

Annual Report

2014-2015

Commissioner's Introduction

Welcome to my 2014-15 Annual Report, which provides an overview of work that has been done over the past year (April 2014 – March 2015) to deliver on the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan. At the core of that plan were the twin aims of visible community policing and putting victims and witnesses first. The purpose of this Annual Report is to show progress against the priorities for 2014/15. Despite the financial challenges faced by Kent Police, which are set to continue, the officers and staff have worked tirelessly to maintain and where possible improve the first class service they provide to the people of Kent. Time and again I am impressed by their dedication and professionalism, and I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to each and every one of them, as so often, the excellent work of police officers and staff goes without comment.

My Police and Crime Plan priorities do not just cover the work of Kent Police but also partners involved in criminal justice and community safety in Kent. These partners are also pivotal in helping to secure reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour (ASB) and reducing the number of victims that experience crime or ASB. Progress during 2014/15 in this area is also set out within this Annual Report.

Ann Barnes
Police and Crime Commissioner for Kent

Strategic vision for policing and crime & disorder reduction

The Chief Constable, Alan Pughsley, and I are committed to working together to secure the best possible outcomes for policing and reducing crime and disorder for the people of Kent. This commitment is reflected in our joint vision for policing in the county.

“Our vision is for Kent to be a safe place for people to live, work and visit and by protecting the public from crime and anti-social behaviour, we will allow our communities to flourish. We will work closely with our partners to ensure that a seamless service is provided and that opportunities for joint working are explored. By working with partners and listening to the public we will provide a first class policing service that places the victim first and is visible and accessible. We will ensure local visible community policing is at the heart of everything we do. We will be there when the public need us and we will act with integrity in all that we do.”

In order to achieve this vision, the seven strategic priorities in my Police and Crime Plan were to:

- Cut crime and catch criminals
- Ensure visible community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent
- Prevent crime, ASB and reduce repeat victimisation and offending
- Put victims and witnesses at the heart of processes
- Protect the public from serious harm
- Deliver value for money
- Meet national commitments for policing

Policing budget 2014/15

In 2014/15, I allocated £310.6m for spend on policing and community safety. Of this, £306.5m or 98% was allocated to the Force.

The final accounts will be concluded in September 2015. The unaudited figures show an underspend for the year of £1.8m.

Overview of Progress

This Annual Report covers the second full year of activity by my office (Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner).

Building on the foundations of the first year, the focus again has been on delivery of the priorities within my Police and Crime Plan including improving the service provided to victims, maximising efficiency and effectiveness through innovation and supporting the Chief Constable in retaining visible community policing.

Key highlights for 2014/15 include:

- Developing Compass House, the centre for care and advice for victims and witnesses of crime in Kent, and improving specialist victim services.
- Launching TrackMyCrime to improve victims' access to information regarding their crime.
- Launching the Kent Victims' Charter.
- Developing the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and related services.
- Maintaining confidence in crime recording accuracy.
- The establishment of a new local policing model, giving District Chief Inspectors greater flexibility to deploy resources to tackle local issues.
- The Youth Commissioner engaging with hundreds of young people about policing.
- The Kent Special Constabulary receiving the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.
- Funding and introducing a Body-Worn Video pilot which will be expanded in 2015/16.
- Introducing the Community Remedy, giving victims a say in offenders' punishment.
- Launching the Kent and Medway Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat to improve services for people suffering mental health illness.
- Establishing a People Board to support the Force culture change, providing a forum for officers and staff to openly discuss organisational matters.
- The joint Support Services Directorate winning an award from the Institute for Continuous Improvement.
- Successfully transferring employment of police staff between the Commissioner and the Chief Constable.
- Expanding and enhancing governance around holding the Chief Constable to account by introducing an independent Ethics Committee.

Cut crime and catch criminals

Key progress areas in 2014/15

Use of technology

Policing is facing many challenges, and the use of technology can assist with improving efficiency and effectiveness.

Preparations have continued for the Kent introduction of Athena in 2015, a major new collaboratively procured operational system that will streamline business processes. Athena will replace the current operational system, providing linked investigation management, intelligence, case management and custody for Kent, Essex and five other forces – Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk.

With my support and that of the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner, Kent Police and Essex Police submitted a joint innovation fund bid to the Home Office for the purchase of Body-Worn Video (BWV) and the associated back office infrastructure. The bid was successful and as a result, funding secured for 400 BWV sets in each force and a shared storage and software capability.

In Kent, the distribution of the 400 sets was determined based on demand for calls, number of complaints received and public satisfaction levels within the 13 districts. As a result, the districts of Maidstone, Medway and Thanet were selected as pilot areas. The trial phase commenced in September 2014, below are some examples of video captured and how it has assisted Kent Police:

- A high speed pursuit of a stolen vehicle that hit a police car and a member of public's vehicle. The offender has been charged with five crimes including handling stolen goods, failing to stop and dangerous driving.
- An officer discharging a Taser with the footage being shared with the Independent Police Complaints Commission to determine if its use was justified.
- An assault on a police officer - the duty solicitor was shown the footage pre interview and a guilty plea submitted (to stop the footage being shown at court).

The Chief Constable has now prepared a business case to justify a broader role out of BWV in 2015/16. Undoubtedly, it is a tool that delivers positive outcomes and the benefits of its use include:

- enhanced contemporaneous evidence capture;
- swifter justice;
- early guilty pleas and admissions;
- more appropriate sentencing; and
- reduced bureaucracy throughout the criminal justice process by focussing on the needs of victims.

Kent Police is also developing new mobile technology. This will provide front line staff with the equipment needed to ensure their time is used efficiently and effectively. The aim is that all appropriate operational officers and staff will be issued with a tablet type device allowing them to spend more time out of the station and in the community.

Confidence in crime recording

In 2013, concerns were raised regarding the accuracy of crime recording and I asked Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) to conduct a full inspection of crime recording in Kent. The resulting report highlighted that one in ten crimes reported to Kent Police were not being recorded correctly.

Following this inspection, Kent Police implemented a comprehensive action plan to ensure the public of Kent could have greater confidence in the crime figures. Organisational and cultural changes were introduced and a subsequent HMIC inspection found the recording rate had improved to 96%.

However, to truly embed cultural change within an organisation as large and complex as Kent Police, it was recognised that there needed to be sustained effort and appropriate resources made available. To help support that long-term culture change, I ring-fenced £30,000 for use on programmes and initiatives that would help ensure the culture continued to develop into one where quality of service and the needs of the victim were central to all that happens.

To further support the culture change, I also established a People Board. The first meeting was held in July 2014 and on behalf of the people of Kent, it provides an opportunity for me to ensure the Kent Police Mission, Vision and Values are being truly engrained within the organisation. Hearing directly from officers and staff, including staff associations and support groups, it focuses on the morale and wellbeing of the Force's greatest asset, its people, rather than holding the Chief Constable to account. Representation at the People Board continues to grow and I have received positive feedback from across the organisation.

The crime recording accuracy issue isn't confined to Kent though, and HMIC conducted their first national inspection in 2014. For Kent, this was actually the third inspection and I am very pleased that it found the 96% accuracy rate had been maintained, with HMIC concluding that the people of Kent could have confidence in the crime figures. However, HMIC found varying degrees of accuracy nationally, ranging from 60% upwards and estimated one in five offences that should have been recorded as crimes were not. For a number of forces, the journey that Kent Police has been on over the last couple of years is just beginning.

I remain steadfast in my support for the changes instigated within Kent to improve crime recording. I am also very proud that the public can continue to trust the crime figures and have confidence in the operational plans based upon them.

Support for rural and business communities

I recognise the challenges that can be faced by the rural and business communities in Kent and continue to support the Crime Rural Advisory Group (CRAG) and the Business Crime Advisory Group.

A Rural Crime Conference was held in October 2014 hosted by the Chief Constable, the Chair of the Crime Rural Advisory Group (Mr Michael Bax) and myself. This saw the launch of the Rural Task Force (RTF), a new team combining the existing Gypsy Liaison Team and the Rural Liaison Team, as well as the launch of Kent Police's new Rural Strategy.

The Strategy is primarily designed to better enable Kent Police to work in partnership with local communities and key stakeholders such as the CRAG and the National Farmers Union (NFU) in order to enhance their ability to tackle rural crime and ASB.

The RTF has gone from strength to strength and as a result, Operation Nonagon, which focuses on tackling rural crime now takes place in all districts; 220 staff took part in the most recent operation. Operation Nonagon has also resulted in numerous arrests and successful prosecutions for rural related theft, the recovery of stolen property and provides an increased visible presence that both reassures communities and deters criminals.

The launch of the RTF has also resulted in an increase in prosecutions for poaching/hare coursing. From September 2014 to February 2015, 15 prosecutions were made, with 11 vehicles being seized as a direct result of focussed policing within rural communities.

Ensure visible community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent

Key progress areas in 2014/15

New policing model

Following Chief Constable Pugh's appointment in January 2014, one of his first decisions, with my support and encouragement, was to review the policing model.

The review led to a locally focused policing model going 'live' on 24 June 2014. By bringing together the previously separate commands of Central Response, Neighbourhood Policing and Custody under the command of local District Chief Inspectors (Superintendent in the case of Medway), the model provides greater flexibility in deploying local resources.

The model also created Community Policing Teams for each district, an additional local resource able to respond to calls for assistance and with the skills to respond to the needs of local people. This includes tackling persistent or problematic crime/ASB and spending more time in local communities. I fully supported the adoption of Local District Policing Teams to maximise the contact between officers and the local community whilst maintaining a focus on cutting crime.

The model ensures my joint vision with the Chief Constable is realised by retaining neighbourhood policing as the bedrock of policing in the county, whilst ensuring the Force is able to realise its savings target.

Since 4 March 2014, Kent Police have also been operating a public call triaging system and crime allocation model, identifying telephone calls that do not require initial police attendance and assessing the necessity for further allocation and/or investigation as per the victim's wishes and available evidence. The crimes are managed by the Investigation Management Unit (IMU) through direct contact with victims, with consideration being given to maximising evidence capture, opportunities for further lines of enquiry and/or progression of the investigation.

This process replaces the need for Kent Police to attend all crimes, allowing patrols to be available for emergency calls for assistance and other priority investigations, whilst also ensuring the best use of resources.

Wider policing family

I am very supportive and appreciative of the work of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), Special Constables and Community Wardens who engage with communities across the county and tackle issues of local concern.

I was particularly pleased at Kent County Council's decision to retain the Community Wardens; they play a pivotal role in local communities and are highly valued members of the wider policing family.

In Kent, Special Constables provide over 100,000 hours of policing annually and I continue to provide funding to support their on-going recruitment and development. In addition to providing local neighbourhood policing and responding to emergency calls for assistance, a key component of the strategy to encourage their retention has been to expand the range of roles they can perform, playing to strengths, interests and professional backgrounds. Rural Specials have been introduced to focus on crime and engagement in these areas; many are land agents, farmers, and rural residents. The Marine Specials have been broadened to include specialist search, providing a valuable reserve to call on when needed. Roads Policing Specials are now able to undertake Advanced Driving courses, making them as qualified as their regular counterparts, and a number of Specials are also working with the Dog Section.

Four new trainers have also been recruited to improve the skill set of existing Specials and accelerate the training of new ones. They continue to deliver a motivated, productive Special Constabulary better able to support regular officers in a greater variety of ways and more focussed on community engagement and the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan. The trainers have also developed new and innovative flexible training packages more suited to the needs of the Special Constabulary.

I am also very proud that the Kent Special Constabulary received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in recognition of its service to residents in Kent. This has the status of a collective MBE and Kent is the only Special Constabulary to have ever been presented with the award. The officers were recognised for 'providing innovative community focused policing to the people of Kent'.

I would like to publically say well done and thank you to these ordinary individuals who perform such an extraordinary role and help to keep Kent safe.

Mobile Police Stations

One of my manifesto pledges was to introduce a fleet of Mobile Police Stations to support enhanced engagement and make it easier for all communities to access policing services.

Whilst they were rolled out in September 2013, a review was conducted in 2014 and I am pleased that this resulted in a number of developments to improve the service, including:

- A dedicated team of PCSOs assuming responsibility for the scheme, bringing increased continuity and resilience.
- Coverage broadened to include fixed venues, dynamic response to daily business priorities, and ring-fenced weekends to attend community events. With an emphasis on pro-active visible patrol, their range has been extended into urban locations enabling them to respond to changing crime and ASB hotspots, as well as areas that suffer from repeat or seasonal crime trends.

- Deployment times amended to provide greater coverage, increasing from five days to seven days a week.
- Weekends being kept free to attend fetes, fairs and other community events that present an opportunity for public engagement and bespoke crime prevention advice.
- Following interest from partner agencies, the Force has explored ways to join forces in areas of mutual interest.
- Details of locations and timings being published on the Kent Police website and tweeted by the PCSO staffing via a Twitter account. Parish Councils are also advised of routes and venues, as well as any changes.

Linked to the implementation of the new locally focused policing model, the Mobile Police Stations provide District Chief Inspectors with a flexible resource, which they can quickly and easily direct towards district policing priorities, helping to address local needs.

Prevent crime, ASB and reduce repeat victimisation and offending

Key progress areas in 2014/15

Youth Commissioner

In early April 2014, Kerry Boyd formally commenced her role as Youth Commissioner. Kerry's brief was to engage with young people across the county to better understand their policing needs and opinions in order to advise the Commissioner and inform the Police and Crime Plan.

An early reflection in response to a particular set of circumstances saw a realignment of the Youth Commissioner role, with Kerry undertaking a three month secondment at CXK. CXK is an Ashford based charity that supports young people in the South East to develop their skills, raise their aspirations and reach their full potential. CXK were chosen as they ran a number of programmes with a variety of young people, from a range of backgrounds. The secondment allowed Kerry to gain the views of young people on policing priorities, collate feedback from those using the Community Activity Team service and generate a recommendations report for CXK.

During her time as Youth Commissioner, Kerry engaged with hundreds upon hundreds of young people at Youth Councils/Parliaments, Pupil Referral Units and Detached Youth Provision seeking their views on policing and staying safe. Kerry also researched youth provision across the country, engaged with partners about youth services and participated in youth programmes – leading and mentoring young people.

At the conclusion of her time with my office, Kerry produced an interesting report which not only identified a range of issues affecting the relationship between young people and the police, but also recommendations as to how this could be improved for the future. I have incorporated a number of Kerry's recommendations in my Police and Crime Plan.

Kerry's contract finished at the end of February 2015. Kerry was a great advocate for my office and gave up numerous evenings and weekends as she travelled far and wide to get the widest views possible. I am now looking to the future of youth engagement and working closely with a group of representatives who either speak on behalf of, or work with young people to develop the best method for ensuring their voices are heard in policing.

Community Remedy

In addition to streamlining nineteen powers into six new powers, the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 introduced two new measures to give victims a greater say. They were:

- The Community Trigger, giving victims and communities the opportunity to request a review of reports of persistent ASB by multi-agency partners.
- The Community Remedy, giving victims a say in the punishment of offenders when a community resolution is used for low-level crime and ASB.

Police and Crime Commissioners were tasked with consulting members of the public and community representatives on what actions they would consider appropriate as a Community Remedy. The consultation in Kent commenced on 4 August 2014 and concluded on 31 August 2014.

Based on the consultation findings, I am pleased that front line officers are now able to invite victims to choose from the following when a community resolution is to be used:

- Financial Compensation (payment of cost of damage or replacement of property).
- Reparation (repair of damage to victims' property or work in the community).
- Parenting contract (voluntary agreement signed by the offender's parent/guardian outlining expected behaviour).
- Acceptable behaviour contract (written agreement specifying behaviour).
- Written apology to the victim.
- Verbal apology to the victim.
- Restorative intervention (facilitated process between victim and offender to discuss the harm caused).

Partnership working

One of the core principles underpinning my Police and Crime Plan is the value of partnership working. I recognise that crime and ASB cannot be tackled by the police alone.

Given the excellent work of the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs), amongst many others, I have continued to provide financial support to these existing partners. Historically, funding to partners including the CSPs was awarded on an annual basis, affecting the viability of projects. In 2014/15, I am pleased to report that I was able to honour the three year funding commitment I gave to partners in 2013/14, providing funding certainty and enabling them to effectively plan for the longer term.

CSPs are key to local problem solving and the delivery of initiatives. I understand the value they add to local communities and examples of the positive work they undertake include:

- support for domestic abuse victims, including provision of One Stop Shops;
- raising awareness;
- support and education programmes;
- road safety activities;
- projects to support safer night time economies; and
- youth diversionary activities.

The Chief Constable's and my commitment to partnership working is clearly articulated through our joint vision for policing in the county.

Put victims and witnesses at the heart of processes

Key progress areas in 2014/15

Compass House

In October 2014 the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) devolved responsibility and funding for commissioning victim services to Police and Crime Commissioners. However, the MOJ retained responsibility for commissioning some national services, such as support to those bereaved through homicide.

In advance of this taking place, work was undertaken with partner agencies in Kent to identify opportunities to improve existing victims' services and to understand the gaps in service provision. This work identified that there was a need for a greater co-ordination of services to victims and witnesses and the concept of a centre for care and advice emerged.

The aim of the centre for care and advice for victims and witnesses, or Compass House as it has been named, is to provide the best possible support to victims of crime across the county. It provides enhanced multi-agency working and information sharing, enabling services to be tailored to the individual's needs and circumstances.

I feel very proud of the significant work undertaken by my office and Kent Police to develop Compass House, including identifying a suitable building and commencing refurbishment. It also included engaging with key stakeholders on their role in the centre and the development of wider service improvements for victims and witnesses.

In December 2014, I signed an agreement with Victim Support to develop an enhanced support service tailored to meet the needs of victims of crime in Kent rather than a national, one size fits all approach. This includes the co-location of Victim Support and the Kent Police Witness Care Unit at Compass House, bringing significant benefits including:

- the provision of an improved quality service for victims that is tailored to their needs (e.g. being able to give evidence remotely);
- closer working and less duplication;
- improved information exchange and case management;
- improved pooling of multi-agency skills and expertise; and
- alignment of the victim's support with their journey through the criminal justice system.

The approach taken by my office was singled out by the Cabinet Office as an exemplar of good practice when working with the third sector.

From April 2015, the service will be extended to include victims of a greater range of crime types than under the national contract. It is estimated the service will support an additional 14,000 people, with a total of around 53,000 victims of crime receiving help each year.

Compass House will be officially opened in June 2015 and provision in the centre includes counselling rooms, two live link suites and reception/information area. In addition, there is a multi-agency training room and a number of 'hot desks' for use by partners.

Specialist victim services

In October 2014 Portsmouth University produced the 'Strategic Assessment of Support Services for Victims in the South East'. This needs assessment included:

- mapping the victim's journey;
- barriers to accessing support services; and
- priorities, best practice and gaps in service provision.

This assessment has been pivotal in helping to inform the commissioning of victim services in Kent. In particular, it helped to identify where specialist services could be enhanced to ensure victims have access to services that help them in coping and recovering from a crime.

As a result of the work by Portsmouth University, a funding opportunity was made available to existing support providers to deliver the following services in Kent:

- General crime trauma counselling and therapeutic services.
- Support for victims of hate crime.
- Support for children and young people who have been victims of crime.

Live link

Live link makes it easier for vulnerable victims to give vital evidence. The video system spares victims and witnesses the trauma of going to court if they feel threatened or too intimidated to attend.

This technology supports my commitment to place victims and witnesses at the heart of the criminal justice system. I am pleased to report that during 2014/15 it's become more widely accessible to both victims and partner agencies across the county:

- Vulnerable witness suites - established at Sittingbourne, Swanley and Margate police stations, as well as two at Compass House, the centre for care and advice for victims and witnesses in Ashford. Work is also underway to provide a facility at the Council offices in Chatham which will be the first in the country outside police/court estate.
- Police officer facilities - total of eight live link rooms around the county, plus the ability to use the equipment in all seven custody suites. Tests have also been carried out using mobile devices, to swear out search warrants without the need for a fixed site, which if successful could be used by officers to give evidence.
- Courts - fourteen Crown Court rooms have video equipment and are linked to the Kent Police network. I have also funded a programme of work to video enable Magistrate Court rooms in Kent, and by summer 2015, there will be nineteen where evidence can be given by video link. Talks are currently on-going with the MOJ in relation to one further court, which if agreed, will make Kent the only county with 100% capability. In addition, three courts have been selected to have a back room video facility to deal with search warrant applications, removing the need for police officers to travel to court and to minimise disruption to live court rooms.

TrackMyCrime

TrackMyCrime is a web-based interactive service that provides victims with online updates on their crime investigations. Victims have the option of using the system, but if they don't have an email account or internet access, face-to-face or telephone contact can still be used.

It supports my manifesto pledge to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system, and I am pleased to report that TrackMyCrime was launched by Kent Police on 1 April 2014.

The benefits of TrackMyCrime for victims are more choice in how they receive updates and the ability to receive updates at their convenience. The benefits for officers are that updates can be provided at any time and they can be provided without having to get hold of the victim in person.

Victims' Charter

Launched jointly by the Chief Constable and me in April 2014, the Kent Victims' Charter outlines ten pledges that promise to put the needs of victims first, to offer individual support if needed, and to help victims through the often traumatic criminal justice system.

The aim is to make the victim's experience of the criminal justice system as smooth as possible and to make it a priority, rather than part of the 'process'. The Victims' Charter helps to make this happen and supports my manifesto pledge to put victims at the heart of the criminal justice system.

Protect the public from serious harm

Key progress areas in 2014/15

Kent and Essex Serious Crime Directorate (SCD)

The combined SCD is one of the largest in UK policing dedicated to tackling serious and organised crime, with more than 1,000 officers and staff working together across both counties

The SCD provides intelligence and support to target and tackle those involved in serious criminality, from home-grown criminal networks operating within local communities, to criminals who travel into Kent and Essex to commit offences.

In conjunction with the National Crime Agency and the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (ROCU), the SCD works to disrupt Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and undertakes investigations into all aspects of serious and organised crime. This includes drug supply, human trafficking and armed robbery as well as murder and serious assaults alongside the Major Crime Team.

For example, in May 2014, Op Lakeland saw 30 warrants executed at addresses across Kent, the Midlands and Yorkshire. More than 320 officers from Kent Police were involved with the National Crime Agency, officers from Slovakia Police and Kent County Council Specialist Children's Services. The investigation focused on an organised criminal network believed to be involved in the sexual exploitation of young girls from the Slovakian Roma community in Margate, Folkestone, Dover and Gravesend. As a result, over 30 vulnerable children were protected from further significant harm and a number of suspects charged with offences including child prostitution, false imprisonment, indecent assault and rape.

The Financial Investigation Unit (FIU) within the SCD not only supports investigations, but also ensures the provisions within the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) are fully utilised to strip criminals of assets they have obtained illegally. In addition, the SCD regularly supports local policing with forensic services, intelligence and additional investigative capacity for specific operations. Through partnership working, the SCD is also building the appropriate capability and leading the response to combat the growing threat from 'cybercrime'.

I am proud of what the SCD has achieved in 2014/15. By pulling together resources from within the Directorate, across departments and working with partner agencies to achieve a common goal, the SCD continues to keep the people of Kent and Essex safe from the threat of serious and organised crime.

Sexual Assault Referral Clinic (SARC)

In July 2014, my office was successful in a bid to the Ministry of Justice Competed Fund. The funding, totalling £149,861 was awarded to Kent in order to support the on-going development of the SARC in Maidstone. In particular, it was used to enable victims of rape to self-refer to the SARC, as previously referrals could only be made after an allegation had been reported to the police.

To support self-referrals a dedicated telephone line, a website and a member of staff, to promote access to the SARC by establishing links with those likely to come into contact with victims of sexual assault, were introduced.

Kent and Medway Mental Health Crisis Concordat

A national Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat was published by the Department of Health in February 2014 and it redefined the core responsibilities of health, police and other agencies in providing care for people experiencing a mental health crisis. It also included an expectation that each police force area in England would have a Local Concordat by December 2014.

In December 2014 a number of organisations in Kent signed the Kent and Medway Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat. By signing the Concordat, signatories including the NHS, Magistrates Association, British Transport Police, Kent County Council and healthcare providers agreed that they will work to develop services including:

- making early interventions to prevent people reaching crisis point;
- ensuring a multi-agency response for people in crisis so their needs are met in a healthcare setting; and
- providing a plan that supports the recovery and prevents reoccurrence for those who have experienced a crisis.

In Kent, examples of success in delivering the Local Concordat include the opening of a 'Place of Safety and Assessment Suite' for young people, and the Street Triage Pilot, which I part funded, being extended to seven days a week. I am also proud that in May 2014, Kent Police received an accolade for the Street Triage project for 'Outstanding partnership work' at the Kent and Medway NHS Partnership Trust's annual Staff Awards.

Due to the significant work that has been undertaken in 2014/15, I am reassured that people suffering mental health illness who happen to come into contact with the police or other agencies, will experience a far more effective and joined-up level of care.

Deliver value for money

Key progress areas in 2014/15

Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR)

In response to the last four years of grant cuts under the first CSR (2011/12 to 2014/15), the Force delivered a new policing model as well as other savings totalling £50m. Those savings have come at a cost though, with approximately 500 police officers and 720 police staff not being replaced when they have left the Force.

In a new round of grant cuts, for the year 2015/16 the Force will have to find a further £14.5m of savings. Thanks to sensible planning, the Force will be able to deliver this without any significant cuts in front-line visible neighbourhood policing. In part, the savings will be met by improved use of IT and innovation. However, it will require the loss of another 100+ jobs, a mixture of officers, PCSOs and staff, primarily through natural attrition and further restructuring.

Beyond 2015/16, the same level of cuts to the police grant from 2016/17 onwards as seen in the previous round up to 2015/16 could be faced. To put this into context, a further 20% real cut in police grant implies minimum further savings of £47.2m over the period 2016/17 to 2018/19. In addition to the £14.5m required in 2015/16, this makes a total of £61.7m further savings as a minimum over the period 2015/16 to 2018/19 – but it could be even worse.

However, even with maximising local efficiency, faced with that level of cuts to police funding, I believe there needs to be a serious national debate about the role and expectations for policing over the medium to long term, and in particular the balance between local, regional and national.

Innovation partner

In December 2013, I engaged Deloitte to act as Kent's innovation partner. The purpose of the innovation partner was to advise on opportunities for innovation, improved use of technology and partnership delivery, ensuring that Kent Police (as well as the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) was delivering services in the most efficient and effective manner in light of financial pressures.

During 2014/15, Deloitte worked closely with the Force and benchmarked on-going activity with developments in both the public and private sector. Having reviewed a range of the Force's activities, they also provided a number of potential options for future consideration in light of the on-going austerity challenge.

I am pleased to say that the Force's internal activity stood up very well to benchmarking across the private and public sector, and that the Force are now developing a range of initiatives designed to assist with meeting the very real financial challenges ahead. HMIC's assessment of the Force's preparedness for securing its financial position in the short and long-term is testament to this (see below).

Following the completion of their work, Deloitte were invited back by the Athena Management Board to conduct a review of the management structure for the Athena project to ensure it is optimised to meet the evolving challenge of transitioning from delivering a new system, to one of developing an in-place system; this work is on-going.

Collaboration

Sections 22 and 23 of the Police Act 1996 enable joint working between police forces and/or Police and Crime Commissioners where collaboration will deliver greater efficiencies or effectiveness.

I am confident that collaboration with Essex Police continues to provide benefits both in efficiency and operationally. In February 2015 the combined Support Services Directorate won first place in the Institute for Continuous Improvement's national awards. The award citation commented on the extent of innovation, commitment to customer focus, well thought through approach to business planning, impressive staff engagement and demonstrable evidence of sustained improvement.

This is a real success for shared services across Kent and Essex. It dispels the myth that public sector staff are faceless bureaucrats who do not have any inkling of what it is like to deliver value for money for tax payers. Nothing could be further from the truth about the staff who work in the Support Services Directorate.

In addition to the key role played by the joint Serious Crime Directorate, I agreed to formalise and enhance collaboration between the South East police forces via regional units, including the South East Regional Organised Crime Unit (SEROUC) and the South East Counter Terrorism Unit (SECTU).

The success of collaboration in Kent and experience gained from it will continue to feed into future work, as all avenues are explored to work collaboratively with other organisations and police forces.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary

The HMIC Value for Money profile shows Kent to be an efficient force in comparison with other forces. This is a key source of assurance and remains an important benchmark. Any areas where Kent Police are significantly over or below the average compared with other forces are thoroughly investigated.

Annually, in each of the last four years HMIC have also conducted a 'Valuing the Police' inspection to assess forces' plans and progress in meeting the Comprehensive Spending Review savings requirements. Following their latest inspection of Kent, conducted in May 2014, I am pleased to report HMIC's judgements were as follows:

Key question	Judgement
1) To what extent is the Force taking the necessary steps to ensure a secure financial position for the short and long term?	Outstanding
2) To what extent has the Force an affordable way of providing policing?	Good
3) To what extent is the Force efficient?	Good

The Force received an overall judgement of 'Good' with HMIC concluding 'Kent Police has responded well to the financial challenge of the spending review. Importantly, the Force is planning for the long term by taking the necessary steps today, so it is ready to meet future funding challenges in this on-going era of austerity'.

Stage 2 transfer

The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act created two new corporation soles, the Commissioner and the Chief Constable. Prior to this, Chief Constables were not legal entities and could not employ staff. Therefore an agreement needed to be reached by 1 April 2014 about which staff would be employed by which corporation sole. This process was known as the 'Stage 2' transfer.

The timing of the Stage 2 transfer coincided with a wider planned review of Kent Police and my office engagement and communication functions as well as the priorities within the Police and Crime Plan. Whilst this work continued, the Stage 2 transfer was kept under constant review.

I am pleased to report that all police staff have subsequently been transferred to the employment of the Chief Constable, with the exception of those employed in the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Meet national commitments for policing

Key progress areas in 2014/15

Strategic Policing Requirement

The Home Office defines the national expectations placed upon the Force in the Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR). This sets out the national threats that the police must prepare for and the capability Kent Police must have to support tackling them, as well as mutual aid arrangements with other forces.

In September 2013, Kent Police was one of 18 forces inspected by HMIC as part of a three-year programme to examine the arrangements forces have in place to meet the SPR. Their report on Kent Police was published in November 2014.

I am pleased to report that Kent was identified as collaborating effectively to tackle serious and organised crime threats, with this work being in addition to the Regional Organised Crime Units (ROCU). In addition, Kent was found to have sufficient Police Support Units (PSUs) for the assessed local threat and was a net provider of officers under mutual aid arrangements.

Code of Ethics/Ethics Committee

The Code of Ethics was introduced by the College of Policing in June 2014 and aims to professionalise the police service. Consisting of nine policing principles and building on the ten standards of professional behaviour, the Code is intended to help officers and staff make ethical decisions.

The Code applies to all police officers and staff, Special Constables, contractors and volunteers. It has also been adopted by my office.

The Code requires Kent Police to establish an internal Ethics Committee, but to maintain public trust and confidence I have also established an external Ethics Committee. The Committee introduces independent, external expertise to the consideration of ethical issues and acts as a forum to debate complex issues and support a culture of ethical decision making.

The Committee is scheduled to meet twice a year and its scope is divided into a number of areas including (but not limited to):

- leadership;
- debating complex operational or personnel issues;
- proactively challenging Kent Police on themes of national significance, especially the use of resources in austere times;
- ensuring senior leaders' decision making is in keeping with the Force's Mission, Vision, Values and Priorities;
- influencing police culture; and
- fostering attitudes and practices which are ethical.

In addition, it will examine issues arising from:

- the Force's internal Ethics Committee;
- the Commissioner's People Board;
- individuals within the Force (at any rank) or my office directly; and
- suggestions by Committee members concerning matters of national or local importance.

In addition to my Chief of Staff and myself, the Committee will consist of five Independent Members, the Chief Constable and other people by invite. The Independent Members are as follows:

- Elizabeth Bilton - a qualified accountant and Director of Internal Audit at MUFG. Elizabeth is also a Non-Executive Trustee and Honorary Treasurer of Plantlife International Conservation Charity.
- John Clarke - following an extensive career in the medical profession, John retired in 2013. While working for the NHS, John sat on the Local Medical Committee and the Professional Executive Committee of a NHS Primary Care Trust.
- Teresa Murray – a local elected Labour councillor and Deputy Leader of the Medway Labour Group. Teresa is also the spokesperson for Health and Community Affairs.
- Vyramuthu Navaratnam - a retired Senior Civil Servant with an extensive clinical career in the NHS before joining the Home Office. Vyramuthu has been a Justice of the Peace since 2006.
- Chrys Short - has held a range of high level nursing, teaching and management roles in the healthcare profession. Chris was previously a Member of the Dartford and Gravesham Ethics Committee and a Justice of the Peace.

In the future, this section will report on the work of the Ethics Committee. However, given the timing of their first formal meeting, it has not been possible to include an update in this Annual Report.

Performance

As outlined earlier in this report, concerns were raised in 2013 regarding crime recording accuracy in Kent and I asked HMIC to conduct a full inspection. The resulting report highlighted that one in ten crimes reported to Kent Police were not being recorded correctly.

Following this inspection, from July 2013 Kent Police implemented a comprehensive action plan to ensure the public could have greater confidence in the crime figures. Organisational and cultural changes were introduced, and as a result all subsequent HMIC inspections have found Kent Police's recording accuracy to be around 96% - one of the highest nationally.

However, as a result of the work to improve accuracy, from July 2013, the Force saw an increase in offences; with crimes previously not recorded, now being recorded. Some categories, such as violence against the person and sexual offences were also more affected than others. It is important to note that this also resulted in the 'normal' level of recorded crime in Kent being recalibrated. The increase in recorded offences peaked in June 2014 when 12 months data at the recalibrated level (July 2013 to June 2014) was compared with the previous 12 months (July 2012 to June 2013). For victim based crime, this showed an increase of 11.3%.

Based on analysis, the Force estimated that the increase in recorded crime would fall by approximately 1% each month as the two periods became more comparable. By the end of June 2015, when there's two years' worth of comparable data at the recalibrated (96% accuracy) level, the Force anticipates recorded crime will have stabilised and the change will be +/-1%.

This is supported by HMIC who in 2014 stated that Kent Police performance is improving and that a true comparison will not be available until 12 month period to June 2015 data, when year on year comparison will be like for like in terms of recording accuracy.

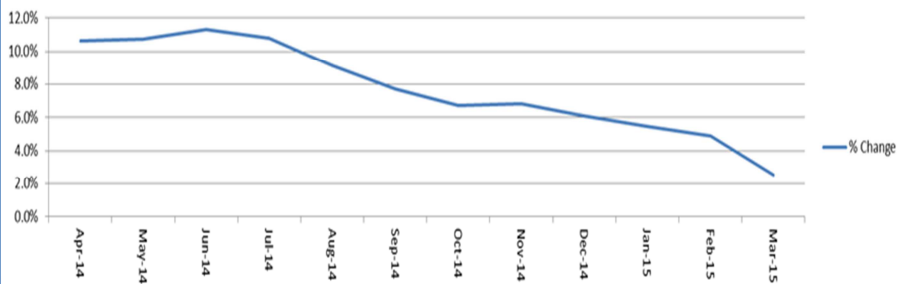
For the purposes of this report, I have provided a comparison of financial year 2014/15 with 2013/14 across four crime categories: Victim based crime (VBC); Violence against the person (VAP); Sexual offences and Burglary dwelling (BD). However, as stated above, this is not a like for like comparison in terms of recalibrated data. It should also be noted that the most recent official published data only covers the 12 month period up to December 2014. The following 2014/15 financial year data should be considered provisional until the figures are published by the Office for National Statistics.

The following table shows the number of recorded offences in each category in financial years 2014/15 and 2013/14, as well as the percentage change.

	2014/15 – total offences	2013/14 – total offences	% Change
Victim based crime	102,628	100,091	+2.5%
Violence against the person	28,624	25,771	+11.1%
Sexual offences	2,626	2,233	+17.6%
Burglary dwelling	5,301	6,182	-14.3%

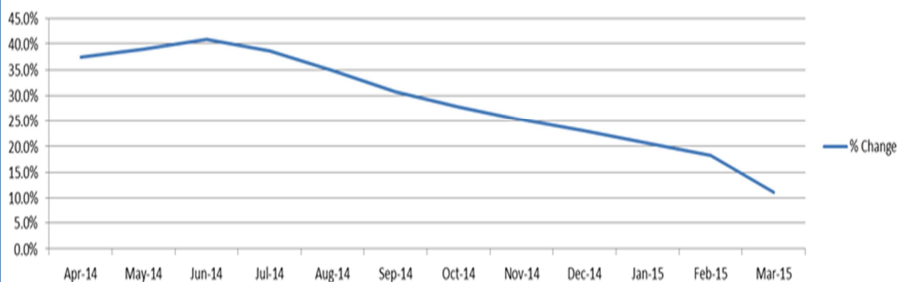
In order to add context and illustrate the direction of travel in recorded crime over financial year 2014/15, the following graphs depict the percentage change month by month.

% Change for VBC rolling 12 months compared to same period 12 month prior



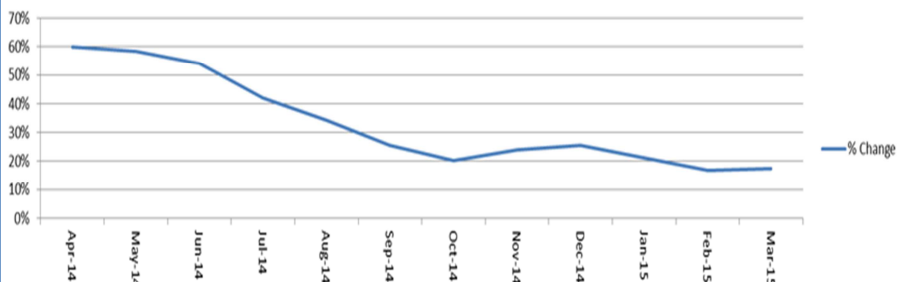
The direction of travel for Victim based crime followed Force predictions, with the increase peaking at 11.3% in June 2014 and subsequently falling month on month to the 2.5% end of year figure.

% Change for VAP rolling 12 months compared to same period 12 months prior



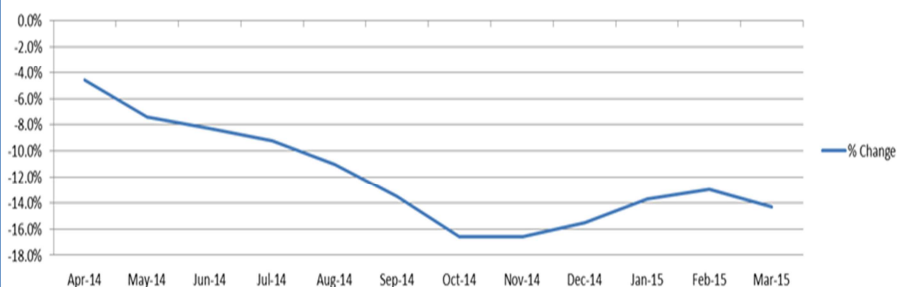
A similar pattern is evident for Violence against the person and Sexual offences, both crime categories that were particularly susceptible to under recording prior to July 2013.

% Change for Sexual Offs rolling 12 months compared to same period 12 months prior



In the case of Sexual offences the peak was a little earlier (April 2014), but the direction of travel stabilised towards the end of the year. It's likely that other factors including Operation Yewtree and the so-called 'Savile' effect also had an impact, with victims being more willing to report offences.

% Change for BD rolling 12 months compared to same period 12 months prior



Burglary dwelling was largely unaffected by the improvements in recording as very few offences would not have been recorded prior to July 2013.

Kent Police are clear that success is a reduction in recorded crime. I hold the Chief Constable to account for performance through formal governance structures, including my Governance Board and weekly meetings, as well as through informal liaison between my office and the Force and ad-hoc discussions.

My office receives and reviews performance data on a regular basis and staff within my office attend a number of Force meetings, including the Performance Management Committee which is chaired by the Deputy Chief Constable. In addition, I receive regular objective performance assessments from HMIC, and where necessary, can commission HMIC to conduct inspections into any aspect of Force performance (as I did in relation to Kent's crime recording accuracy).

Review of Engagement Strategy

I agreed to participate in the Channel 4 fly on the wall documentary 'Meet the Police Commissioner' (aired 29 May 2014) to be transparent and help people better understand the complex and challenging role of a Police and Crime Commissioner.

Unfortunately, the programme did not do this. I was acutely disappointed that there was too much emphasis on me as an individual and not enough on the work of my office and have apologised for the negative reporting and upset it caused, especially to the hard working men and women of Kent Police, who do such a fantastic job. When approached to participate in the programme I did take advice, but the final decision was mine – with the benefit of hindsight, I admit it was the wrong one.

As a consequence, I reviewed every aspect of my approach to engagement and considered where and how things might be done differently. In common with other Commissioners, my initial communication and engagement strategy centred on explaining the role. Whilst my approach continues to be focused on listening to communities, it is now also about building meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with Kent Police, partners and stakeholders. In addition, it focuses on business as usual; a more policy orientated online presence and promoting a corporate professional image through balanced local engagement/communication tailored to suit the audience.

Examples of action I have taken include:

- the creation of a corporate PCC Twitter account;
- the retiring of the Community Outreach vehicle;
- holding regular regular programmed meetings with key partners/stakeholders;
- more face-to-face briefings with officers/staff; and
- the introduction of a People Board to enable officers and staff to give their perspective on Kent Police and the issues that matter to them.

As part of their challenge and support function, the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel have discussed and endorsed my re-focused engagement strategy.

My two dominant messages to the public of Kent have been, and continue to be:

- a commitment to retaining visible, community policing as the bedrock of policing; and
- ensuring victims and witnesses are at the heart of the criminal justice system.

Public Engagement

Tackling local issues requires local knowledge. During 2014/15 I have undertaken a programme of public engagement to truly connect with the people of Kent and understand their policing issues and concerns.

Meet the Commissioner and Chief Constable events

A number of events have been held, including in Gravesend, Swanley and Sittingbourne. These events give members of the public the opportunity to ask questions of me and the Chief Constable about local policing issues.

Web Chats

The Chief Constable and I held regular live web chats enabling questions or comments about policing in Kent to be submitted and responded to immediately. The web chats also enable people to watch questions appear during the online session and see how they are answered.

Commissioner's Surgeries

I have held surgeries in Thanet, Chatham and Maidstone. These sessions are specifically for people to come and meet with me on a one to one basis to discuss personal matters.

Council Leaders

To inform my work and discuss policing across the county, I have met with the Leaders of Kent County Council and Medway Council as well as all district and borough council Leaders.

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)

Two joint meetings with the KALC have been held during the year, bringing parish representatives together to talk about my Police and Crime Plan. There has been good attendance and I am very grateful to the KALC for arranging these meetings and inviting me along. I am invited to many parish council meetings and attend when I am able to do so, but unfortunately due to diary commitments this is not always possible.

Community Engagement

As part of my statutory duty to engage with the local community, I have visited many villages and town centres across Kent. These visits offer an opportunity to talk to a wide range of people about their policing issues and concerns.

I have also visited a number of Community Safety Partnerships, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, attended exercises with Kent Search and Rescue and engaged with representatives from the National Farmers Union. In addition, I have visited the Port of Dover and Coquelles, meeting with representatives from the UK Border Force and Police Aux Frontieres who perform such a critical role in protecting our borders.

I am very proud of the groups, charities and organisations that my office has been able to support with funding, and have visited many to see the difference they make in their local communities. These include:

- Word on the Street - a project that provides after school clubs, youth clubs, homework club, school holiday activities and community events.
- Rubincon Cares - delivery of specialist services to children and young people who have been victims of crime.

Events and Conferences

In 2014/15 I attended and spoke at a broad range of conferences and community group events. These include the:

- Female Genital Mutilation Conference;
- Empowering Women Conference;
- Rotary Club - Whitstable and Chatham;
- Police Federation meeting;
- Canterbury Soroptimists;
- launch of the Children in Care Protocol;
- Community Safety Conference; and
- Disability Hate Crime Conference.

I meet regularly with the Chair of the Independent Police Advisory Group. I have also had the privilege of attending a number of events for minority or 'hard to reach' groups including the Sri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara celebrations, Youth Ngage and Lark in the Park as well as visiting the Nepalese community in Maidstone and Ashford.

I hosted a significant consultation event with representatives from local councils, Neighbourhood Watch and members of the public to debate the budget, council tax precept and future of policing in the county. With the Chief Constable and the Chair of the Crime Rural Advisory Group (Mr Michael Bax), I jointly hosted a Rural Crime Conference that saw the launch of the Kent Police Rural Strategy and Rural Task Force.

Ahead of the General Election I also held a briefing event for prospective Parliamentary candidates that gave an insight into policing in the county and developments that partner agencies are achieving by working together.

In Conclusion

Kent has been my home for over 35 years and I am passionate about ensuring it remains a safe and welcoming place to live, work and visit.

If you would like further information about my Police and Crime Plan, my current priorities or the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner please visit my website <http://www.kent-pcc.gov.uk>.