

Annual Report

2015-2016

Commissioner's Introduction

Welcome to my 2015-16 Annual Report, which provides an overview of work that has been done over the past year (April 2015 – March 2016) to deliver on the priorities in my Police and Crime Plan. At the core of my plan are 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 2015/16. Despite the financial challenges faced by Kent Police, 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.

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, anti-social behaviour and reduce repeat victimisation and offending
- Put victims and witnesses at the heart of processes
- Protect the public from harm
- Deliver value for money
- Meet national commitments for policing

Policing budget 2015/16

In 2015/16, I allocated £306.5 million for spend on policing and community safety. Of this, £300.7 million or 98% was allocated to the Force.

The final accounts will be concluded in September 2016.

Overview of Progress

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

Building on the previous two years, 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 2015/16 include:

- Kent Police being judged as one of the top performing forces in the country by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.
- The opening of Compass House in Ashford, the centre for care and advice for victims and witnesses of crime in Kent.
- The co-location of Victim Support and the Kent Police Witness Care Unit at Compass House, providing a local, tailored and individual service for victims and witnesses of crime.
- Awarding more than £280,000 in grants for specialist support services, such as therapeutic support for children and families affected by abuse and to support hate crime victims with learning disabilities and autism.
- Approving the roll-out of Body-Worn Video cameras to all frontline officers in Kent.
- Establishing a new forum called the Youth Advisory Group to engage with young people about policing issues in Kent and to inform the work of my Office.
- Increasing the pool of Independent Custody Visitors who volunteer their time to provide an insight into what goes on in police custody suites around the county.
- Chief Constable Alan Pughsley being awarded the Queen's Police Medal for Distinguished Service.
- Marking the two year anniversary of Beech House, Kent's Sexual Assault Referral Centre which provides 24 hour confidential support and help to sexual assault victims.
- Launching a co-located multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Team to enhance capacity in the fight against child sexual exploitation and to protect those most at risk.
- The ground breaking joint Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service Control Room winning a national Improvement & Efficiency Award.
- The official Kent Police and Crime Commissioner website being awarded a Quality Mark for Transparency.

Cut crime and catch criminals

Key progress areas in 2015/16

Use of technology

Preparations have continued for the Kent introduction of Athena, with implementation scheduled for autumn 2016. This ground-breaking, multi-million pound, collaboratively procured system will manage core policing business, streamline processes and save the police time.

At a time when the police budget is being squeezed, it will not only save money in the long term, but will also improve the way officers share intelligence and information so they can spend more time where they are most needed – in our communities. Designed with modern technology, Athena will replace the existing operational system, providing linked investigation management, intelligence, case management and custody. However, it is also a platform to build on, supporting the use of mobile devices and interfacing with local and national IT products.

In 2015, the programme also successfully attracted £7 million of Home Office police innovation funding to develop digital public reporting and interaction, multi-agency problem solving and advanced data analytics.

In addition to Kent, Essex and the five other 'founder' forces (Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire, Norfolk and Suffolk), Warwickshire and West Mercia also contracted the solution in 2015. Currently, Essex, Norfolk and Suffolk are operationally live with Athena.

Linked to Athena, the Force is continuing to develop 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 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.

Following a pilot of Body-Worn Video (BWV) and the submission of a business case by the Chief Constable, I approved £1.8 million to expand BWV to all frontline officers in Kent. The initial cost of providing 1,600 more cameras was £1.4 million – which included set-up costs as well as the cameras themselves – with a further £400,000 set aside to cover on-going costs for the next three years. In addition to enabling officers to record interactions with suspects just like mobile CCTV, benefits include:

- improved evidence gathering;
- reduction in bureaucracy;
- swifter justice;
- increase in early guilty pleas; and
- more appropriate sentencing.

The roll-out of BWV to frontline officers is scheduled to be completed by June 2016. It is anticipated that it will pay for itself within two years, with a reduction in the volume of complaints and the time taken to investigate complaints as a result of conversations being recorded, as well as a decrease in absences caused by police officers being hurt on duty.

The Chief Constable and I are committed to protecting the frontline and using smarter ways of working to ensure all communities across the county receive a quality service.

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.

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.

More and more criminals are exploiting the speed, convenience and anonymity of the internet to commit a diverse range of criminal activities that know no borders, either physical or virtual. Through the recently formed Cybercrime Unit, the SCD is now also building capability and leading the response to tackle this growing threat. The unit provides advice and conducts cyber security assessments for small/medium enterprises and also regularly issues crime prevention advice through media releases and social media.

I am proud of what the SCD has achieved in 2015/16. By pulling together resources from within the Directorate, across departments and working with national and local partners 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.

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

Key progress areas in 2015/16

Wider policing family

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

PCSOs are a valuable part of the Chief Constable and my joint vision to keep visible community policing at the heart of the service in Kent. That is why I'm so pleased that despite the Force having to find £8.7 million of savings next year, thanks to sensible forward planning, this will be found without cuts to frontline policing and reassuringly, all 304 PCSOs will be retained.

Wherever I go in Kent I always hear the same thing - people want to see the police where they live. PCSOs truly are the eyes and ears of local communities and they're a vital part of visible community policing. Whilst some forces have already cut PCSO numbers, as far as I'm concerned that has to be a last resort. PCSOs really are vital because, while warranted officers are required to dash about the county responding to calls, PCSOs are a constant in their communities. They get to know the people and the issues affecting their area. They are a comforting and familiar face.

Each year, Special Constables in Kent provide over 100,000 hours of policing which is a magnificent achievement. These unpaid volunteers wear a uniform, have the same powers as the Chief Constable and put themselves in harm's way like paid police officers - but all because they just want to give something back to their local communities.

However, what makes Kent's Specials 'extra special' is the fact they're not confined to some of the more mundane police officer duties. As well as local neighbourhood policing or emergency response, 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. Because there is more in it for them, each Special gets more satisfaction and is more likely to stay, or perhaps consider a move into paid policing.

Either way, the people of Kent get a better, more effective and productive service every time the Special puts their uniform on. Pride and productivity: It's a win-win. In Kent, we chose to take a different approach and it's paid off. The simple fact that Kent Specials give more hours of their time than the national average proves the investment to make their role more professional and fulfilling has been worthwhile.

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

Introduced in September 2013 to enhance engagement and make it easier for communities to access policing services, the fleet of Mobile Police Stations visit up to 360 locations each month.

With a dedicated team of PCSOs, seven day a-week coverage and location details and timings published on the Kent Police website and via Twitter, they continue to do a great job providing extra visible community policing to rural areas, and visiting crime hotspots and public events across Kent.

Youth engagement

Following a workshop in April 2015 attended by representatives who either speak on behalf of, or work with young people, I established a new forum called the Youth Advisory Group (YAG).

Around a third of Kent's population is under 25 and I'm convinced that the best way to engage with young people is to listen to, and hear what they have to say – not just talk at them. Young people are the future and they need to have a voice.

The YAG carries on the good work of my Youth Commissioner by supporting, challenging and informing the work of my Office. The purpose of the YAG is to:

- actively engage and consult on policing issues affecting young people;
- gather evidence from young people to inform policy development;
- represent young people's concerns to inform my Police and Crime Plan; and
- serve as a conduit for other organisations to access young people and engage with them.

YAG meetings are held every quarter, and members include Kent Youth County Council, Medway Youth Parliament, Pipeline Youth initiative and CXK.

During the year, the YAG has met twice. In September 2015, the meeting focused on young victims and witnesses of crime to inform the development of Compass House and victim services in the county. In January 2016, as part of a national consultation with young people, the meeting discussed radicalisation following a presentation from the UK National Counter Terrorism Policing Headquarters.

In addition to the meetings, the YAG were consulted as part of the annual Police and Crime Plan refresh, have been invited to participate in the design of the new Kent Police website and are represented on the Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG) Stop and Search Scrutiny Panel.

I do not underestimate the value and insight young people and those who work with young people can provide in ensuring communities remain safe, re-offending is reduced and trust and confidence in the police is maintained. That is why I have also continued to visit organisations and attend meetings to hear from young people first hand, including Kent Youth County Council, Medway Youth Parliament and The Prince's Trust. I am committed to engaging with young people and making sure their views are heard.

For more information on the YAG, click [here](#).

Keeping young people safe

Young people face a whole host of issues and dangers online, and we all have a duty to do what we can to help them find a way to stay safe. However, parents are often not in a position to spell out the dangers if they are not 'tech savvy'.

That is why I'm so pleased that I was able to continue to fund three staff – PCSO Ashley Gorton, PCSO Sue Kemsley and PCSO Mandy Kimpton – to work full time delivering inputs on how to keep safe online to 10 and 11 year olds around the county.

Having received training endorsed by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP), they have engaged with over 20,000 children. Whilst the visits are predominantly in primary schools, they have also taken place at libraries, Scout and Guide groups, shopping centres and Mobile Police Stations.

It is reassuring that such a large number of children have been on the receiving end of these valuable inputs, giving them the knowledge and tools they need to enjoy all the huge benefits the internet can bring without putting themselves in harm's way.

Prevent crime, ASB and reduce repeat victimisation and offending

Key progress areas in 2015/16

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 existing partners. In 2015/16, despite the reduction in police funding, I was able to honour the three year funding commitment I gave to partners in 2013/14 by utilising under-spends in my Office budget. This has helped maintain vital community safety plans without adding to the Force's savings burden.

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.

Other partners my Office has worked with include the Youth Offending Teams, Drug and Alcohol Action Teams, Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS England, the Kent Criminal Justice Board and voluntary, community and faith organisations across the county.

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

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

Managing this scheme is one of my responsibilities and during the year I was really pleased to welcome nineteen new volunteers. They completed their training in September 2015, and take the pool of Independent Custody Visitors in Kent to 55, plus three co-ordinators.

By making unannounced visits to police custody suites, speaking to detainees about their treatment, checking they've received their rights and ensuring conditions are up to standard, ICVs give my Office a real insight into what is going on behind closed doors. Each volunteer is expected to visit custody suites as often as once a month as well as attend training sessions, panel meetings and an Annual General Meeting.

Kent's Independent Custody Visitors are part of a national scheme set up in the 1980's in response to concerns about how detainees were being dealt with in police custody. Managing the scheme became a statutory duty of Police Authorities in 2002 and responsibility was subsequently transferred to elected Police and Crime Commissioners in 2012.

I am also committed to their personal development, and so when the ICVs identified a need for mental health training, I was only too happy to help. The ICVs often come into contact with people who have mental health issues and so my Office commissioned bespoke training - which included recognising signs of mental health issues, dispelling myths and improving communication with those suffering poor mental health - from the Independent Custody Visiting Association. People with mental health issues can be some of the most vulnerable to come into police custody and while there are a number of reasons they may find themselves there, it is only right that they are treated sensitively.

I'd like to thank the Independent Custody Visitors for giving up their time to help my Office hold Kent Police to account. Their findings provide reassurance that Kent Police is continuing to meet the high standards we all expect.

For further information on the Kent scheme, click [here](#).

Put victims and witnesses at the heart of processes

Key progress areas in 2015/16

Supporting victims and witnesses

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.

As Commissioner, I am committed to providing services to crime victims and witnesses that are the best that can be offered and tailored to individual needs. Crime affects everyone differently so it is only right that every victim can access the support that is right for them.

My victim services commissioning approach consists of the following:

- Compass House;
- Core Victim Service; and
- Specialist Victim Services.

Compass House

Having opened its doors in April 2015, on time and in budget, Compass House in Ashford was officially launched on 12 June 2015 at an event attended by dignitaries from across the county including the Chief Constable, the Chief Executive of Victim Support and the Victims' Commissioner, Baroness Newlove.

Compass House is the co-located hub for victim services in Kent and aims to provide a central point through which victims and witnesses can access support services whilst also encouraging those services to work together more collaboratively.

The set-up costs for Compass House were met from a one-off MOJ grant and to ensure it meets the genuine needs of people in Kent, a Victims' Panel was brought together to share ideas and real-life experiences. It even came up with the name Compass House – which reflects the fact that since the services are delivered within communities, the centre points individual victims and witnesses to whatever services they may need. Victims are not required to visit Compass House.

Victim Support, as the commissioned service provider and Kent Police's Witness Care Unit are co-located within Compass House. This co-location took place in April 2015 and has resulted in greater information sharing and joint working, which is of direct benefit to victims and witnesses. By bringing Victim Support staff/volunteers under the same roof as Witness Care Unit staff, Compass House is able to provide the best possible support to victims and witnesses of crime.

Other facilities provided at Compass House include:

- a staffed reception / welcome desk;
- support / counselling rooms for face-to-face meetings;
- two Live Link suites, for vulnerable witnesses to provide evidence at court remotely;
- private waiting room;
- training room; and
- 'hot desk' facilities.

The support rooms, training room and hot desk facilities are available for other organisations to utilise, free of charge, to meet with clients, undertake training and hold meetings, or hot desk, taking advantage of the co-location opportunities. Compass House has been commended as a blueprint for how victims' services should be delivered.

The Chief Constable and I have a shared vision for policing in the county and Compass House is a step towards putting victims where they belong, at the heart of the criminal justice system.

For more information on Compass House, click [here](#).

Core Victim Service

In April 2015, I awarded the independent charity Victim Support a 12 month contract to deliver an enhanced support service for victims and witnesses from Compass House. This was to enable my Office to gain a greater understanding of victim needs to inform the specification of a longer term contract.

Funded by a grant from the MOJ, the service has moved away from the 'one size fits all' national model and focuses on providing a tailored and individual response for victims and witnesses reporting to Kent Police, British Transport Police or Action Fraud. The service is also accessible to those who do not wish to report a crime to the police.

In addition to providing free and confidential initial telephone support, the service offers follow-up support within communities. The types of support available include:

- emotional support;
- signposting and onward referral;
- information and advice, including practical advice; and
- advocacy.

Other improvements to the service include:

- co-location of Victim Support and the Witness Care Unit at Compass House;
- calls being answered by staff in Kent instead of a regional centre;
- victims of a greater range of crime types being helped; and
- provision of support to an additional 14,000 people, with around 53,000 victims receiving help.

Following a thorough tendering process, I have now also selected Victim Support to carry on providing invaluable support to Kent's victims for at least another three years.

Under the deal, to start on 1 April 2016 and funded through an MOJ grant, Victim Support will reach out to around 75,000 victims a year. My Office has learnt a lot over the first 12 months from talking to Victim Support, partners and of course victims about the service they've been getting. We've listened, and this new contract will see Victim Support give an even better service.

Whilst Victim Support will continue to be based in Compass House, under the same roof as the Witness Care Unit, enhancements will include:

- Offering support to more victims of more crimes, particularly a broader range of victims suffering from domestic abuse.
- Using more convenient ways of keeping in touch with victims, such as text message or email, and outside office hours.
- Opening six 'Compass Points' across the county – places where victims can get face-to-face help and support.
- Pointing victims towards more specialist help, such as support for those bereaved or seriously injured after a road traffic collision.
- Offering more crime prevention advice, to prevent people becoming victims of crime again.

After the initial three years, the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner will review the service and have the opportunity to extend the deal for up to three further years.

For too long victims have been the ‘Cinderellas’ of the criminal justice system – the last people agencies thought about – when they should be the most important people. Victims deserve the very best, that is why we’ve created a locally focussed service here in Kent providing whatever support the victim needs. Without them there is no justice.

For further information on victim and witness services, click [here](#).

Specialist victim services

Whilst Victim Support provides the core support service, there is also a need to ensure appropriate specialist support services are in place, such as trauma counselling and support for sexual assault victims. These specialist services need to work in collaboration with the core support service to ensure there are effective referral pathways for victims to access the right services.

Like last year, I invited bids to deliver the following specialist services across the county:

- trauma counselling and therapeutic services;
- support for hate crime victims;
- support for children and young people who have been victims;
- support for rape and sexual assault victims; and
- specialist domestic abuse support.

After a rigorous process, I awarded more than £280,000 to nine successful applicants – receiving grants of up to £50,000 each. This included a project which offers therapeutic support for children and families affected by trauma and abuse, an award-winning service working with hearing-impaired women suffering domestic abuse and a charity that supports hate crime victims with learning disabilities and autism.

For further detail on the organisations awarded funding, click [here](#).

Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)

Kent’s SARC, Beech House, marked its two year anniversary in October 2015.

Beech House is a 24 hour service offering support and practical help to anyone in Kent and Medway, male or female, who has been a victim of sexual assault. Importantly, during such a sensitive and traumatic time, Beech House offers an environment where victims and survivors can make their own decisions about what works best for them in their own time. The service is free, confidential and victims can seek help without having to contact the police or another third party and can decide if/when they wish to report an incident. It offers immediate medical care for health needs, a forensic medical examination (if the victim wishes) and crisis support in a caring and safe environment. Victims can then be referred to other local services to receive on-going health, welfare and counselling support.

Beech House also offers a 24/7 telephone helpline, staffed by nurses, that provides signposting and immediate advice to professionals and the public.

A few years ago, Kent was in the unfortunate position of only having a small-scale and basic SARC at the very north of the county in Darent Valley Hospital. Victims of sexual assault often had to be taken out of the county to receive the care and support that they needed. It was not open 24/7 and could not handle self-referrals. The situation was nothing short of a scandal and was totally unacceptable. For the past two years Kent has had a first-class SARC, offering the widest and most complete set of services the county has ever had.

With the levels of rape and sexual offences against women, men and children continuing to rise nationally and locally, this service ensures that victims are able to access essential services as quickly as possible. The emotional and physical impact of sexual assault is significant and the psychological consequences are linked to profound long-term health issues. There is also an increased risk of suicide for abused children when they reach their mid-twenties. Over the last two years, more than 500 victims have been assisted by Beech House, with the amount of people seeking help increasing each month.

Beech House is an integral part of the wider Kent Sexual Assault Referral Services (SARS) network and is co-commissioned by myself and NHS England, with additional funding from a number of local partners. The aim is to provide a personalised approach to victims of sexual assault.

I must pay tribute to my staff, particularly my Chief Finance Officer, Sean Nolan, and NHS England for making it happen. I am very proud of Beech House and what has been achieved.

For more information on Beech House, click [here](#).

Protect the public from harm

Key progress areas in 2015/16

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Child sexual exploitation is happening in Britain, including right here in Kent. It is not new, but for too long has gone unchallenged. The horrific abuse which went on under everyone's noses in Rotherham is testament to that.

As Commissioner I recognised the need for a more joined up approach to tackling child sexual exploitation in the county and made it a priority in my Police and Crime Plan. I was worried that child victims could fall through the gaps and be forgotten about, which is why I committed £200,000 each year for the next three years - on top of resources the Force already receives - to boost capacity to fight CSE and enhance multi-agency working.

Launched under the banner 'Operation Willow', the Child Sexual Exploitation Team was set up in December 2015. The police, Kent County Council, Medway Council and the NHS are now co-located and working together with schools, GP surgeries, taxi firms, hotels and pubs/clubs to identify and help those at risk and ensure offenders are brought to justice. Robust processes have been developed to ensure they receive early notification of CSE concerns, intelligence is gathered and analysed from across all agencies and when required, there is an effective multi-agency response that has the victim at its heart.

Since its launch, the team have received over 300 calls – resulting in more than 600 pieces of intelligence. A total of 19 offenders have also been arrested, meaning a number of children in the county have been safeguarded. In addition, with funding from my Office, the team has produced a short training video for officers and staff to raise awareness of CSE, including what to look for when engaging with young people who may be at risk.

Every police force is investigating historic allegations of child abuse and working proactively with partners to uncover abuse taking place behind closed doors. Victims of sexual abuse are coming forward, they are much more confident that they will be listened to, believed and their crime investigated, often after years of personal anguish.

For too long CSE has been hidden from view. One sexual offence against a child is one too many, but what is really important is to make sure when people do speak out, that these vile crimes are properly recorded and proportionately investigated. Joined-up working is key - by the time the police become involved it's often too late.

Tackling terrorism

Tackling radicalisation and terrorism is a key concern for any Commissioner. I welcome changes made by the government this year to create a duty for a wider range of partners to help prevent people from being drawn into terrorism, particularly schools that have a key role to play in protecting children from radicalisation.

However, the terror attacks in Paris last autumn changed everything. The terror threat to Britain remains severe, but the nature of the threat has changed. As the gateway to Europe, with over 30 million people travelling through our borders annually, the county is in a unique position and Kent Police must be able to respond if the unthinkable were to happen.

We no longer have the luxury of waiting for officers to arrive from neighbouring forces. In terms of public safety, the first few hours are the most vital and Kent Police must have the capability to mount an instant, immediate response. The kind of incidents we are increasingly seeing must be quickly controlled by local firearms officers.

After Paris, the Home Secretary asked all forces to increase their firearms capability by up to 50%. That is why, as part of my public consultation on the council tax precept for 2016/17, I proposed raising an extra £1.2 million to pay for 24 of the 37 additional firearms officers the Chief Constable needs.

In total, my Office received 895 responses, with 53.2% indicating that they were willing to pay a few extra pounds a year to recruit more firearms officers. Whilst I realise this adds to the burden of each family's council tax bill, the Chief Constable and I are committed to ensuring the communities of Kent are protected from all forms of harm.

Reassuringly, on the 3/4 November 2015 I observed a 'live play' exercise that took place at Ramsgate Port as part of the Home Office National Counter Terrorism Exercise Programme. In addition to Kent Police, partner agencies involved included South East Coast Ambulance Service, Kent Fire and Rescue Service, Kent County Council, the armed forces and Local Authorities.

Human Trafficking & Modern Slavery

The Modern Slavery Act came into force in 2015, and it is estimated that more than 10,000 people are victims of slavery in all sorts of communities across the UK.

It is also a fact that in Kent there are young women who have been trafficked into the country to work in the sex trade. When I visited Kent Police and UK Border Agency officers based at Coquelles, I personally came face-to-face with this vile trade in human beings, witnessing 20 girls and young women being found in the back of a lorry bound for Britain.

That is why I signed up to the National Anti-Trafficking and Modern Slavery Network which is an agreement amongst Commissioners to work more closely together and share ideas. Human Trafficking and Modern Day Slavery are new and emerging challenges, but through effective partnership working they can be identified and tackled to ensure women like those I came face-to-face with at Coquelles get the service and support they deserve.

Deliver value for money

Key progress areas in 2015/16

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC)

I am always happy to receive reports and reviews from HMIC – I use their Inspectors as independent examiners of Kent Police. As such, they are a very valuable resource.

PEEL is a HMIC annual assessment of police forces in England and Wales. Forces are assessed on their effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy. They are judged as outstanding, good, requires improvement or inadequate based on inspection findings, analysis and professional judgment.

Therefore, I am very proud that based on this year's PEEL assessment, HMIC has judged Kent Police to be one of the top performing forces in the country.

The Force was assessed as 'Good' for Efficiency, 'Good' for Effectiveness and 'Outstanding' for Legitimacy - the only Force in the country to achieve this judgement (see below).



For the first time HMIC also assessed leadership across the Force. This led to a narrative (as opposed to judgement) that confirmed Kent Police is 'a well-led Force where chief officers have communicated a clear and compelling sense of future plans and priorities that the workforce understands'.

In summarising Kent's performance in 2015, HM Inspector of Constabulary Zoe Billingham said:

'I congratulate Kent Police on its performance in keeping people safe and reducing crime.'

The Force works well with partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour. The quality of crime investigation is good and the Force works well to stop re-offending. The Force is good at disrupting organised criminality...

The Force has demonstrated robust financial management and has responded well to the financial challenges it has faced. It understands demand on its services and matches resources to meet demand. I am particularly pleased by the Force's commitment to continuous improvement, demonstrated through its approach to reducing demand...

I commend the way in which the chief officers have created an organisational culture that is extremely positive and supports the legitimacy of the Force. The care given to the wellbeing of the workforce is evident. Members of the workforce feel empowered to challenge decisions perceived to be unethical; and complaints and misconduct allegations are dealt with robustly and fairly. The strength of the culture within the organisation is reflected in the outstanding way in which the Force engages with the people of Kent...

HMIC's assessment of Kent Police's leadership was also endorsed by a review earlier in the year led by Chief Superintendent Irene Curtis, President of the Police Superintendents' Association and commissioned by the Home Secretary into the use of targets in policing. Whilst finding the police service in general needs to tackle a culture of narrow target-chasing and box-ticking, it highlighted and praised the exceptional work of Kent Police in moving to a culture based on 'doing the right thing and providing a quality service'. The report states that the Chief Constable has 'changed the performance culture, but kept the culture of performing'.

Whilst I always believed it to be the case, to be assessed as one of the top-performing forces in the country by HMIC is music to my ears. It is testament to the great work of Chief Constable Alan Pughsley, his officers and staff. I'd like to pay tribute to all their hard work.

The Chief Constable and I have a simple message to everyone about policing in Kent – put simply; it is that the Force will give a quality service, putting victims and witnesses at the heart of everything it does. Indeed, HMIC and Chief Superintendent Curtis quite clearly recognise that this commitment is ‘mainstreamed’ within Kent Police.

For further information on Kent’s PEEL Assessment, click [here](#).

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.

Collaboration with Essex Police continues to provide benefits operationally and in terms of efficiencies. I was particularly pleased when our joint Estate Services won the Public Sector Sustainability Award 2015 for the most sustainable public sector organisation (emergency services). The Awards are run by the Institute of Public Sector Estates Management and acknowledge great achievements in the public sector.

The Chief Constable and I have also agreed to explore further opportunities within the Eastern Region, particularly as a number of the forces are moving to Athena in the future. In January 2016, at the Eastern Region Alliance Summit which includes formal membership of the Chief Constable and me, all 14 Chief Constables and Commissioners confirmed their unanimous support for a ‘Seven Force Strategic Collaboration Programme’.

The overarching aims of the programme are to deliver enhanced:

- Savings;
- Efficiency;
- Value for Money; and
- Public Service.

Efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability and providing the best possible service to the public will be at the heart of all decisions relevant to this Programme. Any savings accrued (be they cash or time savings) through the programme will be returned to respective Chief Constables/Commissioners to utilise in their own county in accordance with local priorities and Police and Crime Plans.

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

Award for Control Room

I was delighted when the ground-breaking joint Kent Police and Kent Fire and Rescue Service Control Room was named Fire and Rescue Project of the Year at the Improvement & Efficiency Awards 2016, run by the national Improvement & Efficiency Social Enterprise (iESE).

As Kent’s Commissioner one of my key roles is to make sure Kent Police represents value for money. By working with partners and other forces the Chief Constable and I have managed to sensibly save millions of pounds – and protect frontline policing as a result. All public services have had to endure years of cuts and whilst several police forces up and down the country have announced plans to work more closely with the fire and ambulance service – in Kent, we’ve been at it for years. I’m a champion for collaboration and this is a perfect example of how successful it can be.

In what was Britain’s first joint police and fire control room, KFRS staff moved into the Kent Police control room back in March 2012. Then, in 2014, KFRS and the Force began using the same IT system to enable closer working and to save even more money.

When you talk about the 'frontline', people automatically think of uniformed officers on the streets but we must not forget the Control Room staff who are frequently the first point of contact. The call handlers do a fantastic job dealing with one million calls each year, often from vulnerable or distressed people. This award is testament to their hard work and the determination of many people in Kent Police and KFRS.

Meet national commitments for policing

Key progress areas in 2015/16

Operation Stack

All of Great Britain benefits from trade with the continent, so it stands to reason that the nation as a whole should shoulder the burden when cross-channel traffic is disrupted for whatever reason.

That is why I called on the Government to reimburse the extra costs of policing Operation Stack from January to October 2015 – in total £576,925. Normal policing costs were not claimed for, only extra costs such as the salaries of officers from other forces who came to Kent Police's aid, Kent Police officers' overtime and National Insurance costs, printing of leaflets for lorry drivers and hiring of refrigerated lorries to provide food and water.

I also personally pointed out to senior Home Office officials that the figure would not meet their funding stream threshold criteria, but was assured that there was another clause – namely payment at the Minister's discretion.

To my utter surprise, the Home Secretary turned down my request, reiterating that the amount claimed for – less than £600,000 – did not meet the threshold criteria for the funding stream suggested by her own officials, who always knew this to be the case.

Not only was this very disappointing, but as a matter of principle it's simply not fair. Whilst Kent Police's professional and effective response, with partners, helped to minimise disruption across the county, Operation Stack is undoubtedly a national problem, and it is not right that policing in Kent is put under strain to deal with it. I firmly believe that local taxpayers should not have to pick up the bill for the inability of others to solve this problem.

Unfortunately, there is no other funding stream to access so, when Operation Stack happens again, we shall be in exactly the same position where Kent taxpayers are expected to pick up the extra policing costs for a national emergency.

Other 2015/16 highlights

Award for Chief Constable

During the year, I was delighted when Chief Constable Alan Pughsley was awarded the Queen's Police Medal for Distinguished Service.

When I appointed Alan as Chief Constable in January 2014 I knew I had made the right choice. In his long career he has always given his best, and as Chief Constable here in Kent he has done a great job in changing the culture within the Force, doing away with targets and instilling a culture focused on correctly recording every crime and delivering a quality service which puts victims and witnesses first.

Appointment of Chief of Staff

Under the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act, Police and Crime Commissioners are required to appoint 'a person to be the head of the commissioner's staff'.¹

¹ Schedule 1, 6 (1)(a) - the Act refers to the position as the Commissioner's Chief Executive, but there is no requirement for the post to be formally titled Chief Executive.

My Chief of Staff resigned and left the Office in May 2015 to work for the Border Force. As a result, I advertised the post internally as a temporary appointment (until September 2016). At the time, the outcome of the general election – and therefore the future of Police and Crime Commissioners – was not known. Additionally, with another round of Police and Crime Commissioner elections scheduled for May 2016, I didn't want to tie the hands of any potential new Commissioner. In light of the possibility of it being a time-limited role, recruiting internally also had the advantage of appointing an individual with extensive policing knowledge who could 'hit the ground running'.

Following a comprehensive, fair and merit based selection process, and unanimous support from the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel, I appointed Mr Adrian Harper on the following grounds:

- A clear and unquestionable ethical approach, evidenced by his work as the Force Crime and Incident Registrar.
- 32 years' experience as a police officer and member of police staff.
- Experience dealing with representatives at the highest level in Government, and HMIC.
- Working closely in partnerships to deliver policing success.
- Managing a staff of 900 and a budget of £46 million.
- Demonstrable commitment to the training and mentoring of staff and officers at all levels.
- A keen understanding of the independence needed, and the political awareness required, to manage the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Adrian commenced as Chief of Staff on 1 June 2015.

Commissioning workshops

To help increase knowledge, and support the development of new and existing skills amongst the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector, my Office hosted workshops covering commissioning, bid writing and scoring, working with commissioners and outcome monitoring.

In addition, a workshop was also held for statutory partners to support their knowledge of commissioning, managing grant applications and monitoring.

All the workshops were well attended and positive feedback was received from a number of attendees:

'The presentation gave clarity to the tendering process and helped to narrow down exactly what commissioners will be looking for in any bid'.

'It was very professionally put together and helped me understand the commissioning landscape much more clearly'.

Website award

It's really important to me that my Office is open and transparent and that the people of Kent can find information easily. I was therefore delighted when the official Kent Police and Crime Commissioner website was awarded CoPaCC's Quality Mark for Transparency.

CoPaCC is an influential and independent body which monitors the activity of Commissioners. To date, its Quality Mark has been awarded to 24 of the 43 Police and Crime Commissioner websites, placing Kent among the most open and transparent.

Presenting the Quality Mark to my Office, CoPaCC founder Bernard Rix said:

'This certificate acknowledges the work of the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner's staff in providing information to the public, which is a statutory requirement. When we check websites for transparency, in some cases we have to look hard to make sure the information is there, but in Kent they've done a great job in providing it and making it easy for us, and the public, to find'.

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.

In addition to my Chief of Staff and myself, the Committee consists 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.

During the year the Committee met twice. In addition to discussing outcomes from the Force internal Ethics Committee, topics considered by the Committee include:

- Legitimate and lawful use of Taser.
- The on-going culture change programme.
- Officer and staff discipline process.
- Proposed Government changes to the police complaints process and role of Commissioner.
- HMIC inspection findings and recommendations.

Performance

In spring 2013 I used my new powers as Police and Crime Commissioner to commission HMIC to conduct an in-depth inspection of Kent Police's crime recording practices. They found that 1 in 10 crimes were not being recorded. This was not acceptable to the Chief Constable or me, or, more importantly, to the people of Kent. Some victims were being badly let down.

To the Force's credit, it took HMIC's findings on the chin and got on with putting things right. The Chief Constable and I oversaw a radical culture shift – from reaching numerical targets to simply giving a quality service and 'doing the right thing' for victims of crime.

Following the findings in Kent, HMIC undertook a national inspection of crime recording accuracy which found vast differences between forces. In fact, nationally, only about 80% of crimes are recorded – with varying degrees of accuracy between forces, ranging from 60% upwards.

Putting things right in Kent was never going to happen overnight, for a while the number of crimes increased significantly. Kent is over that now, but other forces are still going through a difficult transition.

Follow up HMIC inspections and regular internal audits have consistently found Kent Police is recording 96% of crimes correctly. HMIC has also said the public can have faith in Kent's crime figures and I believe that the Force probably has the most reliable crime statistics in the country. However, this does pose one question; how can Kent – where nearly every crime gets on the books – be fairly compared with other forces that are under recording?

The most recent recorded crime data published by the Office for National Statistics reported on the 12 months to September 2015². Compared to the previous 12 months, this showed that while crime increased nationally, crime in Kent decreased.

Latest provisional Kent data - to February 2016 - shows a slight increase in recorded crime. In particular, and mirroring the national trend, there is an increase in violent crime and sexual offences. The increase in violent crime predominantly relates to offences where there is minor or no injury, including non-domestic incidents between friends, and offences such as harassment that can be committed online. Domestic abuse also represents around a third of all violent crime and the Force is working hard not only to safeguard victims of domestic abuse, but also adult abuse, child abuse, child sexual exploitation and hate crime. More than any other crime category, the level of sexual offences reflects the willingness of victims to report historic events to the police. Factors including Operation Yewtree and the so-called 'Savile' effect continue to positively influence the confidence of victims to report historic offences.

I'm reassured therefore, that an important reason for the slight overall increase in crime is that more victims are coming forward to report historic offences and offences going on behind closed doors. Whilst the Chief Constable and I are never complacent, one victim of crime is one too many, the fact that vulnerable people are getting the help they need can only be a good thing.

I continue to hold the Chief Constable to account for performance through formal governance structures, including my Governance Board and weekly meetings, as well as informal liaison and ad-hoc discussions between my Office and the Force. My Office routinely receives and reviews performance data and staff attend a number of Force meetings. In addition, I receive regular objective assessments from HMIC, and can commission HMIC to conduct inspections (as I did in relation to crime recording).

Recognising that in times of austerity, it can be easy to forget the Force's greatest asset, its people, my People Board provides an opportunity for me to hear directly from officers and staff about morale and wellbeing within the organisation and how the Mission, Vision and Values are being engrained.

Whilst I'm proud of the fact that Kent Police was the first force to tackle under-recording and I'm pleased with the Force's performance and progress, I am never complacent. No-one deserves to be the victim of crime and I continue to shine a light on victims and seek assurance from the Chief Constable that crimes are being properly recorded, properly investigated and victims are at the heart of the service.

Public Engagement

Tackling local issues requires local knowledge. During 2015/16 I undertook an extensive programme of public engagement to connect with the people of Kent and understand their policing issues and concerns, including:

Web Chats

The Chief Constable and I have 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.

As part of my commitment to engage with young people and involve them in policing, I also hosted a web chat with Assistant Chief Constable Shiner specifically targeting 16-24 year olds.

² 'Crime in England and Wales: Year ending September 2015' – published 21 January 2016.

Commissioner's Surgeries

I have held three surgeries in my Office at Kent Police HQ. These sessions are specifically for people to come and meet with me on a one to one basis to discuss personal matters.

Elected representatives

To inform my work and discuss policing across the county, I have met with a number of elected representatives from Kent County Council and Medway Council as well as district and borough councils.

Kent Association of Local Councils (KALC)

I attended two joint meetings with the KALC, bringing parish representatives together from across the county. I was also invited to a number of parish council meetings and attended when I was able to do so, but unfortunately due to diary commitments it was not always possible.

Online consultation

In addition to consulting on the refresh of my Police and Crime Plan, and the proposed council tax precept, my Office ran the 'Have your say' survey to find out about victims and witnesses' experiences of the criminal justice system in Kent.

Community Engagement Visits

As part of my statutory duty to engage with local communities to discuss policing, I have visited locations, organisations and community groups right across Kent, including:

- Fremlin Walk
- Dover Community Hub 'One Stop Shop'
- Ashford Designer Outlet
- Swale Advocacy Partnerships
- Rotary Club – Ashford
- Swale Rural Forum
- Deal Civic Society
- Lydd Residents
- Thanet & District Reform Synagogue
- Dover Partnership Against Crime
- Hawkhurst Speedwatch
- Aspire2b

I visited a number of Community Safety Partnerships (including the Combined Community Safety Team), Maidstone Crown Court Witness Service and Beech House, the Sexual Assault Referral Centre.

In light of Kent Police being criticised for the policing of the violent protests in Dover at the end of January 2016, I visited Dover in the immediate aftermath to speak to residents and shop keepers. I can honestly say that whilst they were upset and angry with the protestors, no one had a bad word to say about Kent Police or how the protest was policed.

Events and Conferences

In 2015/16 I attended a broad range of events and conferences including:

- The Kent County Show
- The Medway Try Angle Awards
- Kent People's Trust re-launch - Safer Kent
- Home Office – Police Reform Summit
- Kent Community Safety Conference - Dementia
- Blue Light Innovation Summit
- National Police Air Service Event

I have met regularly with the Chair of the Independent Police Advisory Group (IPAG) and presented at their Annual Forum. I also had the privilege of attending a number of events for minority or 'hard to reach' groups including a Disability Hate Crime Conference and Lark in the Park, as well as engaging with the Nepalese community following the devastating earthquake in Nepal.

I hosted a Policing in Austerity conference with representatives from local councils, community groups and members of the public to debate the budget, proposed council tax precept and future of policing in the county. With John Taylor, Chairman of the Business Crime Advisory Group, I also jointly hosted a Business Crime Conference attended by community leaders and dozens of business owners. With more business taking place online, the theme was emerging crime types, for example cyber-crime, and what action Kent's businesses can take to protect themselves.

I had the pleasure of launching Kent Police's Young Digital Leaders' Day, where around 100 Year 6 pupils from across Kent were invited to Kent Police College to mark international Safer Internet Day. I also had the privilege of watching a short play put on by sixth form students from The Robert Napier School tackling the brave and sensitive subject of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). What was striking was how the teenagers shone a powerful spotlight on a complex issue with no props or costumes.

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 priorities or the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner please visit my [website](#).