

**To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel**  
**Subject: HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 – An inspection of Kent Police**  
**Date: 23 April 2026**

**Introduction:**

1. One of the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC's) key duties is to be democratically accountable for the provision of an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.
2. However, the PCC does not use data in isolation to assess performance and progress. Instead, he also considers other sources of information including His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) reports, independent publications, anecdotal examples of frontline service delivery and feedback from staff and local communities.
3. HMICFRS is the body responsible for independently assessing the effectiveness and efficiency of police forces and fire & rescue services to make communities safer. HMICFRS asks the questions that it believes the public wish to have answered, and publishes findings, conclusions and recommendations in an accessible form, using expertise to interpret the evidence. Its recommendations are designed to bring about improvements in the service provided to the public.
4. This paper provides an overview of Kent Police's HMICFRS PEEL 2025-27 Inspection, and also outlines how the PCC will hold the Chief Constable to account.

**Background:**

5. The PEEL inspection programme is HMICFRS' regular assessment of the effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy of police forces in England and Wales.
6. Kent Police was last inspected as part of the PEEL 2023-25 inspection programme; the report was published on 17 November 2023.
7. By making better use of the breadth of HMICFRS inspection evidence and enabling a broader and more comprehensive understanding of force performance, the continuous assessment model used in the previous cycle of PEEL inspections has continued to be used in the 2025-27 cycle.
8. The PEEL programme is reviewed at the end of each cycle to consider changes in the policing landscape and findings from other inspections. Lessons learnt from the PEEL 2023-25 inspection programme have therefore informed HMICFRS' development of the 2025-27 methodology.
9. Changes from the PEEL 2023-25 inspection programme are:

**Transition of the Victim Service Assessment to the Quality Service Review**

HMICFRS no longer conducts a separate crime data integrity audit. Instead it dip samples crime recording and reports on the findings in the relevant question areas. It has also expanded its audit to cover fraud, safeguarding and the effectiveness of problem solving.

As part of this, the name of the Victim Service Assessment process has been changed to the Quality Service Review, to reflect the alteration in the scope of the activity being completed. Read the [Quality Service Review](#) methodology.

### Addition of custody inspection programme

HMICFRS' rolling custody inspection programme has become part of the PEEL programme. The methodology has been reviewed and also updated to align with the PEEL methodology. This will increase the frequency of custody inspections from every six years to every four years as they will be carried out every other PEEL cycle. Police forces will be awarded a graded judgment for custody.

### Addition of fraud inspection activity

As part of the assessment framework, HMICFRS has introduced the inspection of police forces' response to fraud. All forces will be inspected for their response to fraud and awarded a graded judgment.

### Managing suspects and offenders no longer included as a core question

HMICFRS is not inspecting management of suspects and offenders. Instead it will report separately in a national spotlight report as inspection findings suggest nationally directed change is required to make the necessary improvements.

10. HMICFRS sets core questions for each assessment and these form the PEEL assessment framework (PAF). However, the content, structure and focus of the questions does not remain the same for each cycle, and for 2025-27 they are as follows:

- How good is the force at leadership and force management?
- How good is the force at attracting, developing and retaining its workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace?
- How good is the force at using its powers fairly, appropriately and with justification?
- How good is the force at preventing and deterring crime, antisocial behaviour and vulnerability?
- How good is the force at responding to the public?
- How good is the force at investigating crime?
- How good is the force at safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm?
- How good is the force at managing fraud?
- How good is the force at providing a safe and lawful custody environment?

11. HMICFRS gathers evidence about each force so that it can answer the core questions. Police forces are subsequently graded 'Outstanding', 'Good', 'Adequate', 'Requires improvement' or 'Inadequate' for each core question (unless stated otherwise).

12. The [full PAF for 2025-27](#) sets out what is required for a force to receive a 'good' grade in each of the core questions.

13. It is important to note that because of an increased focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes, changes to the aspects of policing inspected and the addition of new areas, HMICFRS state:

*'It isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections.'*

### **PEEL 2025-27 – An inspection of Kent Police:**

14. On 9 April 2026, HMICFRS published Kent's inspection report – the [full report](#) can be viewed on their website. The PCC informed the Panel Chair and Vice-Chair of its publication the same day, with Members notified on 10 April.

15. The inspection assessed how good Kent Police is, and made graded judgements in eight areas of policing.

16. The findings follow 12 months of evidence gathering including document and data requests, chief officer interviews, strategic interviews, focus groups with frontline staff, extensive reality testing and reviews of investigations, and subsequent outcomes. The report does not take account of any developments or action carried out since the evidence gathering period.

17. The following is an overview of HMICFRS' graded judgements:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Developing a diverse and inclusive workforce	Leadership and force management	Police powers and public treatment		
	Preventing and deterring crime	Responding to the public		
		Investigating crime		
		Safeguarding children and adults		
		Managing fraud		

Grade definition	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
	The force has substantially exceeded the characteristics of good performance	The force has demonstrated substantially all the characteristics of good performance	The force has demonstrated some of the characteristics of good performance, but HMICFRS has identified areas where the force should make improvements	The force has demonstrated few, if any, of the characteristics of good performance and HMICFRS has identified a substantial number of areas where it needs to make improvements	HMICFRS has causes for concern and have made recommendations to the force to address them

18. As Member’s will note, there is not a single area of Kent Police’s effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy that was graded ‘requires improvement’ or ‘inadequate’.
19. It is pleasing to see HMICFRS graded the force ‘good’ at preventing and deterring crime, while its leadership and management was also recognised as ‘good’. In addition, as an organisation which recognises its officers and staff are its greatest asset, it is rewarding to see the way it has developed a diverse and inclusive workforce was graded ‘outstanding’.
20. The public of Kent should also be assured that officers’ use of police powers, the way they treat and respond to the public, how the force investigates crime, safeguards the most vulnerable and manages fraud investigations were all deemed ‘adequate’.
21. Particularly pleasing to see recognised was:
- the ability of neighbourhood policing teams to identify community problems and develop effective plans to tackle crime and reduce antisocial behaviour;
  - the work to prevent knife crime among young people which has been shared nationally as good practice; and
  - the force’s diversionary learning interventions for children involved in low level criminality, which focus on understanding the law, the impact on victims and making better choices for the future.
22. Kent Police’s forward thinking approach to volunteers and special constables was also praised, with HMICFRS acknowledging how training, support and development opportunities have helped build one of the largest and most engaged special constabularies in the country. The force has over 800 volunteers and specials who are supported in roles that match their skills and aspirations, with accredited training aligned to regular officer standards. This not only boosts morale and retention, but also strengthens operational capability, improves engagement with hard-to-reach communities and delivers value for money.

23. Despite the positive assessment and HMICFRS identifying a number of areas of innovative practice, the force also received eight Areas for Improvement (AFIs) as below:
- The force needs to record officers' rationales when using force and increase supervisory oversight.
  - The force should expand its independent scrutiny of stop and search and use of force.
  - The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its internal targets.<sup>1</sup>
  - The force should make sure that it consistently assigns the correct crime outcome type.
  - The force needs to make sure that officers take appropriate action and work with multi-agency partners to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people.
  - The force needs to have a consistent approach to its identification and response to locating and safeguarding missing people.
  - To fully understand how fraud affects its communities and the response needed, the force needs effective governance for all fraud offences.
  - The force should make sure it has the capacity to effectively review and support fraud investigation.
24. The force is therefore not complacent and is now focused on the areas where it can improve. Officers and staff at every level are committed to providing the best service possible to the communities of Kent.

### **Holding to account:**

25. The PCC considers the overall assessment of Kent Police as positive, evidencing the progress that has been made over the past couple of years. As reflected in the commentary and gradings, the force has, and continues to improve the service that it delivers to residents and businesses across the county.
26. The investment in neighbourhood policing, which the Panel has supported, is paying dividends with more neighbourhood officers than ever providing communities with a visible and accessible presence, and the contact centre is now one of the best performing in the country. The force also has strong governance, supports and develops its workforce to an outstanding level, is making greater use of preventative orders, and has increased positive outcomes for victims of crime.
27. However, the PCC also acknowledges that in order to make the service better for the public there are still some areas for improvement. Whilst the force has already started to address these, the PCC will monitor progress through established accountability mechanisms, including the quarterly Performance & Delivery Board.
28. Open to Panel Members and the public on a non-participating basis and also live streamed, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers and answer questions about delivery of the [Cut Crime, Support Victims, Build Trust](#) Police and Crime Plan, as well as policing generally in the county.
29. The 'Inspections, Audits & Reviews' paper routinely reports on HMICFRS activity and will regularly include updates on progress against the AFIs.
30. Progress updates will also be reported at the [Joint Audit Committee](#) and the PCC will continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular one-to-one meetings and provision of bespoke briefings.
31. The PCC would like to thank the officers, staff and volunteers of Kent Police for their continued diligence and dedication to service which they demonstrate every single day in trying to do their best for local neighbourhoods and victims of crime. He would also like to commend them for all that they are doing to cut crime, support victims and build trust.

### **Recommendation:**

32. The Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel is asked to note this report and agree to a further update at their December 2026 meeting.

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<sup>1</sup> Since the inspection took place, the force has improved its response time to emergencies as the 26 February Performance & Delivery Board papers show.