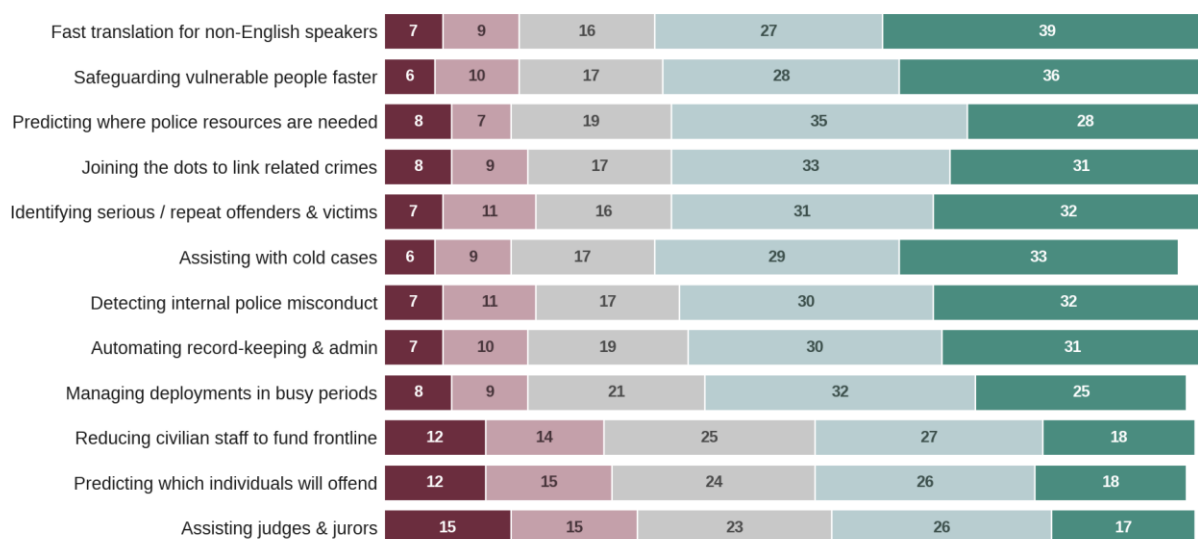
# The Police, Technology and AI

- There is broad support for the police modernising. Around four in five Londoners support the police adopting new technology (**81%**), making use of information they already hold to identify offenders (**80%**) and connecting information across different police systems (**82%**).
- But confidence in the police’s current capability is generally low - **34%** think criminals are better than the police at using technology, compared with **19%** who think the police are ahead and **31%** who think the two are evenly matched.
- Asked about the police using AI ‘generally’, Londoners are net-negative: **40%** oppose it and only **33%** support it. Younger adults are the most sceptical, **52%** of 18–24s oppose it and just **27%** support, a reversal of the usual pattern in which younger people are more comfortable with new technology. Over-65s are the most supportive group (**43%**).
- Yet support rises dramatically once specific, concrete uses are described - to **60%** or more for almost every purpose tested. The framing of AI in the abstract appears to drive more concern than when it’s applied to practical examples, or when it’s presented with trade-offs.

## Support and opposition to police uses of AI

“To what extent would you support or oppose the police using AI for each of the following purposes?”

Strongly oppose    Somewhat oppose    Neither    Somewhat support    Strongly support



Source: Public First poll for the Police Foundation - 1,041 adults in London, 19–22 June 2026 - weighted by age and gender, education and borough - remainder = don't know

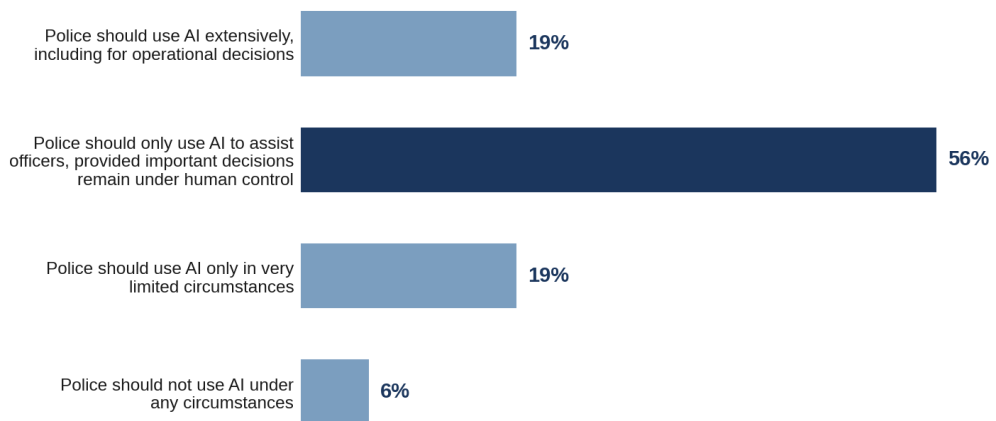
- **64%** say the police should make greater use of AI if it helps them process information more quickly, against **23%** who would rather things were processed more slowly. Asked what worries them more, more than twice as many cite the police failing to spot important information (**36%**) as cite the police using AI to analyse it (**16%**); a further **38%** are equally concerned by both.



- The three uses without majority support are: predicting individual offending, supporting judicial decisions, and replacing staff. Predicting which individuals will offend is the only specific use a plurality actively oppose among some groups - 18-24s (**38%** oppose vs **35%** support) and Green voters (**39%** vs **37%**).
- **56%** of Londoners think the police should use AI **only to assist officers**, with important decisions kept under human control, rising to **70%** among the over-65s. Only **19%** want AI used extensively including for operational decisions, and just **6%** would ban it entirely.

## Londoners support police use of AI, but only as a tool to assist officers

"Which of the following comes closest to your view?" on how the police should use AI.



Source: Public First poll for the Police Foundation - 1,041 adults in London, 19-22 June 2026 - weighted by age and gender, education and borough.

