

To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel

Subject: HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – update

Date: 4 February 2025

Introduction:

1. One of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) key duties is to be democratically accountable for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. However, the PCC does not judge progress based on targets as he recognises that they can skew behaviour and that often, despite Kent Police's best efforts, it is not always possible to protect the public or bring offenders to justice. The PCC does though consider other feedback, including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, other independent publications, anecdotal examples of frontline service delivery and feedback from staff and local communities.
3. Further to the report that was submitted to the 10 October 2024 Panel meeting, this paper provides an update on Kent Police's progress in addressing the findings from HMICFRS' PEEL 2023-25 Inspection and how the PCC continues to hold the Chief Constable to account.

Background:

4. HMICFRS independently assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and fire & rescue services – in the public interest. HMICFRS asks the questions that it believes the public wish to have answered, and publishes the answers in an accessible form, using expertise to interpret the evidence and make recommendations for improvement.
5. PEEL (police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy) is HMICFRS' regular assessment of police forces in England and Wales. HMICFRS use inspection findings, analysis and professional judgment to assess how good forces are in several areas of policing.
6. PEEL assessments are conducted in a cycle, whereby each force is subject to the same inspection. However, the approach HMICFRS takes and the core questions that make up the assessment, change with each cycle of inspections. As a result, HMICFRS make it clear that it is not possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in the 2023-25 cycle and those from previous PEEL inspections.

PEEL 2023-25 – An inspection of Kent Police:

7. On 17 November 2023, HMICFRS published Kent's inspection report – the [full report](#) can be viewed on their website.
8. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is in 11 areas of policing and HMICFRS made graded judgements in 10 of these. They also inspected how effective a service Kent Police gives victims of crime, but do not make an overall graded judgment.
9. The findings followed eight months of continuous assessment consisting of document and data requests, chief officer interviews, strategic interviews, focus groups with frontline staff, extensive reality testing and a Victim Service Assessment requiring the review of a number of calls for service, investigations, and subsequent outcomes.
10. The following is an overview of HMICFRS' graded judgements in the 10 areas of policing:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers & public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership & force management			

11. As a result of the inspection, the force received 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs).
12. While the AFI in respect of improving the recording of victim's protected characteristics from the previous PEEL Inspection was not referenced due to ongoing national work, the force carried this forward. As a result, the total number of AFIs is 15.
13. Although Crime Data Integrity was not assessed, Kent Police's grade of 'Outstanding' from the previous PEEL 2021/22 inspection still stands and so the force continues to lead the field nationally with one of the highest levels of accuracy.

Progress Update:

14. As reported previously, following the inspection, Kent Police created an Improvement Plan. Progress is monitored at the Future Improvement and Development Board chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable and Chief Officer Management Board chaired by the Chief Constable.
15. While HMICFRS will not formally sign off AFIs until the next PEEL assessment cycle (due to commence in 2025/26), the force maintains regular engagement and where appropriate, provides evidence in support of early closure. In July 2024, as a result of evidence provided, the following three AFIs were reviewed by HMICFRS and closed because of the positive progress:
 - The force doesn't always answer emergency calls quickly enough.
 - The force needs to reduce the number of non-emergency calls the caller abandons because they aren't answered.
 - The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.
16. The force has also self-assessed three AFIs as discharged: consistency in assigning the correct crime classification outcomes; the development of serious organised crime (SOC) local profiles; and the introduction of a disproportionality panel to monitor and respond to vetting decisions.
17. Work on the remaining nine AFIs continues, with extensive workstreams for each. Attached as Appendix A is a summary of current progress prepared by Kent Police.

Holding to account:

18. The PCC is pleased that three AFIs have already been closed by HMICRS and that the force has assessed a further three as discharged. He also remains reassured that the remaining AFIs are being progressed, as evidenced by Appendix A.
19. Through his quarterly Performance & Delivery Board, the PCC continues to monitor the AFIs closely and holds the force to account for delivering their responsibilities under the Victims Code, getting the right outcomes and bringing offenders to justice. He also continues to scrutinise the Neighbourhood Policing model to ensure that it delivers the service that residents expect and deserve.

20. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Making Kent Safer](#) Plan and policing generally in the county.
21. The 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper routinely reports on HMICFRS activity and regularly includes updates on progress against the force's Improvement Plan.
22. Progress updates are also reported at the [Joint Audit Committee](#) and the PCC continues to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular weekly briefings.
23. Whilst the PCC recognises that the force has work to do to ensure it consistently provides a first-class service, he would like to thank the officers, staff and volunteers of Kent Police for their continued diligence and dedication to service and doing their best for local neighbourhoods and victims of crime.

Recommendation:

24. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their October 2025 meeting.

HMICFRS PEEL 2023-25 – progress update

On 17 November 2023, HMICFRS published their PEEL inspection of Kent Police. Following publication, the force put in a place a plan to progress the 14 areas for improvement (AFIs) issued by HMICFRS.

One AFI in respect of improving the recording of victim's protected characteristics issued in PEEL 2021/22 was not referenced, but the force carried this across into the improvement plan to ensure continued monitoring.

This brought the total number of AFIs to 15. Details of all the gradings are provided below.

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
	Preventing crime	Managing offenders	Investigating crime	
	Police powers and public treatment	Tackling workforce corruption	Responding to the public	
	Protecting vulnerable people			
	Disrupting serious organised crime			
	Developing a positive workplace			
	Leadership and force management			

The following provides a summary of AFIs that have been closed since the last report and those that remain in progress.

- Victim Service Assessment Ungraded (1 AFI carried over from PEEL 2021/22)

The force continues to await national guidance in respect of recording all protected characteristics. Improvements in the recording of ethnicity continue to be made. Guidance has been provided to staff to reinforce the requirements, data is available via a dashboard on the Force Data Hub and a short training video has been developed to further enhance compliance. Oversight and scrutiny to drive improvement continues to take place through local supervision and governance arrangements, overseen by the Investigative Quality Board chaired by the Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Crime.

- Preventing, Deterring Crime and ASB and Reducing Vulnerability Good (1 AFI)

Problem-solving plans are now stored on the force crime recording system, providing an easy search function, and facilitating the sharing of best practice. Training has been provided to neighbourhood staff and officers and staff in wider teams such as Local Policing and Vulnerability Investigation Teams also receive this. This AFI was discussed at the last Future Improvement and Development Board (FIDB), chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) to review the evidence. It was agreed that the actions set to address the AFI had been met, however additional examples in respect of sharing lessons learned and improved outcomes for victims would strengthen the evidence further.

- Responding to the Public Requires Improvement (4 AFIs: 3 Closed)

Following assessment in July 2024, the following AFIs have been formally closed by HMICFRS.

- The force doesn't always answer emergency calls quickly enough.
- The force needs to reduce the number of non-emergency calls the caller abandons because they aren't answered.
- The force needs to make sure that call takers give appropriate advice on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.

The remaining AFI relates to the monitoring and reassessment of outstanding calls for service that require priority attendance.

The reinstated RETHRIVE process and identification of those callers with vulnerabilities is embedded into daily business and ensures an appropriate response and reassessment of risk takes place. Quality assurance processes within the Force Control and Incident Room are well established and THRIVE and RETHRIVE are regularly reviewed. Ongoing work is taking place to ensure attendance to calls for service is timely, and this will assist in further managing those outstanding calls linked to vulnerability that require a high priority level of response.

- Investigating Crime Requires Improvement (3 AFIs: 1 closed)

The Investigative Improvement Plan, investigative principles and detective development continue to enhance current process and practice with progress overseen by the ACC Crime. Training has been carried out across the force with further sessions planned for 2025. The Investigative Improvement Plan is currently being refreshed to ensure continued focus into 2025. Detective numbers are tracked, and the current position is positive. The current charge rate for victim-based crime is over three percentage points above the figure reported in PEEL. Similarly, the solved rate is four and a half percentage points above that reported in PEEL which demonstrates a sustained positive trajectory.

Immediate action was taken when HMICFRS made the force aware of issues with the administration of outcome 21. Appropriate use of outcomes is now embedded within the Audit Calendar and forms part of the day-to-day process of the Data Audit Team. It also forms an integral part of the Crime Data Quality work being driven by Investigation Management Unit and Quality Policing Managers. Several processes are in place that identify emerging trends to ensure these are addressed quickly through education, development, and amendment. Regular audits of outcomes are undertaken to ensure they are being used appropriately. This AFI was discussed at the last FIDB and the evidence reviewed. The Board agreed this AFI had sufficient evidence to close.

Work continues to agree a long-term solution for recording victim needs assessments (VNAs) on the force crime recording system. Improvements in the recording of VNAs continue to be seen as a result of training, oversight, audit and scrutiny. The quality of VNAs continues to be dip tested to ensure the needs of a victim and not just their vulnerability is documented as per policy. Performance monitoring continues to take place to ensure ongoing and sustainable improvement is made.

- Protecting Vulnerable People Good (1 AFI)

Repeat domestic abuse offenders are targeted by proactive teams who work closely with partners across several agencies to reduce offending and break the cycle of abuse. Work continues to ensure that protective orders are being considered when appropriate and this is monitored at Force Performance Management Committee chaired by the DCC. In addition, policy has been reinvigorated, and training delivered. Performance monitoring continues to take place to ensure ongoing and sustainable improvement is made.

- Managing Offenders and Suspects Adequate (2 AFIs)

The force is confident that overdue active risk assessments are identified through supervisory reviews, however the AFI was noted and a formal monitoring process established to provide assurance. The Divisional Policing Review has seen the management of active risk assessments aligned centrally which has

further enhanced the supervision and performance. Once the new model is established this AFI will be considered at the next FIDB.

The new digital forensics structure is well established, and the 'legacy' mobile phone work is now clear and performance for both mobile phones and computers continues to improve. Delivery of the digital forensics' platform solution is critical to support further performance improvement and discharge this AFI. Delivery has been delayed and is anticipated in 2025.

- Disrupting Serious and Organised Crime Good (1 AFI: Closed)

This AFI has been self-assessed as completed and discharged by the DCC. SOC local profiles are in place. The Regional Organised Crime Threat Assessment reports Kent's performance in respect of disruptions to be positive. The force is second in the region and demonstrating a marked improvement in other disruptions.

- Tackling Workforce Corruption Adequate (2 AFIs: 1 AFI Closed)

Since the inspection took place, the force has made changes to meet the demands placed on the Force Vetting Unit as described in previous papers. This AFI has been considered met for some time, however it has remained open to allow review of the updated Authorised Professional Practice (APP). The revised APP was published on 12 December 2024 and a review is underway to ensure the force remains compliant. An update will be provided at the next FIDB.

Governance

Progress against the improvement plan will continue to be monitored at the FIDB chaired by the DCC and Chief Officer Management Board chaired by the Chief Constable to ensure scrutiny at the very highest level. In addition, regular reporting of progress will continue to take place at both the PCC Performance and Delivery Board and the Joint Audit Committee.

Future

On 30 September 2024 HMICFRS published their proposed 2025-29 inspection programme for consultation. The proposal sets out the PEEL 2025-27 programme, national thematic inspections, rolling programmes, joint inspections and commissions from the Home Secretary and other local policing bodies. Consultation is ongoing and the force awaits the final position.

In respect of PEEL 2025-27, the current proposal is set out below:

- Introduction of two new core questions in respect of safeguarding children and adults at risk and the response to fraud.
- Custody will be incorporated to enable more frequent inspections (from six to four years).
- Crime data integrity will continue to be inspected but not graded. HMICFRS will carry out dip sampling of files and include any relevant findings in specific characteristics of good for other core questions.
- The core question on management of suspects and offenders will be paused.
- The core question on protecting vulnerable people from harm will be removed; however the force's capability in this area will be reported in a revised HMI summary.
- The core questions will focus on: Leadership; Supporting and developing the workforce; Public treatment; Prevention and deterrence; Responding to the public; Investigating crime; Safeguarding children and adults at risk; Custody; and Fraud.

Preparation and governance are well established with Chief Officer oversight to ensure the force puts forward the best evidence available to demonstrate the progress made against the previous AFIs, and new evidence across the core questions being assessed.