



Annual Policing Survey

Summary Report

January 2021

Background and methodology

As part of his commitment to actively engage with the diverse communities of Kent and Medway, the elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) for Kent, Matthew Scott, launched his fifth Annual Policing Survey in December 2020.

Like previous years, the aim of the exercise was to survey a large and representative sample of residents on their views and experiences of policing in their communities. Collecting information from the sample enables the PCC and his staff to draw meaningful conclusions to help inform the Police and Crime Plan and decisions with regards to the council tax precept.

The questions asked of residents included:

- Do you believe the current priorities set for Kent Police are the correct ones?
- How safe do you feel where you live, on a scale of 1 to 10?
- Have you been a victim of crime in the last year?
- Which issues do you feel are the most important?
- Would you be willing to pay more in council tax towards the costs of policing?

The survey also requested information about the district respondents live in, their age, gender, ethnicity, and whether they work for or volunteer with Kent Police. These questions were not mandatory but the information, where given, assists the OPCC to monitor the representativeness of the sample in comparison to the population of Kent and Medway.

The decision was taken to host the survey online via Smart Survey for a second year; in addition to minimising costs and impact on staff workload, Covid-19 restrictions prevented attendance at, or the hosting of physical engagement events. To ensure due diligence and compliance with GDPR legislation, advice was sought from Kent Police's Information Security Department.

Publicising the survey

A link to the survey was posted on the OPCC website and shared widely on social media, making use of the OPCC's Twitter account, Facebook, and Instagram feeds. The survey was also posted on a relatively new platform called 'NextDoor'; via this, the office was able to access a captive audience of 181,055 verified Kent residents. The OPCC also posted the link and a short explanation on community-run Facebook pages, and to local councillors who were encouraged to share it amongst their own public contacts. A handful of Kent MPs also kindly shared the survey. Throughout the survey period, regular reminders were sent out across all social media channels.

A link to the survey was included on all outgoing OPCC e-mail correspondence and staff email signatures. A special edition 'Annual Policing Survey' e-newsletter was also circulated to the more than 1,600 subscribers. A minimal number of surveys were also sent out by post to anyone who requested a copy, and returned surveys manually inputted.

The majority of publicity was free of charge; however, Mr Scott took the decision to promote the survey via Kent Online, one of the county's most popular news websites. As a result of the pandemic, expenditure on engagements was minimal and so a fraction of the unused budget was used for sponsored content and a digital advertisement (screenshots and the results are attached as an Appendix). A combination was chosen in order to achieve the best of both worlds: a digital advert to achieve mass awareness and sponsored content to educate.

The PCC also took the opportunity to promote the survey whilst speaking to Radio Kent on 4 December 2020. Mr Scott also held public consultations online using Facebook live and Microsoft Teams in order to give people an opportunity to ask questions and to go through the content of the survey before completing. In addition, a police cadet-only event was held to give young people an opportunity to ask the PCC questions and complete the survey.

The survey remained open for five weeks from 1 December 2020 to 7 January 2021, with **3,276** completed responses received. This represents a good return for the Annual Policing Survey when compared with the years 2016 (1,690 responses), 2017 (1,661 responses) and 2018 (1,400 responses). Despite running for a much shorter period, it was also close to the record-breaking number of responses received last year (3,468 responses).

Against a total population of Kent and Medway of around 1.8 million, a sample size of 3,276 is considered statistically significant at a 95% confidence level (a commonly accepted level of probability).

The OPCC acknowledges that the results were unfortunately not representative of some cohorts within Kent and Medway, including younger people and those from BAME backgrounds. It is possible that this was linked to the inability to attend specific locations, or host physical engagement events due to Covid-19. It is certainly an issue that the OPCC will look at in the future in an effort to ensure better representation from all communities in the county.

Results of the Annual Policing Survey

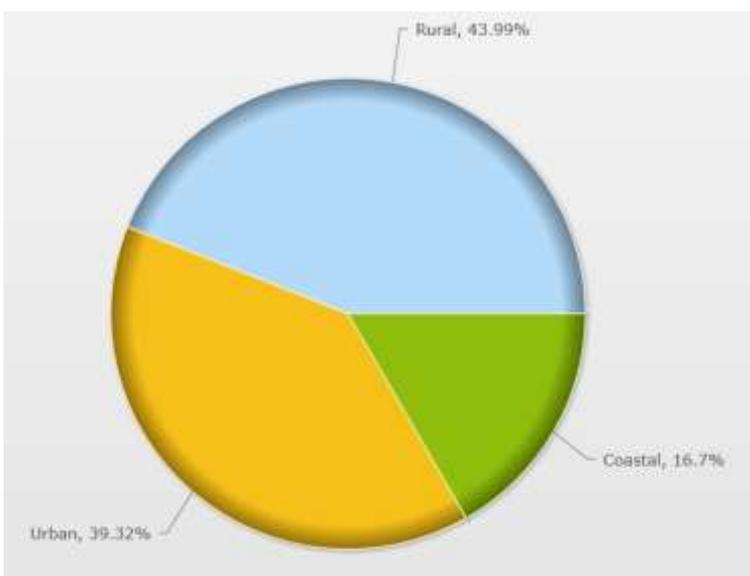
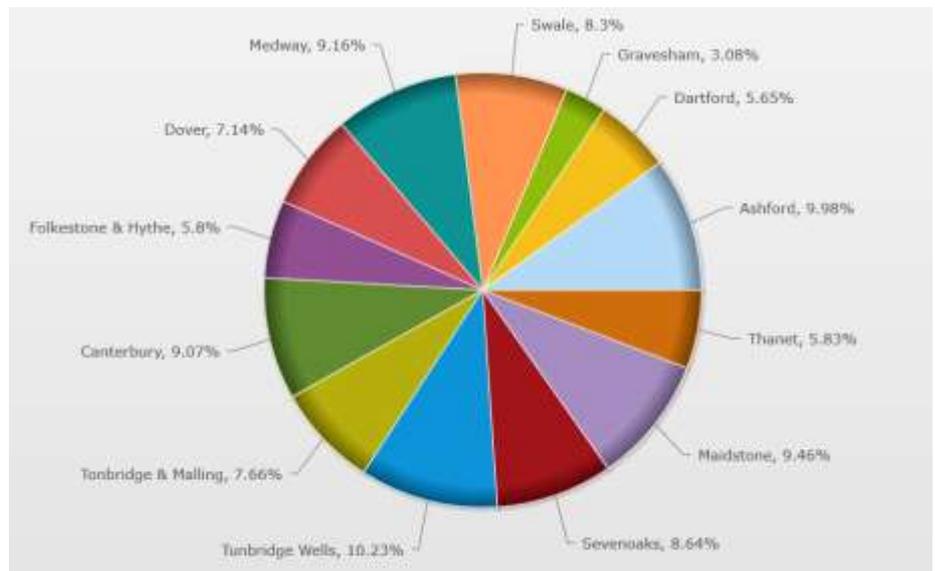
Part One: Introduction

Q1 asked for respondents' email addresses if they wished to be kept informed about the work of the PCC via a quarterly newsletter.

This resulted in an extra 1,633 email addresses being added, increasing the overall number on the newsletter circulation list to 3,313. This will enable the OPCC to send important updates to a wider network of Kent and Medway residents.

Q2 Which district do you live in?

As the chart shows, responses were received from every district, indicating that the survey was widely received. The data also provides an indication as to where the OPCC might need to better promote the survey in the future (e.g. Gravesham).



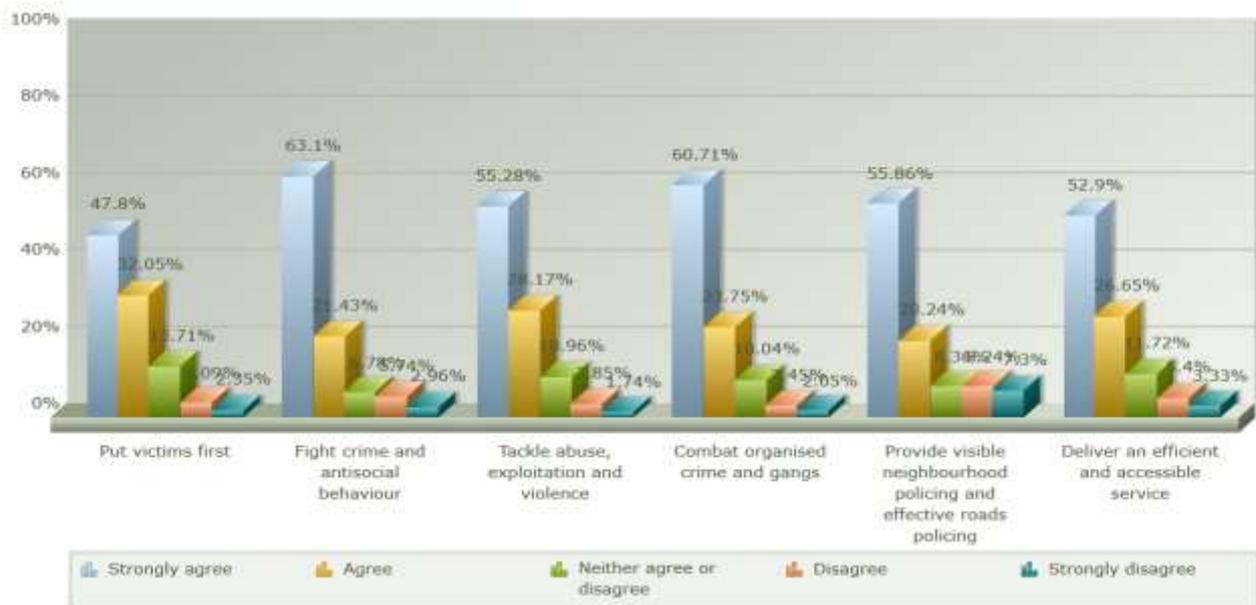
Q3 asked respondents to describe the area they lived in.

The greatest number of respondents (43.9%) indicated that they live in a rural area (although it should be recognised that the classifications were self-defined).

Part Two: Current priorities

Q5 Overall, do you believe the current priorities I have set for Kent Police are the correct ones?

The graph clearly shows the majority of people chose either 'strongly agree' or 'agree' for each of the current priorities – an average of **81.3%**. This was consistent across all age groups.



Part Three: Your experiences

Q6 How safe do you feel where you live, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)

The mean average of all 3,276 responses was a score of **6.97** out of 10, an increase on last year's **6.38**.

There were small variations when the total sample was divided into sub-groups¹, for example:

- Those living in an 'urban' area responded with a score of **6.78** for how safe they felt where they live.
- Those living in a 'rural' area responded with a score of **7.09** for how safe they felt where they live.
- Those living in a 'coastal' area responded with a score of **7.06** for how safe they felt where they live.

Breaking this down into districts we were able to delve deeper into the differences in perception of safety across Kent. On average, respondents from some coastal areas in East Kent and areas in West Kent felt safest (Folkestone & Hythe, Tonbridge & Malling and Dover). Medway, Dartford and Thanet had the lowest feelings of safety, although were still above six on average.

District	Feeling of safety
Folkestone & Hythe	7.57
Tonbridge & Malling	7.45
Dover	7.30
Sevenoaks	7.20
Tunbridge Wells	7.12
Canterbury	7.03
Gravesham	6.98
Maidstone	6.90
Ashford	6.87
Swale	6.77
Thanet	6.57
Dartford	6.48
Medway	6.38

- Those aged 29 and below responded with a score of **6.78**.
- Those aged between 30 and 59 responded with a score of **6.76**.
- Those aged 60 and above responded with a score of **7.18**.
- Those who defined their ethnicity as "White" responded with a score of **7.04**.
- Those from a BAME background responded with a score of **6.57**.

¹ Throughout this report, answers given to questions within the **Part Ten: Concluding questions** section have been used to subdivide the total sample of 3,276 into smaller demographic groups in order to identify any trends. Where totals across the sub-groups do not add up to the total sample size of 3,276 this is due to some respondents choosing not to answer the questions within the **Part Ten: Concluding questions** section.

Q7 Have you been a victim of a crime in Kent in the last year?



520 or 15.87% of respondents indicated that they had been a victim of crime in Kent in the last year; this compares to 19.7% in last year's survey.

Those who said they had been a victim of a crime in Kent within the last year (520 people) responded to Question 6 with a score of **5.50** out of 10 for how safe they felt where they live (last year = **5.08** out of 10). This was on average 1.74 less than those who had not been a victim of crime and supports research that suggests being a victim of crime negatively impacts on people's feelings of safety.

Q8 If so, how satisfied were you with the service Kent police gave you? (1 = very unsatisfied / 10 = very satisfied)

For those who had been a victim of crime in Kent within the last year, their average score in terms of satisfaction with Kent Police was **4.33** out of 10. This compares to **4.49** last year.

In relation to those who had been a victim of crime and the service provided by Kent Police: Q9 asked what went well and Q10 asked what could be improved?

Of the 520 people who indicated that they had been a victim of crime in the last year, 445 made a comment in the free text field for what went well and 463 in the free text field for what could be improved. Examples of responses from across the 1-10 scoring range spectrum are given below.

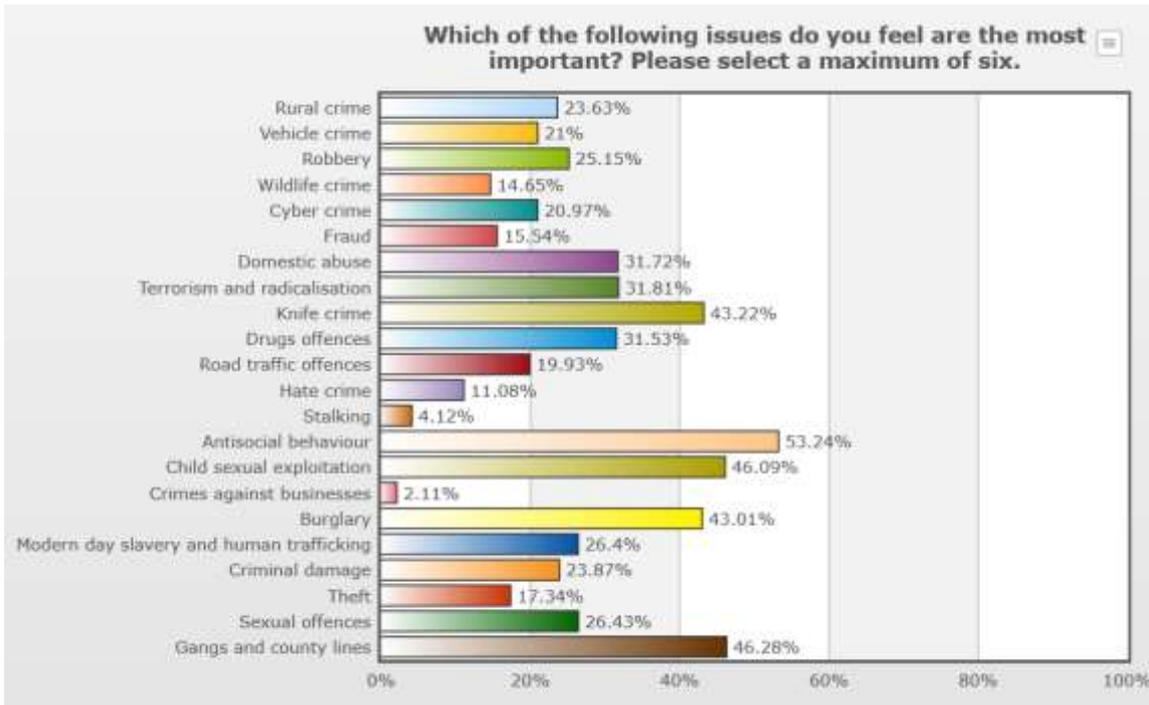
Q8) How satisfied with service Kent Police gave you?	Individual	Q9 & Q10) Use this space to briefly explain what went well, or what could be improved
1 (very unsatisfied)	A person in their 40's from urban Ton & Malling	<i>"Nothing, didn't even take details for a crime report"</i>
2	A man in his 40's from rural Dover	<i>"Response, should not be days, time to get justice is ridiculous and still non existent"</i>
3	A person in their 30's from rural Sevenoaks	<i>"Case follow-up, I haven't received an update in months"</i>
4	A woman in her 40's from urban Swale	<i>"It was only very low level crime (theft of milk from doorstep) but we had video evidence and a name but it couldn't be pursued. Very minor, of course, but it makes us uneasy, especially as the thief came back a few months later and yelled abuse at my partner. We didn't feel there was any point in reporting the second incident. Obviously I would prefer you focus on bigger crimes and resources are limited. It's just a little frustrating that they get away with it"</i>
5	A person in their 60's from urban Medway	<i>"Follow up call, as there did not appear to be a resolution"</i>
6	A person in their 40's from urban Gravesham	<i>"It would have been good if an officer had come out to check the damage and check with neighbours for cctv"</i>
7	A woman in her 20's from rural Ashford	<i>"More police presence in rural areas"</i>
8	A woman in her 50's from Thanet	<i>"Given the budgets set by government and difficulties of coping with this pandemic I think the police are doing an outstanding job"</i>
9	A man in his 40's from Canterbury	<i>"Easy to contact, professional, supportive"</i>
10 (very satisfied)	A man in his 70's from Maidstone	<i>"From time it took police to arrive, the following investigation and taking of statements, all was done with greatest respect and efficiency"</i>

Part Four: What matters to you?

Q11) Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important? Please select a maximum of six.

The survey asked respondents to select up to six issues from a pre-defined list of 22, to illustrate which they felt to be the most important. In order to verify past results as more than just people choosing those crime types at the start of the alphabet (for example: *Anti-social behaviour, Burglary and Child sexual exploitation*), the options were mixed up in a random order. 3,276 people selected at least one issue. The issues which most people selected most often were: *Antisocial behaviour, Gangs and county lines, Child sexual exploitation, Knife crime and Burglary*.

The results are very similar to previous years, indicating that the same issues remain important to the people of Kent.



When the sample size was divided into sub-groups, the top issues selected remained broadly the same, albeit with some slight differences.

For example, younger people ranked *Sexual offences, Domestic abuse and Child sexual exploitation* as the most important issues, whereas older people ranked *Antisocial behaviour* as their top issue, but also *Child sexual exploitation, Gangs and county lines, Knife crime and Burglary* as important. People in rural areas ranked *Rural crime* higher than those in coastal and urban areas, however the top priorities in rural areas corresponded with the overall picture (*Antisocial behaviour, Child sexual exploitation, Burglary and Gangs and county lines*).

Compared to the overall picture, the main differences were with young people aged below 21, BAME and rural respondents. Young people did not prioritise *Antisocial behaviour* by ranking it joint 13th out of 22, whereas BAME respondents ranked *Hate crime* high up the list of issues coming in at joint 6th along with *Drugs offences*. Finally, respondents who lived in rural areas ranked *Rural crime* as 5th.

Top issues among those aged 29 and under:

1. Sexual offences
- Domestic abuse
- Child sexual exploitation
2. Knife crime
3. Gangs and county lines

Top issues among those aged 30 to 59:

1. Anti-social behaviour
2. Child sexual exploitation
3. Gangs and county lines
4. Burglary
5. Knife crime

Top issues among those aged 60 and over:

1. Anti-social behaviour
2. Gangs and county lines
3. Child sexual exploitation
4. Burglary
Knife crime

Top issues among BAME respondents:

1. Anti-social behaviour
2. Burglary
3. Gangs and county lines
4. Child sexual exploitation
5. Knife crime

Top issues among those living in rural areas:

1. Antisocial behaviour
2. Child sexual exploitation
3. Burglary
4. Gangs and county lines
5. Rural crime

Top issues among those living in coastal areas:

1. Antisocial behaviour
2. Gangs and county lines
3. Child sexual exploitation
4. Knife crime
5. Burglary

Top issues among those living in urban areas:

1. Antisocial behaviour
2. Knife crime
3. Gangs and county lines
4. Child sexual exploitation
5. Burglary

Q12 Are there any other issues which Kent Police deal with in partnership with other agencies that you feel are important?

1,328 respondents completed this free text field, although a number of the responses referred to issues already captured within the list at Q11. A selection of the additional answers are below:

- Fly-tipping
- Homelessness
- Pet theft/animal cruelty
- Illegal immigration
- Child protection
- Enforcing Covid restrictions
- Vehicle noise
- Better use of speedwatch
- HGV issues
- Mental health
- Night-time economy
- Electric scooters and mopeds on paths
- Speeding through villages
- Arson
- Elder abuse
- Unauthorised encampments/issues with traveller communities

Part Five: Quality of service

Q13) What do you think Kent Police do well?

Q14) What do you think Kent Police could improve on?

More than 2,225 respondents completed these free text fields with a meaningful answer. Typical example responses are listed, unedited, below.

What do you think Kent Police do well?

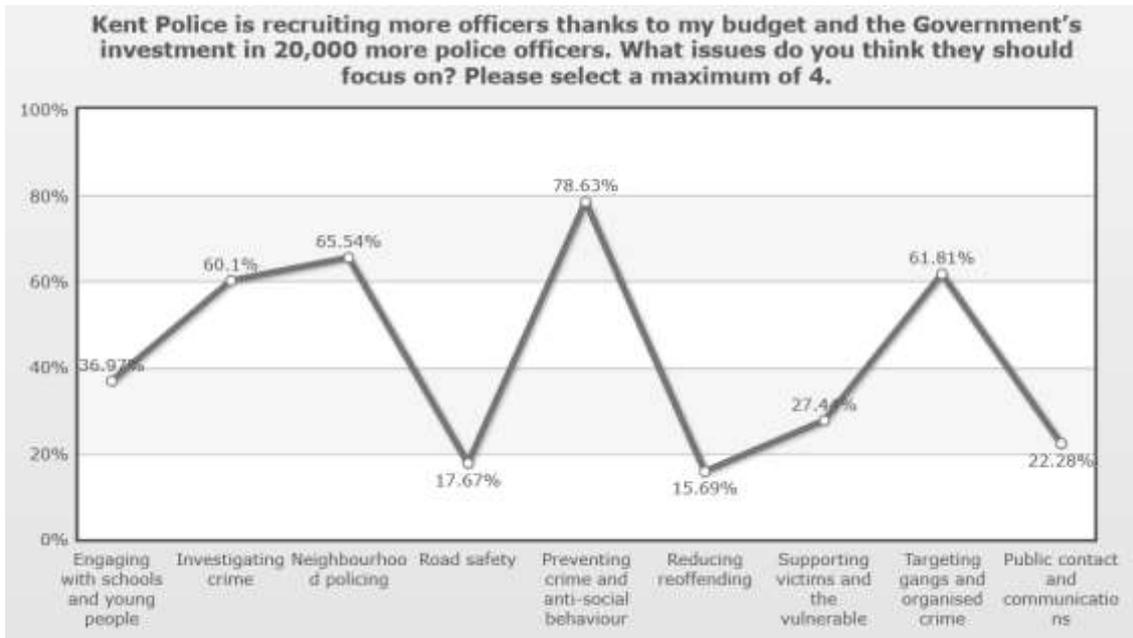
- *“Respond quickly in online chat”*
- *“There seems to be visibility on motorways of police”*
- *“There has been a good response to County Lines issues, drug and knife crime”*
- *“Frontline officers are professional and friendly, they work hard with the lack of resources they have”*

What do you think Kent Police could improve on?

- *“More visible presence. Tackle anti-social behaviour in a more robust manner”*
- *“Slow response rate, timely process to call police on 101, better visibility and attendance on high street”*
- *“Improve communication for reporting suspicious activity and suspected crime”*
- *“More resources to tackle low level crime, ignoring the ‘small stuff’ just pushes up the threshold and almost give low level crime the green light”.*

Part Six: Increasing police numbers

Q15 Kent Police is recruiting more officers thanks to my budget and the Government's investment in 20,000 more police officers. What issues do you think they should focus on?



Respondents could select up to four role areas, from a pre-defined list of nine. 3,276 respondents selected at least one option; the role areas selected most often were:

- 1) **Preventing crime and antisocial behaviour (ASB)**
- 2) **Neighbourhood policing**
- 3) **Targeting gangs and organised crime**
- 4) **Investigating crime**

Again, when the sample was divided into sub-groups, the responses given remained broadly the same, albeit showing some slight differences.

Top choices among those aged 29 and under:

1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Investigating crime
3. Targeting gangs and organised crime

Top choices among BAME respondents:

1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Neighbourhood policing
3. Targeting gangs and county lines

Top choices among those aged 30 to 59:

1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Neighbourhood policing
3. Investigating crime

Top choices among those in urban areas:

1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Neighbourhood policing
3. Targeting gangs and organised crime

Top choices among those aged 60 and over:

1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Neighbourhood policing
3. Targeting gangs and organised crime

Top choices among those in coastal areas:

1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Targeting gangs and organised crime
3. Neighbourhood policing

Top choices among those living in rural areas:

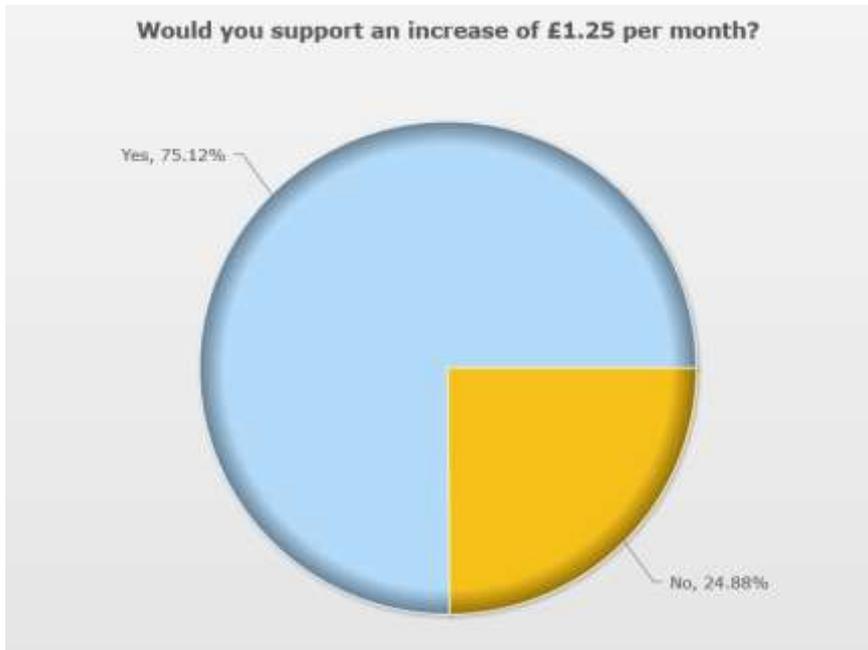
1. Preventing crime and ASB
2. Neighbourhood policing
3. Investigating crime

Interestingly, those living in coastal areas saw *Targeting gangs and organised crime* as a higher priority than *Neighbourhood policing* and *Investigating crime*. Apart from this anomaly, there was broadly a consensus in relation to the top four, with *Preventing crime and ASB* as the top role area.

Part Seven: Funding for policing

Q16) The Government has given PCCs the ability to increase the policing element of council tax by £1.25 per month (£15 a year) for an average Band D property. In the past, any surplus raised from council tax that is not needed to meet running costs has been spent on things like more police officers and staff.

Would you support an increase of £1.25 per month?



A total of 2,461 respondents out of 3,276 supported an increase in council tax precept of £1.25 per month (75.12%).

The majority across all sub-groups supported paying an extra £1.25 per month in council tax to fund additional resources, albeit in relation to BAME respondents the size of the majority was lower than other groups. Younger respondents were also less supportive than those in older age groups:

Aged 29 and under:	70.9% in favour (100 yes; 41 no)
Aged 30 to 59:	72.8% in favour (964 yes; 360 no)
Aged 60 and over:	77.9% in favour (1386 yes; 393 no)
Urban respondents:	74.2% in favour (956 yes; 332 no)
Rural respondents:	76.1% in favour (1096 yes; 345 no)
Coastal respondents:	74.7% in favour (409 yes; 138 no)
White respondents:	77.2% in favour (2305 yes; 680 no)
BAME respondents:	66.3% in favour (67 yes; 34 no)

Breaking the responses into districts, there was a correlation between feelings of safety and support for an increase in the council tax precept. Medway, Dartford, Thanet, and Maidstone were amongst the districts with the lowest feelings of safety (Q6), and also showed the lowest support for an increase in the precept.

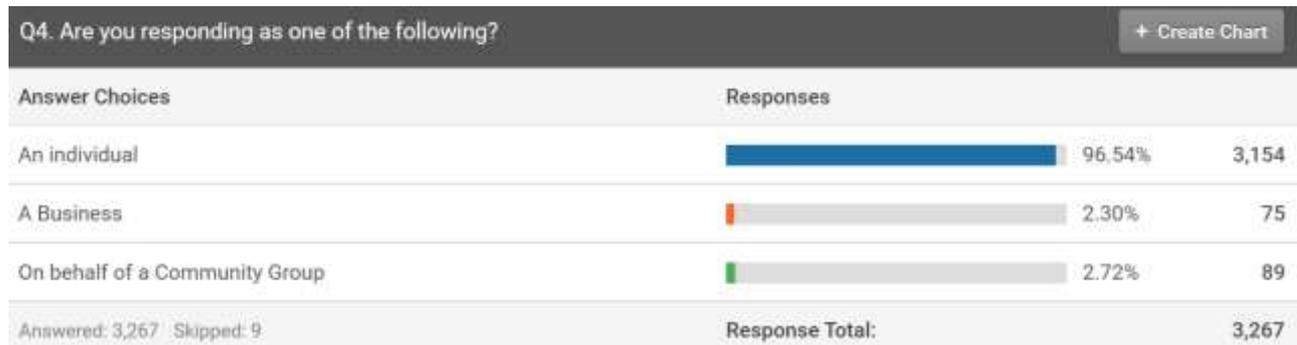
For many respondents their support for an increase in the council tax precept was conditional. For example, a number of respondents stated that if the precept increased, they would like to see a difference in policing visibility/effectiveness in their area. Alternatively, a number stated that the lack of policing in their area was a reason why they were against an increase in council tax precept. Some of the unedited, free text responses to **Q17) Would you like to suggest a different amount per month** are shown below the following table and paint a more vivid picture.

District	% in support of £1.25 per month increase
Tunbridge Wells	79.1
Ashford	78.2
Swale	77.9
Gravesham	76.2
Dover	76.1
Canterbury	75.1
Tonbridge & Malling	74.9
Sevenoaks	74.9
Folkestone & Hythe	74.7
Dartford	73.5
Thanet	72.7
Maidstone	71.6
Medway	70.3

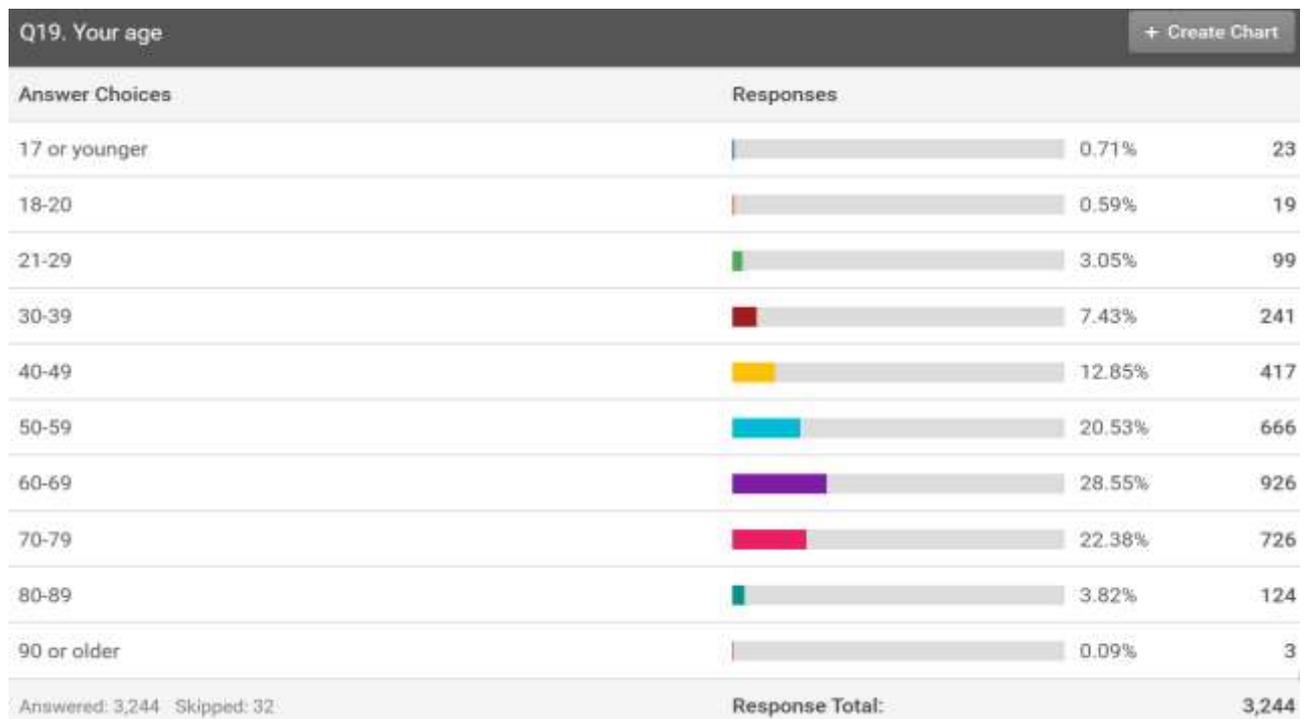
- *“£5 per month for those that can afford it. as long as we see a change in the level of crime in their areas”*
- *“Happy to pay but only if there is a difference”*
- *“We have had increases every year with no Benefit why should we pay even more money for something central government is responsible for (cutting police)”*
- *“There have been big rises in recent years without any obvious improvement in service”*

The overall feeling from the written responses was that respondents were supportive of an increase in the precept, but as a result would like to see greater officer visibility and improved quality of service

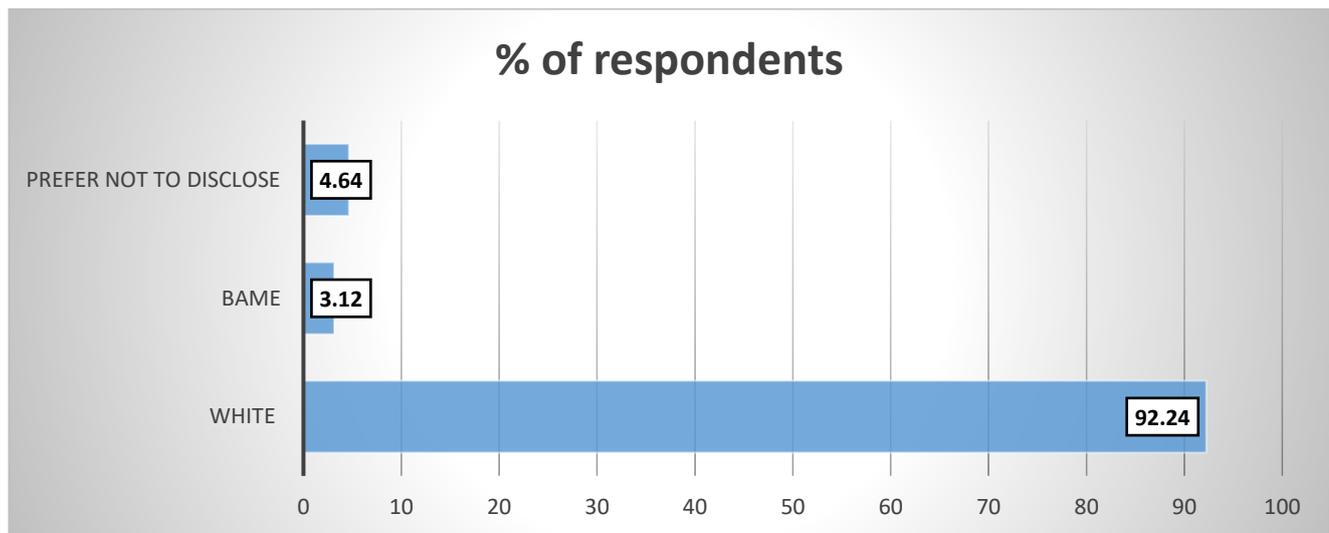
Questions from the survey that are not included in the main report



Demographic questions



Q20 asked about the respondents self-defined ethnicity



Q21. Gender + Create Chart

Answer Choices	Responses
Non-binary / third gender	 0.31% 10
Female	 48.71% 1,570
Male	 46.73% 1,506
Prefer to self-describe	 0.19% 6
Prefer not to say	 4.28% 138
Answered: 3,223 Skipped: 53	Response Total: 3,223

Q22 gave a free text field for respondents to describe their sexuality. There were various responses; however, the majority selected the following categories:

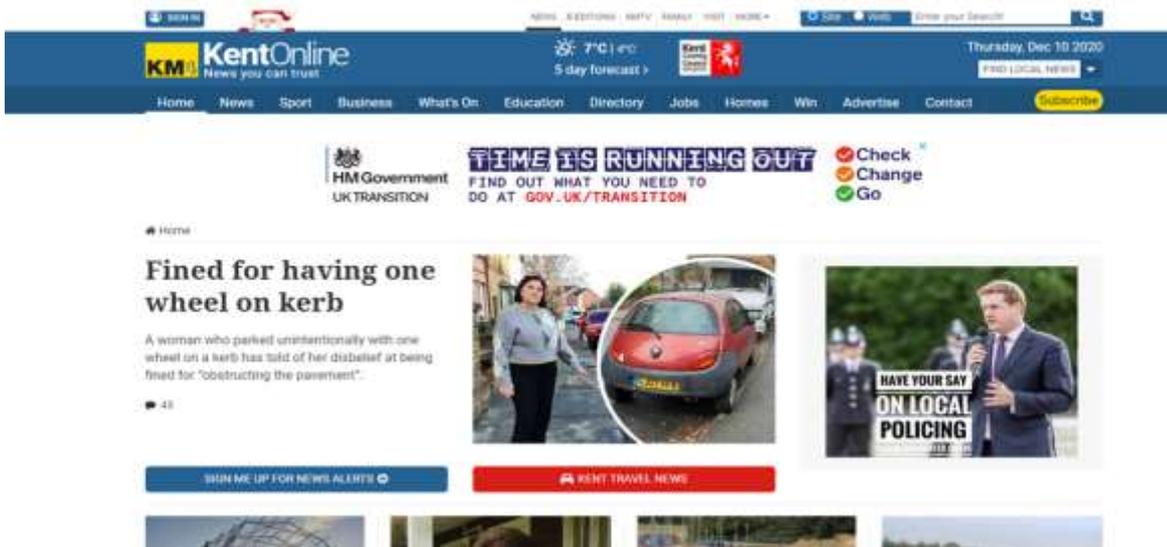
- Heterosexual/straight
- Bisexual
- Lesbian
- Gay
- Asexual
- Pan-sexual

Q23. Do you consider yourself to have a disability? + Create Chart

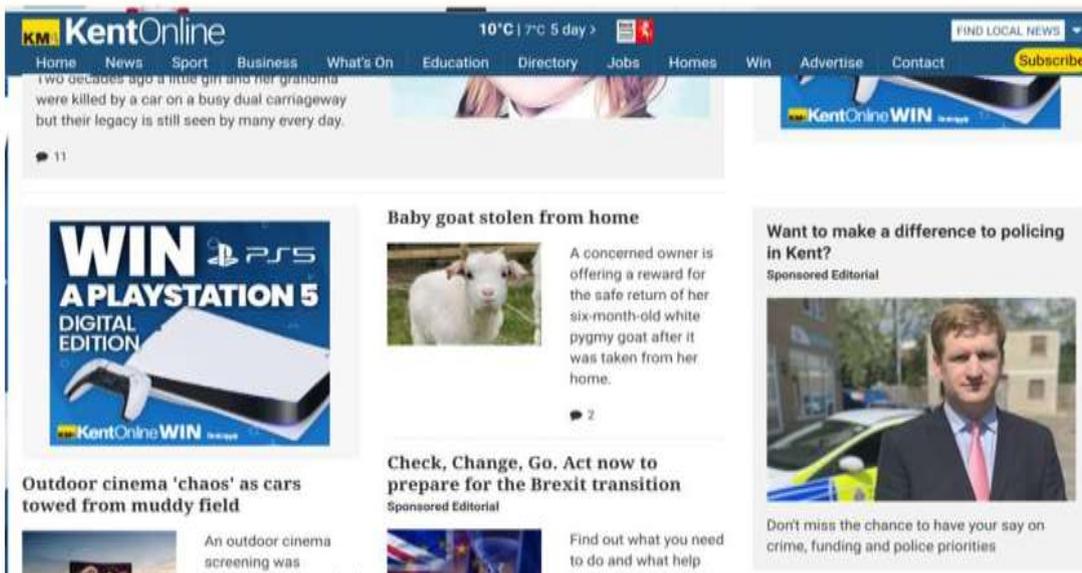
Answer Choices	Responses
Yes	 14.61% 472
No	 85.39% 2,758
Answered: 3,230 Skipped: 46	Response Total: 3,230

Appendix

Kent online digital advert: 250,000 impressions.



Sponsored content: 75,000 impressions



Results:

The sponsored content was read 536 times by 479 people (some read it twice). Average time reading was 35 seconds.

Page Views	Visitors	Minutes	Avg. Time
536	479	283	0:35

Additional to the story, the digital advert was clicked on 737 times (these went straight through to the survey).