

Making Kent Safer

Annual Report 2024 - 2025



Appendix A

Contents

Commissioner's Introduction	2
Making Kent Safer Plan	3
My priorities for the Chief Constable:	
• Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour	4
• Tackle violence against women and girls	5
• Protect people from exploitation and abuse	5
• Combat organised crime, county lines and drugs	6
• Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities	6
• Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero	7
• Protect young people and provide opportunities	7
The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	8
My commitments as PCC:	
<i>Community engagement</i>	9
• Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system	10
• Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and anti-social behavior	13
• Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation	18
• Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and the funding formula review	20
• Support volunteering	21
• Commission services for victims that are needs-led	23
National expectations:	
• Strategic Policing Requirement	27
• National Crime and Policing Measures	29
• Policing Vision 2030	30
• Legislation	30
Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody	30

Commissioner's Introduction

It is with immense pride that I present my Annual Report for 2024/25.

This year marked the beginning of my third term as Police and Crime Commissioner, following the elections in May 2024. I remain deeply honoured to serve the people of Kent and humbled by the faith placed in me to deliver on their behalf.

Nationally, 2024/25 saw a change of Government which led to a shift in priorities and changes to funding. Locally, I was very pleased to support a request from Chief Constable Tim Smith to extend his appointment to December 2029. Mr Smith has delivered significant performance improvements, and I look forward to working with him in the future to make Kent even safer.

My role covers a range of duties across policing, criminal justice and community safety, but the cornerstone is public engagement informing effective scrutiny. The response to my Annual Policing Survey was overwhelming, with more feedback than any other consultation ran by my office. I also continued to engage with residents and businesses, listening to what they had to say, and holding the Chief Constable to account.

In this capacity I am delighted to report that Kent Police continued to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour across the county, with 4,500 fewer victims than in 2023/24. The force also maintained its public call handling performance in 2024/25, answering 97% of 999 calls in under 10 seconds, ranking it 2nd nationally, and answering 101 calls in an average of 31 seconds. Importantly, this means the public are able to contact Kent Police when they need to.

As in previous years finances were a challenge. Kent is a high performing force, but I know they could achieve more with extra funding. Every penny is precious and the ongoing budgetary challenges highlight the importance of maximising resources and value for money. Whilst successful in securing £3.1m in additional funding for my commissioning budget, I am committed to working with partners to ensure victims receive the right support and to make Kent Safer.

As Chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board, challenges remain around the backlog in cases. Despite efforts by criminal justice partners and engagement with Ministers, caseload numbers remain unacceptably high. Victims and witnesses should not have to wait months, or years, for their case to be heard in court, and I will continue to press for action that makes a difference locally and nationally.

I remain committed to continuing work that will make a real difference to the lives of the people in Kent. Over the next three years, I want to cut crime, support victims and build trust in Kent Police.

Lastly, I would like to thank every Kent Police officer, Police Community Support Officer, member of staff and volunteer for their tireless efforts during 2024/25. My thanks also to the staff in my office for their hard work and support to me as your elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

Matthew Scott

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

Making Kent Safer Plan

By law, Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are required to publish a Police and Crime Plan that covers their term of office, and keep it under constant review. PCCs also have a duty to consult victims and the wider community on their priorities.

On 1 April 2022, I published ‘Making Kent Safer – April 2022 to March 2025’. It set the priorities for Kent Police, partners and my Office, as well as the overall strategic direction of policing and community safety in the county.

Having taken the decision to formally refresh my plan on an annual basis, and being committed to encouraging feedback from victims and those living in the county, my Annual Policing Survey ran from July to October 2023

A total of 4,538 responses were received - the highest return rate ever. The full survey report can be viewed [here](#), but this is a precis of the results.

I would like to thank all those who took the time to have their say on policing and crime in the county.

However, the survey was only one element of my consultation. It also took account of correspondence received by my Office; feedback from engagement events; observations from criminal justice bodies and community safety partners; emerging local threats; and national guidance. The Chief Constable was also fully consulted.

The plan was refreshed where necessary but not fundamentally altered. Of note, the consultation found the top five issues respondents felt were most important were consistent with previous years (Q15).

My refreshed plan was considered and supported by the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel. It was published on 1 April 2024.

At its core was integrity and transparency. As an elected PCC, the public rightly expect the highest standards of behaviour from me, therefore strong ethics, integrity and transparency have to be at the heart of all I do. From Chief Constables to police officers on the street, there also remained a need to strengthen trust and confidence.

Q1. On a scale of 1-10, how much do you trust Kent Police? (1 = not at all / 10 = very much so)
➤ Respondents trusted Kent Police 6.0 / 10
Q2. Overall, how well do you think Kent Police perform?
➤ 40% well or extremely well
➤ 26% neutral
➤ 34% badly or extremely badly
Q3. How safe do you feel where you live? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)
➤ Respondents felt 6.3 / 10 safe where they live [2022 = 7.2 / 2021 = 7.0]
Q4. Have you been a victim of crime in Kent in the last year?
➤ 22.7% indicated ‘Yes’ [2022 = 17.9% / 2021 = 16.8%]
Q6. If yes, did you report the crime?
➤ 81.7% of victims reported the crime to police [2022 = 79.4%]
Q15. Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important?
➤ Respondents could select up to six issues from a pre-defined list; the top five were:
1. <u>Serious</u> violence, incl. gangs / weapon offences
2. Sexual offences, incl. rape
3. Child sexual exploitation
4. Anti-social behaviour
5. Burglary / Robbery

For the plan to be successful, underpinning the actions and decisions of the Chief Constable and myself were three overarching guiding principles, namely:

- Crime is important no matter where it takes place – urban, rural or coastal communities.
- Victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do.
- Ensure that vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health get support from the right agency.

The plan then outlined the priorities I had set for the Chief Constable and myself:

My priorities for the Chief Constable:

- Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- Tackle violence against women and girls
- Protect people from exploitation and abuse
- Combat organised crime, county lines and drugs
- Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities
- Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero
- Protect young people and provide opportunities

My commitments as PCC:

- Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system
- Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour
- Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation
- Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and the funding formula review
- Support volunteering
- Commission services for victims that are needs-led

The plan also recognised that the priorities did not sit in isolation but had to be delivered in the context of national expectations, and in particular:

- The Strategic Policing Requirement
- National Crime and Policing Measures
- Policing Vision 2030
- Legislation

April 2024 to March 2025 was the third and final year of my ‘Making Kent Safer’ Police and Crime Plan.



My priorities for the Chief Constable to deliver

The following examples illustrate how the Chief Constable delivered on my priorities in 2024/25.

- **Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour**

Crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) are issues that residents, communities and local businesses care deeply about. Kent Police must ensure it has the right resources with the right skills to deliver effective long term solutions and where necessary, investigate and bring to justice those who harm individuals and businesses.

- Levels of recorded crime and ASB:

	April to March		% change	
	2023/24	2024/25		
Victim based crime	143,574	139,060	▼	-3.1
Burglary residential - Home	3,053	2,571	▼	-15.8
Violent crime	78,348	75,140	▼	-4.1
Rape	2,073	1,990	▼	-4.0
Domestic abuse	30,134	28,129	▼	-6.7
ASB	28,523	27,131	▼	-4.9

- In a joint operation, the Canterbury Neighbourhood Task Force and the Rural Task Force worked alongside the Environment Agency, Joint Unit for Waste Crime, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), and Canterbury City Council Environmental Crime Officers to target those illegally carrying waste on a commercial scale.

Delivering results: One day's operation in November 2024 saw the following:

- 22 vehicles stopped
- 1 arrest
- 5 vehicle seizures
- 1 vehicle removed from the road for safety
- 8 roadside Traffic Offence Reports
- £1,600 in DVSA fines issued

- **Tackle violence against women and girls (VAWG)**

Women and girls are at a disproportionate risk of a wide range of crimes, predominantly perpetrated by men. Kent Police must maintain the trust and confidence of women and girls by listening to those directly affected by violence and abuse, and working with partners to ensure no woman or girl feels unsafe.

- In December 2024, Ian Hamilton, a 63-year-old male from Dover, was sentenced to 42 years imprisonment following a Major Crime Cold Case Team investigation into his violent, sexual, and predatory offending against a number of vulnerable women and girls across the Dover and Canterbury area between 1976 and 1999. Hamilton was initially charged with offences following a review of a 1988 case where a girl was attacked in Hersden; he was then linked to a 1992 report where a child was abused in Dover in the mid-1980s. Detectives traced and interviewed people who had come into contact with Hamilton during the relevant period, leading to further women reporting they had also been sexually abused or violently assaulted by him.

A total of 50 previously unreported offences were investigated and by the time Hamilton stood trial there were 59 charges, including rape – he was convicted of all of them. His Honour Judge Silas Reid who presided over the trial at the Inner London Crown Court described Hamilton as “cunning and sadistic” and a “monster of the night”.

- Examples of VAWG related activity across the force include:
 - ‘Women’s welfare cafes’ with partners, providing female only spaces where support and advice could be obtained.
 - A Knowledge is Power event for women and girls at Ramsgate Football Club.
 - In excess of 40 Walk & Talks allowing officers to walk with women and girls to see the local area through their eyes.
 - Multi-agency events at high harm locations, including hospitals, schools, and higher education establishments to promote reporting routes, provide safety advice and strengthen relationships.
 - Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation in the hospitality industry by testing the response of hotel staff when presented with an adult and child (trained Police Cadet) with what appeared to be alcohol, requesting accommodation.
 - Training of staff in Project Vigilant, a nationally recognised tactic using plain clothed officers to identify predatory behaviour in the night-time economy - the aim being to prevent sexual offending by challenging individuals observed as being a potential risk.

Delivering results: On 31 October plain clothed officers in Dartford noticed a male demonstrating behaviours of concern towards an intoxicated female. police intervention led to the woman being safeguarded.

- **Protect people from exploitation and abuse**

The exploitation or abuse of anyone in Kent is unacceptable which is why the vulnerable must be protected. Kent Police must work with local partners to identify exploitation and abuse wherever it is occurring, pursue and bring offenders to justice, take action to safeguard victims and facilitate the provision of appropriate support to help them cope and recover.

- 11 November 2024 marked the launch of Operation Sceptre, a national week of action targeting knife crime across the UK. Neighbourhood officers conducted weapons sweeps and stop and searches, leading to multiple arrests and the recovery of knives. Search warrants were executed to seize weapons and other illicit items, as well as test purchase operations conducted to ensure adherence to the ‘Challenge 25’ policy in relation to knife sale regulations. Multiple locations, including Medway, Tunbridge Wells, Dover, and Gravesham were targeted. Events such as hosted community meetings and educational events were also held to raise awareness.

	Number	Knives recovered	Arrests
Weapons sweep	46	12	
Stop & search	101	1	12
Search warrants	3	23	3
Other	3	3	11

- Due to its geographical location, Kent acts as a gateway to and from the continent which organised criminals use for trafficking and exploitation. Tackling the gangs who exploit vulnerable people in this way has continued to be a priority for the Serious Crime Directorate (SCD), whose officers and staff are determined to protect those most at risk of being targeted.

Delivering results: In June 2024, the Serious and Organised Crime Team carried out raids on suspected brothels in Gravesend and Maidstone following a three-month investigation into sexual exploitation and OCG activity. This resulted in the arrest of six key members of the network, with three individuals subsequently charged and remanded for the offence of keeping a brothel. In addition to the intervention and enforcement, three sex workers were engaged with and safeguarded in partnership with the charity, Justice and Care. Notably, over 50 mobile devices were located and seized, many were active and being used to respond to brothel bookings, £3,000 in cash and a quantity of drugs was also recovered. Numerous other locations of note were identified with relevant intelligence disseminated for action.

- **Combat organised crime, county lines and drugs**

Organised crime can seem like a distant threat, but sadly it presents considerable challenges and its effects can be seen in local communities. Kent Police must continue to develop and share intelligence to build a local picture of threats, risk, harm and vulnerabilities to safeguard victims and enable the deployment of the right resources to prevent, disrupt and investigate offending to keep Kent safe.

- The Serious Crime Directorate continued to pursue those offenders that cause the most threat, harm and risk, targeting OCGs that erode the economy and communities, and are responsible for drug importation and supply, firearms offences, aggravated burglary, and theft of ATMs amongst other offences.

Delivering results: *In October 2024, a criminal gang was sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court for conspiring to import and supply class A drugs. The Serious Economic Crime Unit, supported by the Serious and Organised Crime Team, initially uncovered the OCG's criminality having infiltrated the encrypted messaging service EncroChat. On one occasion, a ship arrived at Sheerness docks from Costa Rica and in a container of bananas, over a tonne of cocaine was concealed. The following evening, the OCG arrived at the port to remove the shipment for onwards distribution. Police enforcement was carried out leading to the arrest and charge of multiple offenders. On 1 October, seven members of the OCG were handed sentences totaling 90 years imprisonment for their roles in the illegal enterprise.*

- Kent has three Divisional County Lines and Gangs Teams (CLGT) who provide a proactive and preventative capability to reduce the harm caused to communities from county-line criminality and gang activity. They investigate criminal activity which carries the greatest risk and harm, targeting those who supply controlled drugs.

Delivering results: *The Force received information relating to a crack and heroin drugs line operating in Maidstone and through investigation, intelligence and local knowledge, the CLGT identified two local drug users living in Maidstone who were renown for facilitating county-lines. Both individuals were believed to be supplying at street level and the line holder was identified; he was known for crack cocaine and heroin supply, along with violent offending. Information was also received that the line holder was sexually exploiting young females whom he would sell crack cocaine to and then have sex with. He was also on life license for a violent murder of his ex-wife who he stalked and stabbed to death. On 6 June 2024, Kent Police and British Transport Police Officers deployed on a joint operation with the aim of dismantling the line. Three people were arrested and 107 wraps seized, along with cash and the line phone. Nine charges were gained, and the offenders remanded to custody.*

- **Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities**

The relationship between the police and the people who live, work and visit the county is vital to building trust and confidence. Kent Police must listen to and understand the needs of communities and provide a visible, accessible and responsive service 24/7, 365 days a year which is timely, empathetic and professional.

- Force Crime and Incident response:

999 Contact	April to March	
	2023/24	2024/25
Calls received	384,460	363,396
% Not Answered	0.35	0.44
Average Time to Answer	10 seconds	3 seconds
% Answered Under 10 Seconds	81.41	96.59

101 Contact	April to March	
	2023/24	2024/25
Calls received	275,065	255,824
% Not Answered	8.75	2.95
Average Time to Answer	1 minute 6 seconds	31 seconds

- In April 2024, Kent Police launched its approach to Right Care Right Person (RCRP), a national initiative which aims to ensure that calls for service into policing, linked to mental health, are referred to the right agency.

Partner agencies including the Police, NHS and Ambulance Service, have signed a National Partnership Agreement to deliver the RCRP principles which cover calls for concern for welfare, absent from health based/care premises, Section 136 detentions and transportation of health-based patients. This work has involved significant partner engagement locally, supported by the Integrated Care Board.

In a one-month period, Kent police saw a 7% reduction in concern for welfare calls and a 5% reduction in those attended, saving approximately 1,000 policing hours. It also saw a decrease in the number of Section 136 detentions.

System wide developments have also improved provision including the new NHS 111 option for mental health, eight Safe Havens across Kent with two operating 24/7 in Medway and Thanet, and the opening of crisis houses offering short term support, the first in Medway.

- **Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero**

Despite the efforts of many, Kent's roads remain a concern for local communities. Kent Police must continue to crackdown on the main factors which contribute to people being killed and seriously injured and play its part in Vision Zero by working with partners to prevent road dangers, tackle inconsiderate behaviour and educate where appropriate.

- Kent Police is committed to supporting Vision Zero, the partnership road safety strategy that seeks to eliminate road deaths. The Vision Zero approach is incorporated into the daily business of the following teams: Roads Policing Unit, Roads Safety Unit, Serious Collision Investigations Unit, Safety Camera Team, Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit and Community Speedwatch.

Delivering results: Officers from the Roads Policing Unit deployed on key Bank Holiday dates to target motorcyclists travelling through Kent towards coastal towns.

Officers were deployed on unmarked motorcycles for enforcement, marked motorcycles and cars for engagement and as a deterrent. Safety Camera Vans were deployed at key predetermined locations.

Numerous enforcements and engagements took place, resulting in zero fatalities or serious injury collisions involving motorcyclists on the Bank Holiday dates deployed.

- On a daily basis the force continues to focus on those offences that have the most impact on road deaths, commonly known as the 'Fatal Four' – speed, not wearing a seatbelt, using a mobile phone and driving whilst impaired. The following table shows the enforcement undertaken by way of automated and mobile cameras, as well as roadside Traffic Offence Reports.

	Speed	Seatbelt	Mobile phone	Drink/Drug arrests
2021/22	79,613	1,819	947	3,347
2022/23	66,093 ¹	2,086 ¹	1,938 ¹	3,502
2023/24	80,877	2,449	1,718	3,650
2024/25 ²	72,857	2,300	1,467	3,406

¹ Excludes October and November 2022 data

² Data incomplete as some still working through the system

- **Protect young people and provide opportunities**

Every interaction with a child or young person leaves a mark; it is an opportunity to build trust and to keep them safe. Kent Police must continue to provide positive engagement opportunities and whenever an officer or member of staff comes into contact with a child or young person, they must look beyond the immediate situation by asking questions and observing their behaviour and environment.

- During a Special Constabulary traffic operation supported by the Police Cadets, over half the vehicles stopped had action taken against the driver. More than 150 vehicles were stopped and checked in the Broad Oak Road area of Canterbury during a six-hour operation. Officers also advised motorists about the 'fatal four' offences which contribute to fatal and serious injury collisions.

Delivering results: Of 152 vehicles stopped:

- 61 were reported for offences including speeding, insufficient tyre tread, vehicle condition likely to cause danger or injury, and not wearing a seatbelt
- 2 vehicles were seized for no insurance
- 20 were issued warnings – including for anti-social driving

- Such is the success of the Police Cadet Scheme, that in November 2024 it was awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service. The award is the highest recognition a voluntary group can receive in the UK and is the equivalent to a collective MBE. It followed an intensive year-long assessment of policies, processes, results and community impact, as well as interviews and surveys. During 2024/25, the Police Cadets took part in several large volunteering events including the Kent Police Open Days, Operation Carrot (property initiative), Divisional award ceremonies and several D-Day celebrations. They also supported their communities at car shows, festivals, garden shows, race for life, and summer fetes, as well as through community projects such as litter picking and community surveys.

As well as being the first, Kent Police remains the only police force in the UK to be running Cadet programmes across three different age groups – Mini, Junior, and Senior, covering ages 8 to 18 years.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) supports me in discharging my statutory responsibilities and delivering my manifesto, as set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

The staff do not change with the election of a new PCC and are politically restricted. This means they are not allowed to support me, as the incumbent PCC, or any other candidate to stand for election or become involved in party political work on my behalf.

The OPCC is a separate organisation to Kent Police, and therefore staff also have no operational policing responsibilities.

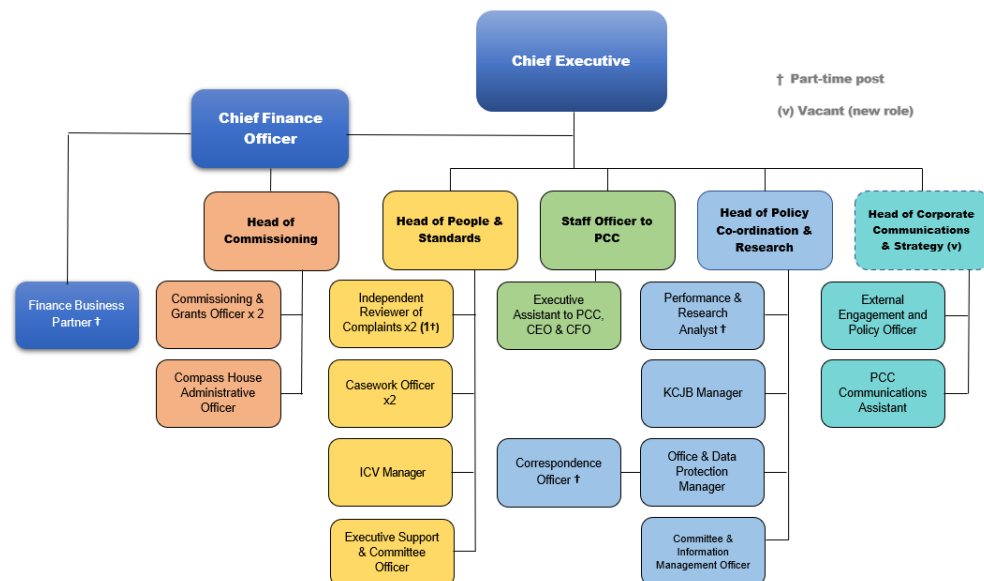
There are two statutory roles within the OPCC:

- the Chief Executive who leads the office and is responsible for all the staff; and
- the Chief Finance Officer who is responsible for the financial strategy and ensuring good value for money.

In addition, the OPCC senior leadership team consists of the following:

- Head of Commissioning;
- Head of People and Standards;
- Staff Officer to the PCC;
- Head of Policy Coordination and Research; and
- Head of Corporate Communications & Strategy.

The structure of the OPCC as at 30 September 2025 is shown below:



With 25 established posts, the OPCC is smaller than many offices around the country allowing as much funding as possible to support policing and commissioned services. The office makes a significant contribution to holding Kent Police to account on behalf of the public, supporting victims of crime and improving community safety.

In supporting me, the team operates under the 'seven principles of public life'. These principles were set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and apply to anyone who works as a public-office holder. The seven principles are:

- Accountability
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Selflessness
- Openness
- Leadership

The OPCC is committed to providing value for money. In 2024/25 there was no increase in the cost of running the office, with the budget being maintained at £1.5m – the same level as in 2017. This was just under 0.4% of Kent's total, annual policing budget.

In 2024/25, the OPCC received:

- Over **6,500** pieces of correspondence via email, online through the website or in hard copy. This included requests for information, invitations to meetings/events, members of the public wishing to complain about Kent Police and promotional/sales material.
- Of this, **5,000** were individual contacts from the public and handled by my Casework team, with one individual alone accounting for around 400 separate contacts in a month. A high proportion related to members of the public wishing to make a complaint about Kent Police which were referred to the Kent Police Professional Standards Department (PSD). However, examples of other issues raised include: the illegal dumping of waste; processing of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks; and the use of e-scooters/e-bikes on pavements, and impact on those with visual impairments.
- **255** requests from members of the public for an independent review into how their complaint against Kent Police was handled by PSD (an increase of 11% or 25 on the previous year).
- **101** Freedom of Information Act requests and **35** Subject Access Requests – an increase of 44.3% (31) and 75.0% (15) respectively.



My commitments as PCC

Community engagement

As my role is to be the voice of the people, it is vitally important that I engage with, and listen to communities, residents, stakeholders and partners.

The OPCC [Facebook page](#) increased its following to 979, with the page reaching an estimated 45,281 people, and followers of the OPCC on [Instagram](#) grew to 878, reaching 7,346 people. The [@PCCKent](#) X account (formerly Twitter) had 11,344 followers, with an average of 648 views per post. My office also utilised [Nextdoor](#) which has almost 370,000 members, with an average of 8,357 impressions per post. 14 videos were posted on the OPCC [YouTube](#) channel, the most popular viewed up to 1,000 times.. My office also continued to engage via the [website](#) and a regular [e-newsletter](#) circulated to more than 5,000 subscribers. In 2025/26, my office will launch on TikTok and LinkedIn to increase its reach.

I actively sought opportunities to engage face-to-face with members of the public by holding street stalls across the county. I also visited all 27 Grip Zones and went on patrol with the local Beat Officer, providing an opportunity to meet with residents and businesses and to see firsthand the impact of focused police activity.

I engaged with local community groups, including attending various Women's Institute and Rotary Club events, and also met with local Parish Councillors and representatives from national bodies such as the National Farmers Union.

In autumn 2024, I began a series of engagements with schools to better understand how Kent Police's Child Centred Policing Team was addressing issues. As a result, it became clear that mobile phone use was having a significant impact on the wellbeing of young people. I therefore launched a [Youth and Parent Survey](#) which revealed nearly 34% of primary children and 29% of secondary pupils had been bullied or picked on online.

Subsequently, I began a series of visits to primary and secondary schools to discuss the findings of the survey and highlight the dangers of mobile phones. Up to March 2025, I visited six schools and met with over 500 pupils. These will continue in 2025/26.

Visiting commissioned services is equally important, and examples this year include DAVSS, Advance Charity Women's Centre and St Giles Trust. My [Victim Voice](#) pamphlet remains a key part of my engagement strategy and continues to be well received and downloaded from the website. It is regularly refreshed to ensure it remains up to date and is a useful aide memoire for officers and staff when supporting victims of crime.

As well as attending new police officer passing out parades and presenting at the Chief Constable's Annual Awards ceremony, I met with all new staff joining the Force Control Room. In addition, I have met regularly with the Police Federation and Unison, as well as other staff support groups.



One of my key duties is to secure an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account. The appointment of the Chief Constable of Kent is therefore a crucial function that I am responsible for.

Chief Constable Tim Smith made a formal request to participate in the ‘Retire and Rejoin’ Scheme in December 2024. The scheme allows any police officer (including a Chief Constable) to formally resign before being re-appointed into the same rank.

Mr Smith was promoted to Chief Constable in December 2022 following a competitive process with a contract to run until December 2027.

Following formal meetings, and based on evidence of his achievements as Chief Constable and future strategic aims, I supported his participation in the Scheme.

At their 4 February 2025 meeting, the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel held a confirmation hearing and recommended that Chief Constable Smith be appointed.

As a result, Chief Constable Smith retired on 28 February 2025 and re-joined on 1 April. He was issued with a new term of appointment which commenced on 1 April and will cease on 7 December 2029.

I am very pleased with the performance improvements Mr Smith has delivered as Chief Constable, and look forward to working with him to make our town centres and rural communities safer and improve outcomes for victims of crime further.

Hold all agencies to account for delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system

Kent Police: In 2024/25, I continued to hold the Chief Constable to account on behalf of the people of Kent.

This was underpinned by a range of governance arrangements that are visible and accessible in order to build and maintain public trust and confidence.

The table below outlines those arrangements:

Key Principles: dynamic & risk-based; takes account of, & has due regard for each parties distinct role	
Informal Interaction (Daily)	Spontaneous discussions between the OPCC & Kent Police.
Joint PCC & Chief Constable Briefing (Weekly)	A closed briefing which enables dialogue & discussion on a routine frequent basis.
Performance & Delivery Board (Quarterly)	Held in public & enables me to formally hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the priorities & related matters.
Joint Audit Committee (Quarterly)	Combined committee with Kent Police. Scrutinises internal processes, spending & risk management policies.
Kent & Essex Collaboration Oversight Meeting (6 monthly)	Co-chaired by me and the Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Keeps collaboration under review and holds both Chief Constables to account.
Complemented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective assessments by HMICFRS • The OPCC conducting checks / audits • Feedback from Independent Custody Visitors • Regular meetings with public bodies & inspectorates 	

As my principle means of holding the Chief Constable to account, Performance and Delivery Board meetings were held on 12 June, 2 October, 11 December and 19 February 2025. Examples of topics discussed include:

ASB/Serious Violence hotspots: With the support of my Office, Kent Police was allocated £1,568,614 from the Home Office (HO) Hotspot Response Fund to combat ASB and serious violence.

The primary objectives of the funds were to provide a reduction in hospital admissions, knife offences, homicides, firearms offences, attempted murder and serious harm cause by assaults, robberies, incidents of ASB and ASB linked offences. The funds were divided with £600,000 for hotspot (Grip Zone) additional police patrols, £500,000 for problem solving activity and the remaining amount funding an Inspector and Sergeant, as well as full time analytical support and IT software.

In 2024/25, Kent had 27 Grip Zones across the county identified through extensive analytical review. 24 encompassed serious violence and ASB, and 3 focused on ASB only.

Compared to the previous year, there was a reduction in recorded serious violence offences of 6.3% in the serious violence hotspots, with 18 of the 24 locations seeing a decrease. In relation to the ASB hotspots, there was a 4.5% reduction in recorded incidents of ASB, with 16 of the 27 locations seeing a decrease.

Call handling: In 2024/25, Kent Police received 363,396 999 calls, a reduction of 5.5% compared to the previous year. The reduction was primarily due to the following: improved 101 call answering times; work around nuisance and hoax callers, as well as improved support for those suffering poor mental health; and inflated 999 call volumes in summer 2023 due to a national android phone issue.

The average abandonment rate was 0.44% and average answer time 3 seconds; the previous year they were 0.35% and 10 seconds respectively. The percentage of calls answered in 10 seconds was 96.59%, compared to 81.41% the previous year. Kent Police's ranking nationally also improved: in 2023/24 it was 31st for average answer time and calls answered in under 10 seconds, in 2024/25 it was 2nd for both.

The number of 101 calls was 255,824, a reduction of 7.0% compared to the previous year. Greater use of digital contact accounted for a large proportion of this, but there was also a significant reduction in re-presented demand, when someone calls 101 but is unable to get through on the first occasion and rings again, or in some cases multiple times.

101 performance also improved in 2024/25, with 97.05% of calls answered compared to 91.25% the previous year. The average time to answer reduced to 31 seconds from 1 minute 6 seconds the previous year.

The total number of digital contacts was 254,839, a 1.6% increase on the previous year. This is positive as digital offers an enhanced service to the public given their ability to select and self-serve via a channel of their choice 24 hours a day.

I would like to congratulate Kent Police on continuing to manage growing demand from the public effectively, and thank those officers and staff in the Force Control Room for their hard work.

PEEL 2023-25: In holding the Chief Constable to account I am not solely reliant on data, but also consider other feedback, including independent assessments of performance.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and fire & rescue services in the public interest. In November 2023, HMICFRS published the [Kent PEEL 2023-25 inspection report](#).

In response to the 14 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) issued by HMICFRS, the force developed an Improvement Plan and during 2024/25 I continued to receive regular updates on progress at each Performance and Delivery Board.

Over the course of the year the Force continued to make good progress in addressing the AFIs. In 2025/26, Kent Police will be subject to HMICFRS' PEEL 2025-27 inspection and I look forward to receiving the report in due course.

Further information about my [Performance and Delivery Board](#) can be found on the OPCC website.

Police Complaint Reviews

Following changes to the police complaint system in February 2020, the OPCC is one of two 'review' bodies (along with the Independent Office for Police Conduct) to which members of the public may appeal after they have complained to Kent Police and had a response from the PSD.

Subject to the nature of the complaint, it is the role of the OPCC to determine whether the handling of the complaint was reasonable and proportionate; and if not, to make recommendations to Kent Police to redress any concerns. This may be that Kent Police apologises to the member of the public, through to the identification of process failures that need to be addressed. It is not a reinvestigation of the complaint itself though, as this is not within the PCC's remit.

In 2024/25, the OPCC received 255 requests for an independent review into how a complaint had been handled by Kent Police. Of those:

- 28 were upheld;
- 174 were not upheld;
- 11 were passed to the IOPC as the correct review body; and
- 42 were invalid.

The OPCC performed strongly in terms of timeliness, taking on average 30 days to respond to a review, compared to a Most Similar Group average of 46 days, and a national average of 48 days. 14% of valid reviews were upheld, which was in line with the national average and IOPC expectations.

Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel

In 2023/24, the Association of PCCs, and National Police Chiefs' Council (with HO, Ministry of Justice and Independent Custody Visitors Association support), contacted all PCCs and Chief Constables, with an expectation that they create and implement Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels (CDSPs).

It was recognised that scrutiny of custody was limited to either infrequent, large scale inspections - such as by HMICFRS - or regular, more limited review by Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs). Therefore CDSPs were to provide a more frequent, in depth review of custody and the practices within suites by:

- assessing and reporting on detention and custody processes;
- reviewing and advising on matters of disproportionality; and
- assisting in generating a transparent product suitable for public consideration at the end of each annual Panel cycle.

In Kent, the meeting is co-chaired by the OPCC Chief Executive, and one of the ICV Panel Coordinators. It includes representation from Kent Police, the Independent Advisory Group, both Appropriate Adult organisations, ICVs as well as OPCC staff. During the year, membership was extended to include Kent Police's Custody healthcare team, and the Liaison, Diversion and Reconnect service, which is commissioned to signpost detainees to further support once released.

The meeting scrutinises custody-related data such as numbers detained, vulnerabilities and complaint outcomes. However, in 2024/25, this was enhanced through the development of an extensive data pack which now includes detainee demographic data, Most Similar Group comparators, and detailed information about child detentions, such as reasons for bail, searches and their ethnicity.

The CDSP produced its first Annual Report, and also commenced work on its second Thematic Review, focusing on the experiences of child detainees from ethnic minority backgrounds. As it is now relatively well-established, Kent has been approached by staff from a number of other OPCCs wishing to observe the meeting and take best practice back to their own areas.

Wider criminal justice system (CJS): I continued to chair the Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB). The Board brings together chief officers from criminal justice (CJ) agencies and wider partners and has responsibility for overseeing CJ across Kent and Medway with the purpose of delivering effective, efficient and fair justice.

Despite the Board doing all it could to limit the increase in outstanding caseloads in both Magistrates and Crown Courts, it continued to be hampered by a complex mix of capacity, infrastructure and staffing issues, as well as the CJS' inability to flex resource where it was most needed.

The outstanding caseload issue in Kent can primarily be attributed to three factors:

- Record levels of work entering the system - Kent Police has more officers than at any other time in its history, resulting in more arrests and charges. Therefore, work entering the system is simply greater than the CJS can manage.
- Insufficient physical court capacity – whilst Canterbury Crown Court showed some signs of recovery, Maidstone remained a critical issue, with the outstanding caseload continuing to rise. HMCTS accepts it does not have capacity to meet demand, and the outcome of a business case to build two further courtrooms is awaited. In terms of Magistrates Court capacity, while at county level it is sufficient, it is not aligned to demand. For example, as the busiest court, Medway only has three secure docks and five cells, significantly short of what is required. However, there is unused capacity in courts such as Sevenoaks and Margate.
- Shortages of key staff – whilst there continues to be a national shortage of Judges (exacerbating the shortage in Barristers), Kent recruited two new Circuit Judges in 2024/25 providing some, but not enough, additional capacity. In Magistrates Courts, Kent continued to experience difficulties in recruiting and

retaining Legal Advisors, Lawyers and Probation Service staff limiting the courts that could run. Many staff/recruits opt to work in London and I have previously recommended there should be a Southeast Allowance, but with no funding available, this has not been progressed.

Increased case numbers and delays to justice have also dramatically impacted Kent Police's Victim and Witness Care Unit. Despite an increase in staff numbers the team remains under immense pressure to manage the volume of work required to update victims and witnesses, with an average workload of 122 cases per member of staff, 61% higher than pre-pandemic levels. They also report an increase in levels of anger and upset from victims, and that keeping them on board with a prosecution is becoming more difficult due to the length of time cases are taking to be heard.

I have a statutory responsibility to commission support services for victims of crime, regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the Police. In 2024/25, I funded 26 organisations to deliver around 40 different services to victims, including specialist support for children and young people (C&YP), therapeutic services, trauma counselling, sexual abuse (SA), and domestic abuse (DA) specialist support. These services supported 83,889 victims.

However, caseloads continue to increase for victim services, particularly Independent Domestic Violence Advisers (IDVAs) and Independent Sexual Violence Advisers (ISVAs), where average caseloads are between 21-25 and 51+ respectively. Some of the reasons for the increase are the complexity of cases and delays within the CJS.

Despite the issues, I would like to recognise and acknowledge the work of local teams who continue delivering the most efficient and effective system possible under the most extreme circumstances. Without the excellent relationships that have seen all agencies pull together as one under the control of the KCJB, Kent would be in a far worse position than it is.

Through the KCJB, work continued on driving efficiency improvements, with all agencies attending a facilitated workshop in March 2025 to identify key barriers, and to initiate improvement work in specific areas. Four initial improvement workstreams were identified, namely: Recalls; Out of Court Resolutions; Timely production of prisoners at court/prisoner transport; and Updates and information to Victims. Each has a named lead, and progress will be reported throughout the next year to the KCJB.

The KCJB governance structure was strengthened, with its existing sub-groups - the Core Performance Group and Reducing Offending Board - reviewed and reinvigorated. Supplementing these, a new Victim and Witness sub-group will be introduced in 2025/26 to ensure their voices are heard and that they remain at the heart of the Board's work, as well as the CJS in Kent.

During 2025/26, a number of national reviews will come to fruition, including the Independent Sentencing Review and the Independent Review of Criminal Courts. I am hoping that they will make recommendations that will have a real impact, and through the KCJB, opportunities for Kent to pilot new initiatives will be seized in an effort to improve the system locally and reduce backlogs.

As PCC and Chair of the KCJB I continued to engage with senior government ministers, the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) and HMCTS, setting out the case that something needs to be done as the Crown Court caseload volume continues to increase and the gap between Kent and the national average widens. Unfortunately, until court capacity and staffing shortages are addressed, delays to justice will not improve.



Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour

Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

The countywide VRU was set-up after the OPCC secured funding from the HO in 2019. The introduction of VRU's in 18 local areas nationally is part of a focus on early intervention, as set out in the Government's Serious Violence Strategy.

The Kent and Medway VRU is a partnership between the police, local councils, health service providers and other key partners. The aim of the VRU is to develop a public health, preventative approach to serious violence across the county. Its work is carried out in line with the HO's 'All Systems Approach', and the elements that underpin it are:

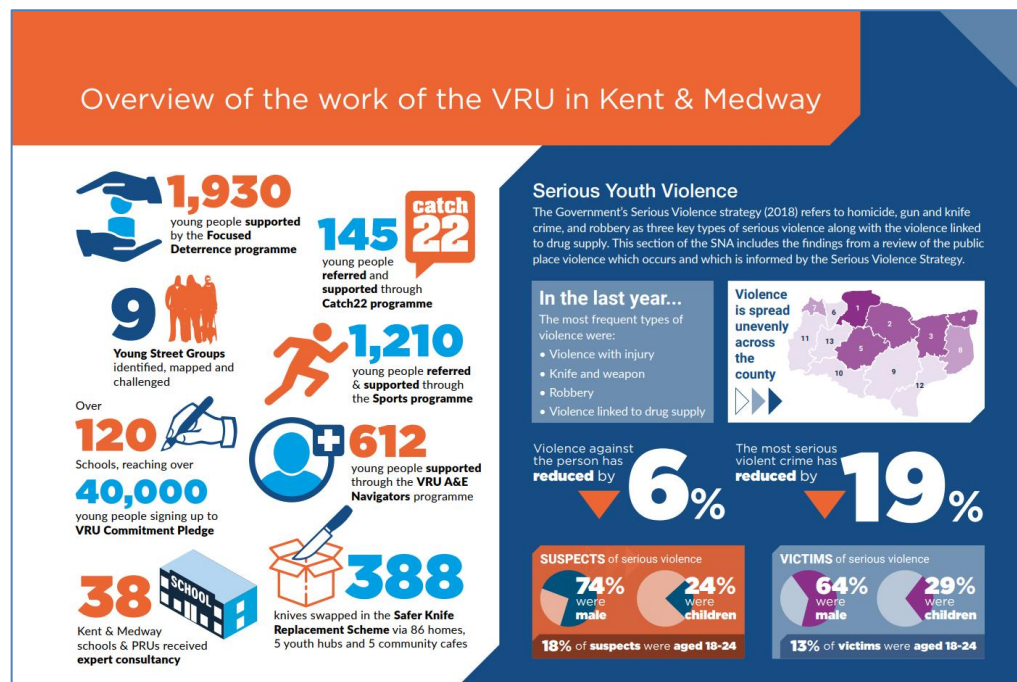
- Driving and coordinating a multi-agency response to serious violence.
- Sophisticated data sharing.
- Involving young people and communities.
- Commissioning and delivering evidence-based activities and evaluating those activities where an evidence base does not yet exist.

The VRU identifies what is driving violent crime through the sharing of data. Using this model, it is better able to understand which partners are best able to support with a prevent or protect response.

Violence is not something that just happens, nor is it normal or acceptable in society. Many of the key risk factors that make individuals, families or communities vulnerable to violence are changeable, including exposure to adverse experiences in childhood and subsequently the environments in which individuals live, learn and work throughout youth, adulthood and older age.

The public health approach adopted by the VRU is an evidence-based four step process:

- What's the problem? - gather data to reveal the who, what, why, where and when of the problem. This can be crime data but also information from hospitals, schools and a range of other sources.
- What are the causes? - look for evidence on the factors that put people at risk of experiencing, or perpetrating, violence as well as the factors that can protect them.
- What works and for whom? - using the data gathered design, implement and (crucially) evaluate interventions.
- Scale it up! - if an intervention works, then scale it up while evaluating how well it works and its cost-effectiveness.



The VRU commissions county-wide and locally designed services to deliver its prevention and intervention approach. In 2024/25, examples included:

- Second year of funding for a sports programme with Sports Connect CIC and their partners Sport on Your Doorstep, supporting young people aged 11-18 with a focus on those deemed at risk of entering the CJS. The programme aims to reduce offending and raise employment aspirations and opportunities through sports. Delivered in schools and communities, the programme creates bespoke sessions based on the need of the area and the young people in attendance.

- **#Pointless** – Why is there a point on the end of your Knife? The VRU launched this Safer Knife Replacement Scheme (SKRS) last year and it has gained national interest throughout the country. The VRU has not only established the Safer Knife Replacement Scheme throughout Kent, but due to enthusiasm from other forces, has formed a National Core Working Group dedicated to sharing best practice, with the inaugural meeting being held in October 2024. The scheme has already swapped nearly 400 knives from vulnerable premises and with more swaps happening every day, it is making Kent a safer place.

Serious Violence Duty (SVD)

The SVD was introduced through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, and came into effect on 31 January 2023.

The duty identifies a number of partners including local authorities, the police, youth offending teams, Integrated Care System, probation, and the fire service. as specified authorities with a duty to reduce serious violence in their area.

The duty places several requirements upon these authorities including: agreeing a local partnership arrangement to lead on the duty; a shared definition of serious violence: having consistent data sharing and analytical processes to develop a Strategic Needs Assessment: and production of a strategy to set out how the duty will be implemented locally.

Although not a specified authority, the PCC as the receiver of HO funding for the duty has associated oversight and reporting responsibilities. The SVD is also being co-ordinated through the OPCC, and I continued to use my convening powers to host Board meetings which support its development and implementation with clear oversight on local delivery.

The VRU led the work to create and agree a Strategy and Strategic Needs Assessment which were both finalised and published in January 2024. The three main strands of the Strategy are:

- Serious Youth Violence – A 0-25 Approach (Board lead – KCC)
- Sexual Violence (SV) and DA (Board lead – Kent Police)
- Violence linked to Drugs and Alcohol (Board lead – Medway Public Health)

Detailed plans for these strands have been developed and actions completed, with regular updates to the Board.

Activity in 2024/25 included:

- Working with the two Youth Justice partnerships and the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) to align strategic priorities and actions with those of the Board. This has reduced duplication and ensured the greatest impact from work. For example, the VRU and CSPs have jointly led work to develop community sport in hotspots and have brought women and girls together to involve them in how VAWG can be prevented.

- Co-ordinating the work of different partners. In response to C&YP's feedback on sexual harassment, the VRU in partnership with Kent Police, KCC and Medway Council delivered the 'Don't Disrespect' campaign. The VRU also coordinated work around tackling knives so there was multi-agency approach to the Knife Pledge in schools, the Safer Knife Replacement Scheme and the Street Aid Bystander programme.

Retail and Rural Crime Boards

With increased concern from across the communities of Kent and Medway, I introduced and Chair both a Retail Crime Board and Rural Crime Board.

In general, their purpose is to:

- provide strategic oversight by bringing together relevant representatives, Kent Police and the OPCC;
- strengthen engagement and partnership working with Kent Police and the wider criminal justice system to improve the response to retail and rural crime;
- ensure there is a robust response to retail and rural crime, increasing security and confidence while making Kent safer.

Retail Crime Board – the inaugural meeting was held on 17 September 2024, with a further meeting on 5 December 2024. Membership includes a senior officer from Kent Police, and representatives from the retail community, customer service industry, Business Improvement Districts, and Business Crime Partnerships.

Rural Crime Board – the inaugural meeting was held on 3 October 2024, with a further meeting on 26 March 2025. Membership again includes a senior officer from Kent Police, local farmers, the Environment Agency and representatives from local councils, landowners, as well as shooting and conservation.

Members routinely receive an update on Kent Police activity and discuss crime and policing issues. Examples to date for retail include pharmacy theft and the disposal of stolen goods; for rural, fly-tipping, GPS thefts from agricultural vehicles and use of catapults/slingshots.

In 2025/26, I will continue to regularly hold Retail and Rural Crime Board meetings. Neither Board will be a talking shop - they are about building trust with the police, supporting victims of crime, and developing effective partnerships.

Further information about the [Retail and Rural Crime Boards](#) can be found on the OPCC website.

Young Peoples Prevention Service

This was commissioned during 2022/23, with the service commencing on 1 October 2022. It is a 3-year contract to September 2025 with the option to extend.

The service provides age-appropriate messages to C&YP to support them make better, informed choices by highlighting risk factors which can increase the

likelihood of a negative outcome. This approach also shows them how they can de-escalate situations to help keep themselves and others safe.

The service supports C&YP aged 9 to 14 years and is delivered by two separate providers who cover the following topics:

- [Collaborate Digital](#) (£47,870): Healthy Relationships (attitudes, behaviours, and safety), Online Harms and Cyber Safety and Cyber Bullying.
- [St Giles Trust](#) (£29,184): Gangs, County Lines, Violence, Knife Crime and Criminal Exploitation.

Outcomes

Between Winter 2024 and Spring 2025, [Collaborate Digital](#):

- *Delivered 33 days of activities in West Kent schools – 17 primary, engaging with 1,037 9-11 year-olds; 14 secondary, engaging with 4,970 11-16 year-olds; and 2 special schools engaging with 29 students.*
- *They held 25 half-day media workshops (a multi-media experience, with the emphasis on active learning and participation), and 60 interactive assemblies delivered to full year groups.*
- *The assemblies covered the most relevant and up-to-date information on online harms, healthy relationships online, safety, cyberbullying and support services.*
- *In the workshop, students were able to demonstrate their understanding of the topics raised in the assembly by producing their own podcast - [Kent Secondary Schools 2024/25](#).*
- *Of 817 surveys completed by students following the workshop:*
 - *just under 80% felt the topics were important for people their age;*
 - *just over 80% now knew how to access support if they felt unsafe online;*
 - *50% said they had learned new information.*

Between October 2024 and March 2025, [St Giles Trust](#):

- *Delivered 35 workshops across East Kent, reaching 14 primary and secondary schools, with some having multiple sessions across different year groups.*
- *Delivered 2 workshops in professional settings, with a further 1 scheduled for the end of June 2025.*
- *Topics covered in the workshops include: knife crime and weapons awareness; gangs – grooming and county lines; girls – gangs and empowerment; realities of prison; and gateway drugs – dispelling myths.*
- *Feedback from students included:*
 - *61% agreeing and 31.7% strongly agreeing they were more aware of the dangers of risk-taking behaviour;*
 - *60.2% agreeing and 28.5% strongly agreeing they would change their behaviour because of greater awareness;*
 - *56.1% agreeing and 36.6% strongly agreeing they would have the confidence and ability to challenge negative behaviour;*
 - *63.4% agreeing and 26% strongly agreeing that they had a better understanding of boundaries and how to seek support.*

Gangs and County Lines Preventative and Protective Interventions (£343,059)

This was commissioned in 2021, with the service commencing on 1 July 2022. It is a 3-year contract to 30 June 2025 with the option to extend.

The service is funded through the VRU funding I am allocated and my commissioning budget.

It provides age-appropriate, trauma informed, needs led support to C&YP and their close relatives or immediate support network to reduce risk and prevent serious youth violence, exploitation and gang and county line activity.

The service is divided into two elements:

- Preventative interventions for those C&YP up to the age of 25 at risk of serious youth violence, knife offences, drug supply, criminal exploitation, or gangs.
- Protective interventions for those C&YP up to the age of 25 involved in serious youth violence, knife offences, drug supply, criminal exploitation, or gangs.

In 2024/25, Catch22 delivered the service in Medway, Thanet, Swale, Canterbury, Ashford, Maidstone, and West Kent.

Outcomes

In 2024/25:

- The service received 193 referrals (168 the previous year) and supported 200 young people.
- 135 of those supported identified as being subject to child criminal exploitation.
- Local authorities accounted for 42% of all referrals, followed by Kent Police at 32%. Medway accounted for 40% of all referrals followed by Thanet at 19%.
- The youngest individuals referred were 10 years old and the oldest 24 years old. The average age of referral was 15.8 years old.
- Of those supported:
 - 79% demonstrated improvements to their wellbeing;
 - 75% demonstrated improvements to their safety and security;
 - 72% demonstrated positive changes in relation to drugs and alcohol.

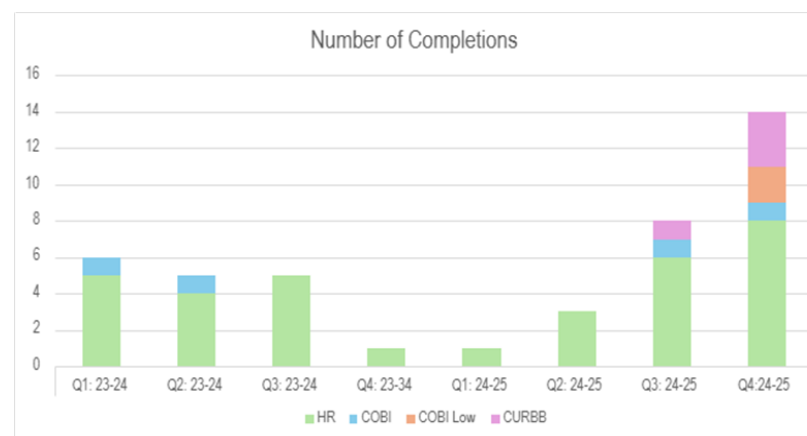
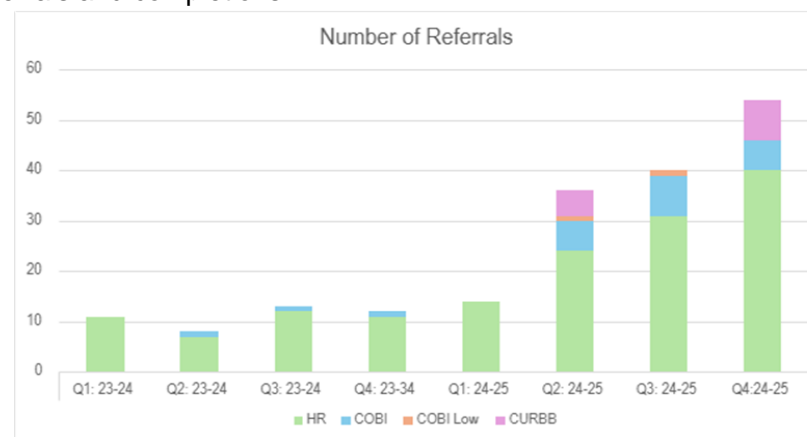
Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions Programme (£829,195)

In August 2021, my Commissioning team and I were successful in securing funding from the HO to implement DA and stalking perpetrator programmes in Kent. Delivery was focused on developing a coordinated response to DA and stalking perpetrators, with a focus on managing risk and ensuring the wellbeing and safeguarding of victims and their children. We were successful in securing funding until 31 March 2026 to continue delivery of the programme.

Delivery is a collaborative approach between Interventions Alliance, Kent Police, Look Ahead and Victim Support. It provides the following:

- Intensive multi-agency case management to coordinate and sequence interventions for perpetrators, their victims, and their children.
- Early Response to provide targeted motivational, denial and minimisation work to increase engagement with programmes. This is supported by the Challenging Unhealthy Relationships Beliefs and Behaviours Programme (CURBB).
- Two 1:1 behaviour change interventions; Healthy Relationships (HR) and Compulsive Obsessive Behaviour Interventions (COBI). HR is based on cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and COBI is based on dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT).
- Victim Protection and support delivered by a Victim Link Worker (Qualified IDVA) in line with Safelives Standards, a Step-Down Worker, and the Stalking Advocacy Service.

In 2024/25, delivery continued to make positive progress with a significant increase in referrals and completions:



Outcomes

- Feedback for Q4 was secured from 12 of the 14 completions – 10 rated their intervention as 'excellent' and 2 as 'good'. All 'strongly agreed' (highest rating) that they were 'treated with respect' and the same for 'my allocated Practitioner was approachable, helpful and supportive'.
- A total of 89 victims (plus children) were supported. The Step-Down Worker provided extended support to victims whose ex-partner/partner withdrew from support, and to those who required further assistance with housing, benefits, and budgeting, even after completing the service. As a result, the time spent in service was an average of 300 days. They have also made referrals to counselling/therapy sessions and there was positive engagement with the 12-week Phoenix Programme resulting in improvements in self-care and DA awareness.
- At the end of the intervention, Project Mirabel data showed a reduction in participants' perceived risk to others and an increased understanding of factors relating to DA.

Case study

The applicant was going through the Family Court and referred by social services due to a history of abusive behaviour towards previous partners. The current victim had normalised the behaviour and had limited knowledge and understanding of the applicant's abusive behaviour. While the applicant was engaging with HR, the victim was supported through the DA educational program to understand what DA was and for empowerment.

The victim was also referred to 6-week counselling and therapy sessions to process the impact of Family Court and the DA experienced. Both the applicant and victim completed the program, and the victim's exit risk assessment showed a decrease in abusive behaviour from the applicant. The children were also stepped down from child protection to Early Help.

In the client's own words, "I am happy that social services recommended this program and that my daughter stayed with me. I was weary before and lacked trust in social services. My child and I were also at risk of my partner's mental health and abusive behaviour. This support has been really good and helpful, it has given me an understanding of what happened, and it gives me peace of mind and an understanding of what is going on."

National Crimestoppers

In 2024/25, I provided the following grants to support the work of National Crimestoppers:

- £51,148 as Kent's contribution to the Contact Centre through which members of the public can provide information anonymously 24/7. The staff process the information and where assessed as actionable, share it with Kent Police to support the prevention and detection of crime.

- £15,000 as a contribution to the Regional Manager who is responsible for engaging with Kent Police and ensuring the county receives appropriate support.
- £8,722 as Kent's contribution to the single national Police Anti-corruption and Abuse Reporting Service. This enables members of the public to report information about a police officer, member of staff or volunteer who they believe is taking advantage of their role or abusing their position of trust.

I also provided £14,699 of funding to Kent Crimestoppers to support the delivery of tailored campaigns in Kent, such as 'Most Wanted', the Ambassador Programme and activity in response to specific identified issues.

Crime Reduction Grants

Each year I allocate a portion of my commissioning budget to the CSPs and other statutory partners or providers (third parties). The funding is provided to support them deliver against the priorities set out in my Police and Crime Plan.

Total allocated spend for 2024/25 across the 14 CSPs was £558,385, and £768,522 was allocated to third parties, such as Kent Youth justice Team, the Kent and Medway Drug and Alcohol Partnerships and Safeguarding Boards.

134 projects were funded, with 121 delivered by CSPs and 13 by third parties.

Projects delivered through this funding generally aligned to the following themes:

- Reducing ASB, including CCTV deployment, high visibility community engagement, youth hub engagement and Safe Spaces.
- Safer Streets approach, including target hardening and crime prevention equipment.
- Raising awareness and promotional activities, including training, community safety learning and CPD events.
- Diversionary activities, including sports programmes, educational events and mentoring sessions.
- Reducing re-offending, including support programmes for young offenders, substance misuse services, 1-1 interventions and Community Payback.
- Community engagement.



Case studies

Rapid Deployment CCTV cameras – to gather evidence of those committing crime and ASB, reassure residents and act as a deterrent.

- Deployed on 17 occasions in 2024/25 in ASB hotspot locations and isolated locations vulnerable to VAWG offences. Also proactively deployed following reports of hate crimes directed at mosques, and locations where homophobic and far right extremist graffiti were reported.

Youth hub engagement – support for two youth hubs targeting 11-15 year-olds who were in, or at risk of entering the CJS. Provided diversionary activities that allowed them to express their thoughts and feelings but also offered support with referrals to other services.

- Sessions held weekly, with approximately 25-30 young people attending.
- In-depth conversations on topics ranging from vaping and drug taking to radicalisation and knife crime, real change observed in their behaviour.
- Received visits from PCSOs to break down barriers with the police, support around bullying at school, and helped some young people report offences such as sexual harassment/grooming to the police.

Sport on your Doorstep – this project used coaches to provide boxing sessions to young people in key locations for youth-related ASB. The sessions were very effective, not only in attracting young people, but also in sustaining their interest with participants returning each week. The coaches built strong relationships with the young people, raising awareness of the impact of ASB on others, improving their understanding of risky behaviours, and building their resilience to resist peer pressure.

- 39 young people took part (exceeding the target of 32) – 24% female and 76% male.
- Feedback from the young people, their parents and the coaches was extremely positive, including:
 - “I have been looking for an activity to do after school... My mum is pleased I am away from my screens.”
 - “Amazing that this boxing session is right near where I live - are you sure it's free?”
 - “I really enjoy boxing and love taking part, it would be great if this was an after-school club.”
 - “It's great to take part in a session with my friends - we don't usually see each other after school.”



Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation

MoJ Local Integration of Women Services (£63,593)

In October 2022, Kent Police and the OPCC submitted a collaborative bid to the MOJs Local Integration of Women Services grant round. The bid was successful and secured £208,954 for 2022/23 to 2024/25 to develop a Whole System Approach to improving outcomes for women in, or at risk of contact with the CJS.

The funding has provided a dedicated Women's Justice Officer (WJO) to develop work with female offenders directly, through custody, Integrated Offender Management (IOM), charities and partner agencies. Identification and referral of eligible female offenders commenced in custody, with the WJO directly approaching women to explain the support offer and gain consent. The WJO was very skilled in delivering in a calm and supportive manner which led to a high uptake. As well as custody, referrals came through the Adult Out of Court Resolution Team.

This funding raised the profile of women's justice and options on how to build this into Kent Police's longer-term work, with opportunities being explored through the Criminal Justice Command.

Safer Streets Fund 5 – Protecting Public Spaces

The HO launched the fifth round of the Safer Streets Fund in July 2023, with a focus on: tackling neighbourhood crime (domestic burglary, robbery, theft from person, vehicle crime); ASB; VAWG in public places, including inside night-time economy (NTE) venues; and improving feelings of safety from VAWG or ASB.

Funding had to be targeted within defined geographic areas where evidence demonstrated a disproportionate impact from the defined crime types.

Following an extensive data review, three districts were identified and evidence-based bids developed. I was successful in securing funding for all three bids, totaling £1.4m over the period 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024. From 1 April to 30 September 2024, the funding amounted to £341,398.

Below are examples of activity delivered in 2024/25 in each area:

Folkestone & Hythe – Folkestone Central Ward (£121,911)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Folkestone Town Council CCTV network upgraded. Facilitated improved working relationship with Swale Borough Council (SBC), which now monitors all CCTV cameras in Folkestone via their 24/7 Control Room with radios linked directly to shops and the police. The partnership has been so successful that a further 5-year contract has been signed between Folkestone Town Council and SBC. ○ Funding for Urban Pastors and the Folkestone Town Sprucers, including uniform and safety merchandise. At the peak, Urban Pastors undertook 370 engagements in Q4, with 224 safety resources distributed. The Town Sprucers made significant improvements in the area, including removal of graffiti and drugs detritus leading to a greater sense of safety in the area. ○ Safe taxi scheme established, including a Taxi Marshal scheme every Friday and Saturday evening between 10.30pm and 03.30am within Folkestone Town Centre. A Safe Routes Scheme, now known as Folkestone Connected also developed.
Swale – Sittingbourne & Sheerness Town Centres (£110,929)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active Bystander Training, with 10 training sessions held and over 300 attendees registered. ○ Provision of Street Marshals in Sheerness and Sittingbourne High Streets and surrounding areas during school holidays. Equated to 1,326 hours of community engagement and re-assurance. ○ Improved streetlighting and CCTV in 2 park areas in Sheerness and Sittingbourne. ○ Youth programmes in partnership with Brogdale CIC, including additional sessions at Sheerness Youth Club and Sittingbourne Skatepark. Mentoring, 1-1 support and workshops on mental health, online safety, and relationships also provided, creating a safe, consistent and structured space for C&YP.
Medway – Chatham Town Centre (£108,557)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 3 additional CCTV cameras installed in key locations and a new Neighbourhood Watch Area established. ○ Outreach activities for young people using Chatham High Street, including those at heightened risk of Child Criminal Exploitation. Core age group 13-19, years, and those up to 25 years with additional needs. ○ Training for door and security staff in VAWG, drink spiking and welfare / vulnerability. 40 licensed premises targeted as part of the offer. ○ Provision of secure gates at Chatham Memorial Synagogue, preventing trespass, ASB and vandalism.

Youth and Parent Online/Smartphone Surveys

In Autumn 2024, I launched three surveys - a primary and secondary school pupil survey, and a parent's survey - to understand online and offline experiences.

The survey links were circulated to every school and college in Kent by email, with the parent survey also circulated via social media. All information was provided anonymously.

3,476 responses were received from parents, 2,237 from secondary school pupils and 1,446 from primary school pupils. The survey found:

- Nearly 34% of primary and 29% of secondary pupils had been bullied or picked on online.
- 14% of primary and 16% of secondary pupils admitted to bullying, picking on or being mean to someone online.
- Nearly a quarter of parents believed their child stopped using the platform on which they were bullied or picked on, whereas 90% of primary and 85% of secondary pupils said they continued to use the app.
- More than 20% of pupils said they were online before 7am, and 10% of primary and 21% of secondary pupils that they were online after 11pm.
- 80% of parents supported a ban or restrictions on devices in school if it improved behaviour or results, whereas 56% of primary and 30% of secondary pupils were supportive.
- 56% of secondary pupils said social media had made their life neither better nor worse, but just over 10% said it had made their lives worse.

The survey also found that smartphone usage is growing. In 2018, 70% of schoolchildren surveyed owned a smart phone; in this survey, 60% of primary and 96% of secondary pupils had a smartphone.

In my 2023 Youth Survey, 11.5% of school children admitted they had been bullied, picked on or been mean to someone else online. This compares to 14% of primary and 16% of secondary pupils in this survey.

The results show how important it is to talk to young people about the problems that social media, smartphones and online bullying can cause. Schools need to implement smartphone policies, but also educate parents about the risks of giving them to children whilst still young.

As a result of the findings, I began to visit both primary and secondary schools to meet with pupils and teachers to discuss the results and highlight the dangers of mobile phones in today's world. Up to March 2025, I visited six schools and met with over 500 pupils.

I will continue to raise awareness of the issue and call on social media companies and smartphone manufacturers to act more ethically.

The [Survey Report](#) can be found on the OPCC website.

Internet Safety Campaign

Following the concerning results of my Youth and Parent Online/Smartphone Surveys, I held a number of internet safety sessions in schools across Kent and Medway.

Targeting Years 5, 6 and 7, the hour-long sessions included discussions on screen time, how to verify people are who they say they are, how to check if sites are secure, what sort of information is safe to publish on social media, and how digital footprints can catch up with people. I also reminded pupils about the age restrictions for most social media platforms and why privacy settings are so important.

The pupils then had the opportunity to design posters or put together 'campaigns', setting out a mission and explaining how they would go about lobbying for change.

Protecting young people is a priority for me as PCC. Cybercrime is increasing and it is imperative that youngsters are alert to the potential hazards. Social media is awash with pitfalls and it is all too easy to forget that everything said or done will stay online forever.

I am delighted to have held these sessions in schools and have been very impressed by the posters and campaigns the pupils have produced. I am committed to engaging with more pupils by delivering further sessions in 2025/26.

[More information](#) on internet safety, and the school sessions, can be found on the OPCC website.



Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and the funding formula review

All funding for policing in Kent and Medway comes through my office including that which I give to the Chief Constable to deliver policing. For 2024/25 this was £405,578,640. I have always argued that the Police Funding Formula – used to determine the amount of funding each PCC receives - is out of date and inherently unfair on some areas; Kent is one of those areas. Despite previous, and current Government plans to review the formula, the results have not been published.

Throughout the year I have actively participated in discussions around Kent's specific funding needs and police funding more generally through the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC). My Chief Executive and Chief Finance Officer also fed into regional discussions and national mechanisms via the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives (APACE), the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society (PACCTS) and the APCC.

Together with my senior staff, I will continue to engage with Ministers and officials to set out the case for Kent to ensure the county receives a fair share of national police funding.

Kent police also continues to attract funding outside of government, although such funds tend to be time limited or for specialist posts which can make recruitment difficult. I continued to challenge the Chief Constable around maximising the use of external funding, and through my Performance and Delivery Board scrutinised this on a regular basis.

As PCC, I can commission or grant fund services to support the delivery of my Police and Crime Plan priorities. These services can range from community-based organisations that provide diversionary activities to multi-year contracts that provide support to victims regardless of when the crime took place or if it was reported to the police.

Within the OPCC I have a Commissioning Team who are responsible for commissioning services, issuing grants and managing contracts. They are also responsible for attracting additional funding through successful bid writing. In addition to funding the commissioned services, My office budget was £1.5m of which 85% comprised of staff salaries, a significant proportion of the remaining funds were allocated to statutory requirements/subscriptions to facilitate the running of the office.

During 2024/25, the Government offered several funding opportunities and my team worked hard to ensure Kent received its fair share to enable enhanced and new services to be delivered.

Overall, they were successful in securing the following funding:

- £1,837,213 to increase the provision of DA and SV victim support services
- £341,398 for Safer Streets 5 projects
- £829,195 for DA and Stalking Perpetrator Interventions
- £63,593 for Local Integration of Women's Services

This brought the total additional funding for my commissioning budget in 2024/25 to almost £3.1m. However, it is disappointing that these funding streams are due to cease on 31 March 2026; my Commissioning Team has already commenced work to understand the risk and potential impact on services.



Support volunteering

It is important to provide people with opportunities to get involved in activities which support community policing and to learn about responsible citizenship.

The purpose of the Cadets is not to recruit police officers of the future, but to encourage the spirit of adventure and good citizenship.

- The Senior Cadet programme is for young people aged 13 to 18 years and provides opportunities to develop life skills and prepare for future careers both within the police and other professions. As at 31 March 2025, there were 388 Senior Cadets located at 12 units across Kent and Medway.
- Whilst not every force has a Junior Cadet programme, it offers those aged 11 to 13 years an opportunity to learn about the police and to support their local community. As at 31 March 2025, there were 35 Junior cadets.
- The Mini Cadet programme is open to those aged 8 to 11 years and is run through primary schools. It is designed to teach about good citizenship and concentrates on building self-esteem as well as breaking down barriers with the police. Since its launch in April 2021, it has proven popular enabling Kent Police to engage with 1,358 children across 121 schools.

I would like to congratulate the Cadet Scheme on being awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service and express my thanks to the dedicated and enthusiastic Volunteer Cadet Leaders who work tirelessly to support our young people.

I am very supportive and appreciative of the work of Special Constables; unpaid volunteers who wear a uniform, have the same powers as regular officers and put themselves in harm's way like their paid colleagues - but all because they just want to give something back to their communities. As at 31 March 2025, there were 174 Special Constables who volunteered almost 70,000 hours of policing in 2024/25.

My congratulations also to Special Sergeant Niyi Opaleye who received The Kings Police Medal (KPM) for his contribution to policing. Niyi has served the Dartford community voluntarily for 25 years, while also working full-time as a scientist. Niyi is only the second Special ever to receive such recognition, announced in HM The King's Birthday Honours List in June 2024.

Introduced in 2018/19, Community Police Volunteers (CPVs) provide direct support to specialist policing teams and help maintain a police presence in local communities. As at 31 March 2025, there were 62 trained CPVs who volunteered nearly 4,000 hours in 2024/25.

As at 31 March 2025, Kent Police also had 94 Police Support Volunteers who over the year gave nearly 10,000 hours in roles which made good use of their skills. Examples of work undertaken include provision of administrative support in various departments, vehicle maintenance and role-playing for student officer training.

Information on [volunteering opportunities](#) can be found on the Kent Police website.

I have also continued to provide grant funding to charities and organisations who rely on volunteers within local communities to deliver their services.

I would like to thank the Special Constabulary, Community Police Volunteers, Volunteer Police Cadets and all other volunteers who do not wear a police logo, such as South East 4x4 Response and Kent Search and Rescue, for their time and for all their hard work in helping keep the county safe.

Independent Custody Visitors

I am responsible for the ICV Scheme which sees volunteers making unannounced visits to police custody suites to check on the welfare of detained persons (DPs), ensuring they have received their rights and are held in satisfactory conditions.

In 2024/25, the 38 ICVs conducted 227 visits to custody suites and engaged with 660 DPs.

Areas of good practice identified by ICVs included:

- Named carers being assigned to those requiring one, including all children and female detainees as standard practice. This provides a single point of contact for detainees to speak to on more sensitive matters should they feel uncomfortable raising with a male custody officer. In addition, feminine hygiene packs were also routinely offered to female detainees.
- Detainees being routinely offered access to the Liaison, Diversion and Reconnect service to identify individual needs and provide pathways to existing support and service providers upon release from custody.
- Following ICVs raising concerns about the availability of emergency shears/ligature knives, Kent Police custody swiftly reviewed their policy. All staff are now personally issued fish knives and each suite has two pairs of 'Leatherman Raptors' surgical shears.

Areas requiring improvement identified included:

- On several occasions ICVs noted that suites were running at minimal staffing levels, with no resilience. The Kent Police custody team submitted a report to the Chief Constable requesting more staff and included the ICVs concerns. A restructure of the staffing model has been agreed, with an uplift which aims to improve staffing across the board.
- ICVs highlighted concerns about the allocation of Forensic Healthcare Practitioners (FHPs) across custody suites. Each suite shares a FHP with another, apart from Medway which has a dedicated FHP. ICVs received concerns from both custody staff and FHPs about availability whilst covering two custody suites, and DPs also reported long waits to see a FHP or receive medication. Whilst currently under review, ICVs also noted excellent care from FHPs when available.

Overall, ICVs found the care to be excellent, with staff focused on the dignity and wellbeing of DPs.

I would like to extend my thanks to the ICVs for their support and the excellent work they carry out. Further information on [ICVs](#) can be found on the OPCC website.



Commission services for victims that are needs-led

It is my responsibility to commission services for victims of crime across the county, whether they report to the police or not. I am committed to providing services that are needs-led so victims and witnesses are treated as individuals, and services are tailored accordingly.

I also have a dedicated Victims hub in Ashford - Compass House - which houses a number of services enabling closer working and a more joined up approach to delivering services to victims.

My core commissioning budget for 2024/25 consisted of a grant of just over £2m from the MoJ to deliver support services for victims. I match funded this with just over £1.7m of my own budget to support delivery of services to reduce ASB, crime and disorder.

In addition to the core commissioning budget, my Commissioning team secured additional funding from central government to enable enhanced and new services to be delivered. They were successful in securing the following additional funding:

- £1,837,213 to increase the provision of DA and SV victim support services.
- £341,398 for Safer Streets 5 projects.
- £829,195 for DA and Stalking Perpetrator Interventions.
- £63,593 for Local Integration of Women's Services.

This resulted in additional funding of £3,071,399 in 2024/2025. However, these additional funding streams are due to cease on 31 March 2026, so work is underway to understand the risk and potential impact.

All services and projects funded, regardless of whether they are contracts or grants are subject to oversight and governance by my Commissioning Team. This is to ensure they operate to an appropriate set of standards and the impact of delivery can be fully understood.

Governance is proportionate to the level of funding provided, but it is important that any service or project operates effectively and to the benefit of those accessing it. In addition, my commissioning processes and governance are subject to independent audit which enables learning and improvements to be identified.

Victims Funding

I received several different funding streams from the MoJ for the delivery of services that support victims of crime. They consisted of the following:

- Victim Services Core Grant
- DA/SV Funding
- Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) /Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Baseline Funding (700)
- ISVA/IDVA Additional Funding (200)
- ISVA/IDVA Additional Funding 23/24 (50)
- ISVA/IDVA Additional Funding 24/25 (50)

To ensure continuity of provision, I provided a continuation of the grant funding awarded in 2023/24. The funding was however, originally allocated based on an application process which assessed the evidenced need, reach, delivery approach, impact, and cost of each proposal.

All funded services are available regardless of whether the crime has been reported to the police and whether it was recent or non-recent.

The following are examples of the organisations and services funded in 2024/25:

- Brake (£39,500) - support for family members of those killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.
- Innovating Minds CIC (£40,000) – training of 46 professionals to deliver the Healing Together Programme in schools to support C&YP impacted by DA.

52% of those who took part were able to confidently put their training and knowledge into practice and provide support to C&YP.

- Rising Sun DV & Abuse Service (£178,530) - to provide 1 C&YP Trauma Informed Worker and 1 Young Women's Trauma Informed Mentor to support those impacted by DA, 1 IDVA Manager and 2 IDVAs to support those experiencing DA and SA living in unstable accommodation, at risk of homelessness or homeless and with multiple needs. Funding for a women's counselling project in Canterbury, Ashford, Folkestone, and Hythe.
- Look ahead (£244,661) – delivery of a male IDVA and DA Support Service.

*o Managed a caseload of 173 males.
o 171 were identified through needs assessments as requiring additional support, such as finance, housing and mental health. Look ahead onward referred to appropriate services through established pathways and partnership working.
o A dedicated male Recovery Programme and Peer Support Group were also created.*

- SATEDA (£140,642) - to increase capacity in the following services: Support to Court, Therapeutic Support, Outreach Services, and IDVA provision, including for C&YP and families.

- East Kent Rape Crisis Centre (EKRCC) (£235,160) - 1 to 1 therapy and family counselling for victims of SA. Provision of an Adolescent ISVA, a combined ISVA / IDVA, a Student ISVA and a Child ISVA specialising in complex mental health issues. Collaboration with Family Matters to increase support capacity for men and boys who had experienced rape or SA at any point in their lives.

○ Supported 1,116 victims.
 ○ 357 reported the crime to police prior to engagement, and 205 felt empowered to report during or following engagement with the service.
 ○ Over 50% of clients reported being better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life following engagement.

- Kent Integrated DA Service (KIDAS) (£251,000) - provision of 4 IDVAs, 2 Outreach Workers and an IDVA in East Kent to support young people impacted by DA.
- Choices Support (£34,398) - delivery of the Jigsaw Hate Crime Project to support hate crime victims with learning disabilities, mental ill health and autism.

○ The service created films in partnership with victims to show what was a crime, and these were used as part of the support.
 ○ This approach allowed the films to be paused to discuss what should happen next, helping with conversations around keeping safe.

- Oasis DA Service (£85,049) - provision of 1.5 IDVAs to increase capacity within the Medway Integrated DA Service (MIDAS).

○ Supported 238 victims.
 ○ 76 reported the crime to police prior to engagement, and 129 felt empowered to report during or following engagement with the service.

- Daisy Chain (£45,000) - provision of a pro-bono legal advice service for DA victims not eligible for legal aid. Support with documentation related to special measures in court, non-molestation orders and child related orders.
- Rubicon Cares (£72,502) - provision of 1 to 1 trauma counselling for victims of all crime, regardless of whether the crime was reported to the police.

○ Of 205 individuals supported, 167 reported being better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life following engagement.

- Dandelion Time (£66,842) - a nature-based charity providing therapeutic services and support to children and families impacted by the trauma of DA and SA.

○ Supported 56 families, of which 48 reported being better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life following engagement.

Key outcomes against all victim services funded in 2024/25 include:

- 89,498 victim referrals, with 83,889 supported.
- 5,856 DA victims – adult and C&YP – supported by 17 specialist DA services.
- 2,388 SV victims supported, both adults and C&YP across 2 specialist SV support services.
- With the support of specialist ISVA services, 207 victims felt empowered to report to the police during or following engagement with the service.
- Of those supported, 80,927 reported the crime to police prior to engagement, and 1,605 felt empowered to report during or following engagement.
- 5,368 victims reported being better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life following engagement with victim services.
- The three highest crime categories supported were violent crime (with or without injury), DA and 'other services for victims of crime', for example theft, fraud and road crimes.

However, 2024/25 was challenging financially for victims of crime and the services that support them.

For victims, financial pressures are adding to the complex difficulties they already face, including making it harder to escape abuse, and the affordability of travelling to participate in the CJS process and attend victim support services. For many, it is also impacting on their mental health, so they need to be supported for longer.

The support services experienced a sustained increase in demand, but also in costs (e.g. salaries, travel, rent, room hire) not being met through the funding available. As a result of the short-term funding allocations, there are real concerns about what will happen post March 2026 when the current grant settlement from the MOJ ends. Without funding certainty there is a growing risk that service delivery and specialist support provision will need to be restricted.

Victims Contracts

In addition to the examples outlined in the previous section, I have several contracts that have been commissioned to provide the core support offer to victims across Kent and Medway.

- Kent Advocacy and Support Service (£1,029,766)

This was commissioned during 2022/23 and the service commenced on 1 April 2023. It is a 4-year contract to 31 March 2027 with the option to extend.

Delivered by Victim Support, it provides a trauma informed, needs and risk led approach. The service is available to all victims of crime resident in Kent and Medway, including C&YP regardless of when the crime took place or if it was reported to the police.

Support is also available to close relatives (spouse, partner, relatives in direct line, siblings, and dependants of the victim) particularly those aged 18 years and under.

The service has several delivery strands:

- Referral, risk assessment, triage and support for all victims of crime.
- Initial referral and triage for DA victims for the Kent Integrated DA Service (KIDAS) and Medway Integrated DA Service (MIDAS).
- Short and long-term support to victims in the immediate aftermath of crime, or when support is accessed to help them move forward with their lives.
- Advocacy support for specific groups (e.g. Stalking and Hate Crime).
- Short or long-term support to standard and medium risk DA victims should they choose to remain with the service.
- Direct support for C&YP.

Outcomes

In 2024/25

- *A total of 78,086 referrals were received – an average of 6,507 per month.*
- *Most were via Kent Police, followed by Action Fraud and then self-referral.*
- *The most common support activities were: listening and validation; external signposting; safety planning; building awareness about the impact of crime/traumatic incident; external referral; building support networks; and provision of security items.*
- *Improvements were seen in all outcomes measured by the distance travelled survey for victims. The survey tracks their position at the start and end of support against the following six outcomes: ability to cope; experience of the CJS; feeling informed; perception of safety; reintegration; and wellbeing.*

Case study – Hate Crime Advocacy Service

The client was initially referred to Victim Support having been the victim of criminal damage, but during support became the victim of a hate crime.

The client had health and mobility issues and disclosed they had been a victim of an assault on a local bus. They were called an “immigrant” and discriminating statements made towards them. They also felt let down by the police response.

The client was experiencing flashbacks, panic attacks and feeling “hopeless”.

The caseworker provided details for the Hollie Guard app and about the Victim’s Code, so they were aware of their rights and entitlements. They also shared information on the police complaints process.

The client felt the service had listened and had attempted to get agencies involved. The service was able to link in with Kent Police and local beat officers visited the client to restore confidence.

Through support from the caseworker, they felt able to reach out for legal advice, and support from a local MP due to experiences with the bus company involved.

The Stalking Advocacy Service provides dedicated Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworkers (ISACs) for victims of stalking who have been referred or self-refer. Whilst providing similar support activities as above, it also offers specialist support such as advice about online safety and accessing legal advice.

Outcomes

In 2024/25

- *A total of 390 referrals were received.*
- *Most victims saw an improvement in all outcomes measured by the distance travelled survey. The survey tracks their position at the start and end of support against the following six outcomes: ability to cope; experience of the CJS; feeling informed; perception of safety; reintegration; and wellbeing.*

• Kent Restorative Justice (RJ) and Mediation Service (£369,970)

This was commissioned during 2022/23 with the service commencing on 1 October 2023. It is a 4-year contract to 30 September 2027 with the option to extend.

It is delivered by Restorative Solutions and provides a trauma informed, needs and risk led approach that is accessible to all victims of crime who are resident in Kent, regardless of when the crime(s) took place.

The service delivers in the interest of all individuals involved, but is victim led, and at no time should lead to increased risk. Specific risk assessments are conducted for harm related cases such as DA and SA to ensure the risk to the victim is not increased, and delivery is by staff with enhanced training.

The service consists of the following elements:

- Direct, indirect, and informal RJ interventions.
- Adolescent to Parent Violence and Conflict (APVC) interventions.
- Mediation for repeat and persistent neighbour and community based ASB and crime issues.

The service continued to experience challenges engaging with HM Prisons, resulting in delays to RJ delivery where the offender was serving a custodial sentence. Engagement is ongoing nationally to resolve this, but it can have a negative impact on victims as it is a barrier to delivering a RJ outcome.

Outcomes

In 2024/25:

- *The service received 428 referrals – 170 for RJ, 230 APVC and 28 Mediation.*
- *Most referrals came from the Kent Police Witness Care Unit and victim services. Self-referrals, from both victims and offenders, also increased by 31% from 2023/24.*
- *Of the RJ referrals, 130 interventions were facilitated with 8 being direct, 12 indirect and 110 facilitated RJ conversations.*
- *For APVC, 136 interventions were facilitated, with 53 being direct, 16 indirect and 67 facilitated RJ conversations.*
- *For Mediation, 23 interventions were facilitated, with 8 being direct, 13 indirect and 289 one party conversation.*

- Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service (ISVA) and Sexual Violence Support Service (£450,000)

This was commissioned during 2017/18 and commenced on 1 April 2019. It was a 3-year contract to 31 March 2022 with the option to extend. The service was due to be re-commissioned in 2023/24 and 2024/25, but due to funding uncertainty the contract has been extended for a further 12 months from 1 April 2025. Re-commissioning has now commenced.

The service is delivered by Family Matters and provides support to victims of rape and SA across Kent and Medway regardless of when the crime took place or if it has been reported to the police. The service supports both adults and C&YP, including their close family members if needed. It provides dedicated ISVAs who deliver independent support, advocacy and impartial advice and information. The service also provides specialist counselling for those that have experienced rape and SA, which can be accessed with or without ISVA support.

Demand for therapeutic support continued to grow and unfortunately led to extended wait times. To manage demand, Family Matters Telephone Support Line provided check-in calls and wellbeing support. In 2024/25, 707 calls were made to telephone support users.

Outcomes

In 2043/25:

- *The service received 1,859 referrals – 801 ISVA, 315 Child ISVA, 6 Gangs ISVA and 737 therapy.*
- *On average, ISVAs supported 650 victims at any one time, with those supported aged from 5 years old upwards.*
- *608 victims were supported with therapy, equating to the delivery of 1,650 sessions.*
- *Most referrals came via the police, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre or self-referral. However, mental health agencies and other support organisations, such as Victim Support, also referred into the service.*

Quotes from clients

- *"I didn't understand any of the criminal justice system and what to expect and this made me very anxious. My ISVA was reassuring and informative and my anxiety about court went away knowing she was there to help me through."*
- *"I feel I can move forward with my life and have been completely supported through this hard time by my ISVA. I have taken on board all the advice and information she has given to me, and I am now more informed about the criminal justice process."*
- *Before starting therapy I wasn't in the best state of mind as I was quite miserable and lost in my life. Now, I feel a bit more optimistic and my mood has definitely gotten better."*

- Family Welfare Service

This was commissioned in 2021 and is delivered by Victim Support.

It was a bespoke offer, providing tailored support and specialist interventions for close relatives impacted by the offending of David Fuller. It provided a 24/7 support line in the initial stages of notification to the families impacted and at significant points during the CJ process.

During 2024/25 the service continued to provide case worker led support, specialist therapeutic services and planned exit support to the remaining families engaged. The service ceased on 31 October 2024, with those supported highlighting the value and benefits of the service.

- Appropriate Adult Service (£259,779)

This service was commissioned in 2022 and commenced on 1 October 2022. Initially a 2-year pilot, the contract was extended until 31 March 2025.

The service is delivered by The Appropriate Adult Service (TAAS).

Appropriate Adults (AAs) were introduced under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) to safeguard and reduce the risk of miscarriages of justice.

AAs must support all juveniles (aged under 18) and vulnerable adults, as defined by PACE Code C who are detained in police custody or attend voluntary interviews as a suspect, and they must be independent from policing. The service ensures the rights, entitlements, welfare, and participation of those detained or attending a voluntary interview, in custody or a non-custody setting, are safeguarded.

Outcomes

- *October 2024 to March 2025, TAAS provided AAs to 1,220 vulnerable adults and 101 juveniles in Kent, and 67 vulnerable adults and 32 juveniles in Medway.*
- *Of those supported, the most frequent vulnerabilities were mental health, anxiety, learning disabilities, depression, self-harm and unable to read or write.*
- *Whilst due to the nature of the service it is not always appropriate to request feedback, it was overwhelmingly positive, with 59% of adults and 46% of juveniles in Kent and 55% of adults and 44% of juveniles in Medway stating the support was excellent.*



National expectations:

The Strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view, are the biggest threat to public safety and the national policing capabilities needed to counter them. It supports PCCs as well as Chief Constables to plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

A revised version of the SPR was published in February 2023 which provided strengthened detail around the action required from policing at the local and regional level to the critical national threats. It also saw the inclusion of VAWG, and so identifies seven national threats:

- VAWG
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Terrorism
- Cyber
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Public Disorder
- Civil Emergencies

In April 2022, prior to the SPR, I published my Making Kent Safer plan and it included VAWG as a priority for the Chief Constable. My office also ensured that consideration was given to the other threats when developing the plan, and as part of the annual refresh process.

The Chief Constable is responsible for having due regard to both the Police and Crime Plan and the SPR when exercising their functions, and I hold the Chief Constable accountable for doing so through my governance arrangements.

VAWG: Kent Police has a focus on VAWG through the Control Strategy, which centres on predatory sexual offending, rape, and DA, and has recently restructured its service to create larger more resilient teams to investigate harmful crimes. It has also increased the number of local beat officers engaging with communities to increase trust and confidence and improve its response to VAWG.

Community Safety teams concentrate on establishing local links to tackle VAWG, identifying areas of concern and taking a problem-solving partnership or community approach to making them safer. Kent Police has established VAWG 'Walk and Talks' across the county, and initiated campaigns to ensure night-time economy venues are safe for all, including Project Vigilant. It has also worked with taxi firms on 'bystander' training to spot signs of DA, spiking and sexual assault and increased patrols in 'hot spot' areas where VAWG is reported.

Operation Soteria - a program initiated to improve the investigation and prosecution of rape and serious sexual offences - has been adopted across Kent, ensuring all rape investigators are trained in current best practice. Working with CPS colleagues, opportunities are also maximised to hold offenders to account.

There is strong governance focused on identifying trends or wider threats, enhancing the response and scrutinising outcomes.

Serious and Organised Crime: Kent Police continues to implement the 4P strategy (prevent, pursue, protect, prepare) in an effort to combat Serious and Organised Crime.

In 2024/25, the Serious and Organised Crime Unit achieved significant operational results, including 188 arrests (up 77 on the previous year), execution of 120 warrants (up 60), and securing 186 charges (up 49).

A robust partnership with the Regional Special Operations Unit further strengthens intelligence gathering, facilitates the identification of organised crime groups, and ensures a coordinated response to the most critical threats.

Terrorism: Kent Counter Terrorism Policing Borders (CTPB) provides a 24/7 presence at the Kent Border. Working in collaboration with law enforcement partners, officers remain vigilant to threats of international terrorism and any associated travel. Officers also continue to prioritise working with partners to help deal with small boat arrivals on the Kent coast.

Kent CTPB is part of the wider CT policing network and works alongside CT Policing South East Region which provides safeguarding, intelligence and investigative capabilities locally, regionally and nationally.

Kent CT officers form part of the Channel Tunnel Policing Unit, delivering policing at the channel tunnel and responding to underground incidents. They also work at the Port of Dover alongside other law enforcement agencies, providing a policing presence and initial incident response.

Cyber: The Kent Cyber Crime Unit (CCU) is responsible for all cyber enabled crime investigations and also offers support and expertise to colleagues across Kent and Essex dealing with investigations where there are cyber enquiries.

With a wealth of knowledge of how computers are used in crime and the criminal use of Cryptocurrencies, the team has seen cases increase. National guidance on crypto seizure is still pending, with some forces hesitant due to perceived risks, but Kent has implemented policies to manage this and avoid delays.

The CCU have developed a safeguarding leaflet to assist women and girls in protecting themselves from online abuse. This is now part of the Victim Needs Assessment and has been shared widely.

Child Sexual Abuse: Child SA is a priority for Kent Police and a focus within the response to VAWG and the sexual exploitation of children, both of which are in the Force's Control Strategy.

A recent restructure has created a central leadership model for all Child Protection investigations which leads the response to Child SA across Kent. This has further enhanced joint working with partners and provided larger more resilient teams.

The centrally based Online Child SA investigation team continues to service Kent with increased referrals being managed linked to the online SA of children. The force has also formed a Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce.

Child Protection investigation teams work closely with Child Centred Policing teams and Missing Persons teams to ensure a swift response to any reported concerns.

There is strong governance that focuses on the investigation and progression of Child SA cases. Work also continues with CPS colleagues to maximise opportunities to hold offenders to account.

Public Disorder: Kent Tactical Training and Public Order Unit delivers a dynamic and responsive capability across the county, ensuring the safety and security of communities during planned and spontaneous events and to fulfil the SPR.

Operating 24/7, Kent Police Public Order officers are trained to the highest national standards and deployed to manage risk, maintain public safety, and uphold lawful protest and assembly.

Working in close collaboration with regional and national partners, Kent Public Order teams support major events, protests, football fixtures, and spontaneous incidents, including critical infrastructure disruption and large-scale disorder.

Kent Police is a key part of the South East Regional Public Order and Public Safety (POPS) network, contributing to mutual aid deployments and supporting national resilience.

Civil Emergencies: Kent Police has a pivotal role, alongside partners, in coordinating and delivering the preparation for and response to Civil Emergencies.

The response is coordinated through the Kent and Medway Resilience Forum (KMRF) formed in accordance with the 'Civil Contingencies Act 2004'. The KMRF is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency, and wider critical partners such as utility providers and key transport hubs. An Assistant Chief Constable chairs the KMRF whilst Kent Police commits support at all levels to the development and delivery of multi-agency risk assessments, planning, training and exercises, and joint operational learning. Kent Police personnel are also embedded in the Kent Resilience Team, a multi-agency initiative to coordinate and enhance planning for, the response to, and recovery from Civil Emergencies.

I am confident I have given due regard to the seven threat areas in my role of holding the Chief Constable to account. I am equally assured, as outlined above, that Kent Police has sufficient capacity and capability to meet the responsibilities outlined in relation to the national threats.

National Crime and Policing Measures

The previous Conservative Government was clear that PCCs should achieve significant reductions in crime and restore the public's confidence in the CJS.

The [Beating Crime Plan](#) was their strategy to do this; it made clear that to reduce crimes such as burglary and robbery, evidenced-based and targeted interventions, underpinned by common sense policing were necessary. The Home Secretary also made it clear to Chief Constables and PCCs that they should get the basics right and improve forces' performance across the country.

To support the Beating Crime Plan, the HO introduced a number of measures to focus effort on key national priorities and allow performance to be measured. They were introduced in early 2021 and many used year ending December 2019 as a baseline.

Below is an overview of Kent Police's performance against the measures:

Reduce murder and other homicides

In 2024/25, there were 15 murders and other homicides; a reduction of 16.7% (or 3) on the previous year.

Reduce serious violence

• Firearms offences

In 2024/25, there were 90 offences; a decrease of 18.2% (or 20) on the 2019 baseline.

• Knife related offences

- In 2024/25, data from the NHS regarding under 25 admissions for assault with a sharp object showed a reduction of 57% on the 2019 baseline, from 35 to 15.
- The VRU monitors knife enabled serious violence. Compared to the previous year, in 2024/25 there was a 34.6% decrease in victims under 18, and a 9.6% decrease in those aged 18-24.

• Violence with injury

In 2024/25, there were 15,895 offences; a decrease of 7.7% (or 1,332) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline of 19,768 offences, a decrease of 19.6% (or 3,873).

• Robbery

In 2024/25, there were 952 offences; a decrease of 12.2% (or 132) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline of 1,949 offences, a decrease of 51.2% (or 997).

Disrupt drugs supply and county lines

In 2024/25, there were 6,337 drug offences; an increase of 23.3% (or 1,196) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline of 3,598 offences, an increase of 76.1% (or 2,739).

[N.B. This type of offence is influenced by proactive policing; levels and trends should not be considered a measure of criminal activity in relation to drugs]

- Trafficking in controlled drugs increased by 31.6% (or 658) on the previous year; and by 150.7% (or 1,646) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Possession of drugs (excl. Cannabis) increased by 19.0% (or 178) on the previous year; and by 89.8% (or 527) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Possession of Cannabis increased by 17.1% (or 362) on the previous year; and by 33.8% (or 625) on the December 2019 baseline.

Reduce neighbourhood crime (NHC)

[N.B. Relates to four crime types, namely Personal Robbery, Theft from the Person, Vehicle Crime and Residential Burglary]

In 2024/25, there were 15,212 NHC offences in total; a decrease of 4.7% (or 755) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline, a decrease of 39.0% (or 9,739).

- Personal robbery decreased by 13.5% (or 138) on the previous year; a decrease of 50.3% (or 897) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Theft from the person decreased by 3.9% (or 41) on the previous year; a decrease of 27.8% (or 389) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Vehicle crime decreased by 4.3% (or 404) on the previous year; a decrease of 34.5% (or 4,803) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Residential burglary decreased by 5.0% (or 223) on the previous year; a decrease of 46.2% (or 3,650) on the December 2019 baseline.

Tackle cyber-crime

[N.B. There is no local or national data available relating to confidence in the Police response to cyber-crime. A proxy measure of the number of recorded online / cyber-crimes where the victim was an organisation has been used]

In 2024/25, there were 87 online related offences where the victim was an organisation; an increase of 24.3% (or 17) on the previous year.

Improve satisfaction among victims, with a focus on victims of DA

Kent Police conducts three satisfaction surveys:

- DA - in 2024/25, overall victim satisfaction was 93.4%; an increase of 2.5 percentage points on the 12 months to March 2024 (90.9%).
- Hate Crime - in 2024/25, overall victim satisfaction was 91.1%; an increase of 3.6 percentage points on the 12 months to March 2024 (87.5%).
- Rape - there are two key elements based upon whether a) the victim felt they were treated with dignity and respect, and b) they felt they were treated fairly throughout the case.
 - In 2024/25, 96.6% of victims felt that officers treated them with dignity and respect; a decrease of 1.8 percentage points on the previous 12 months.
 - In 2024/25, 93.6% of victims felt they had been treated fairly throughout the case; an increase of 0.3 percentage points on the previous 12 months.

Policing Vision 2030

Building on the successes of the Policing Vision 2025, [Policing Vision 2030](#) identifies the agreed key priority themes for focus and delivery that will help policing get to where it wants to be by 2030. In summary, this is to deliver a service that is effective, inclusive and trusted by the communities it serves.

Vision Statement:

By 2030, to be the most trusted and engaged policing service in the world working together to make communities safer and stronger.

As evidenced through this report, I am satisfied that Kent Police is on the path to delivering the Policing Vision 2030.

Whilst funding nationally remains difficult, in 2024/25 the force continued to:

- reduce crime and increase the number of offences solved;
- protect and safeguard the most vulnerable in communities;
- manage incoming demand and respond appropriately;
- ensure visibility, public accessibility and engagement through the Neighbourhood Policing Model;
- problem solve and adapt to the changing nature of crime through innovation;
- attract a talented and inclusive workforce able to meet future challenges; and
- develop effective leadership and a strong ethical and professional culture.

Accountability arrangements are also clear and transparent with opportunities for the public to observe them in practice.

Legislation

New or amended legislation represent real opportunities to make Kent safer.

During 2024/25, I am satisfied that Kent Police embraced new legislation such as the Pet Abduction Act 2024 for the benefit of protecting local communities and keeping the county safe.

Having received updates at my Performance and Delivery Board meetings, I am also reassured the force provides training for officers and staff, empowers them to take appropriate action and puts in place the right resources to address relevant provisions.

Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody

Police custody may only be used where it is both necessary and proportionate to the investigation of an offence. Detainees in police custody are often among the most vulnerable in society and there is a significant duty of care on the police.

As Home Secretary, Theresa May commissioned the independent review of deaths and serious incidents in police custody, and appointed Dame Elish Angiolini as independent chair. The review published its [report](#) on 30 October 2017, making 110 recommendations for improvement. The [Government's response](#) was published on the same date.

In recognition of PCCs being accountable to the public, and responsible for holding police forces to account, the report included the following recommendation: 'Recommendation 53 - PCCs should report annually on deaths and serious incidents in police custody in their jurisdictions'.¹

The IOPC requires forces to submit a mandatory referral when there is a death or serious injury (DSI) in custody. The IOPC defines a DSI as '*Any circumstances in, or as a result of which, a person has died or sustained serious injury who at the time had been arrested by a person serving with the police and not released, or was detained in the custody of a person serving with the police. A serious injury is a fracture, deep cut, deep laceration or injury causing damage to an internal organ or the impairment of any bodily function. Any loss of consciousness resulting from a medical episode would constitute a DSI*'.¹

In 2024/25, a total of 27,550 people were processed through Kent custody suites. I can report the force recorded no deaths in police custody and 36 serious injuries. The majority involved no lasting injury and they predominantly related to self-harm and collapses caused by prior consumption of drugs or alcohol.

Among the most important safeguards available to those in police custody are Appropriate Adults, who ensure that both children and vulnerable adults understand custody processes, and that their rights and entitlements are respected. ICVs managed by the OPCC also have a key role to play in safeguarding people detained in police custody.

Whilst I acknowledge that due to the nature of policing it is impossible to entirely eradicate deaths and serious injuries in police custody, I am reassured that Kent Police takes all reasonable steps to minimise the risks as far as possible, and that when such incidents do occur, they have procedures in place that are efficient, effective and humane.

¹ The report does not include a definition of 'serious incident' and it is not a term that the IOPC or forces use.