

From: Matthew Scott, Kent Police and Crime Commissioner
To: Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel
Subject: Crime Data Integrity, recorded crime & crime outcomes
Date: 27 September 2018



INTRODUCTION:

1. As outlined in the 'Safer in Kent' Plan, tackling crime and anti-social behaviour are issues that residents and local communities care deeply about. The PCC expects Kent Police to have the right resources with the right skills to investigate, and where possible, bring to justice those who harm individuals and businesses. To do so, there is also an implicit expectation that when a crime is reported, it is recorded accurately.
2. Further to previous reports submitted to the Panel, this paper updates on Kent Police's next Crime Data Integrity inspection, and provides an overview of the latest recorded crime and outcome data.
3. It also outlines how the PCC, in discharging his statutory responsibilities, effectively holds the Chief Constable to account for these matters.

CRIME DATA INTEGRITY:

4. On 20 July 2017, the Panel received a report setting out Kent Police's record in relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS)¹ Crime Data Integrity inspections.
5. For reference, a summary is provided below:
 - February 2013 – the previous PCC commissioned an inspection to determine whether the people of Kent could have confidence in the Force's crime figures. HMICFRS found that Kent Police was recording approximately 90% of crime correctly and had a target-driven culture. Their judgment was that 'appreciably more needed to be done before the people of Kent could be confident that the crime and resolution figures published by the Force were as accurate as they should be'.
 - January 2014 - interim report published that found Kent Police was recording 96% of crime accurately and had also moved away from a target-driven performance culture to one focused on outcomes and quality of service. Their judgment was that the Force had made significant improvements, but they needed to be sustained over a longer period of time before the people of Kent could be confident in the crime and resolution figures published by the Force.
 - November 2014 - third inspection report published which found that Kent Police was recording 96% of crime accurately. HMICFRS also found no evidence to suggest any remaining pressure to meet numerical performance targets, concluding the people of Kent could have confidence in Kent Police's crime figures, although the Force needed to maintain focus and continue making improvements.
 - June 2017 – the most recent inspection report found that Kent Police had not maintained the standards of accuracy reported in November 2014. Based on an examination of crime reports, HMICFRS estimated that the Force failed to record over 24,000 reported crimes each year; representing a recording rate of 83.6%. They made seven recommendations and identified one area for improvement (AFI).
6. The PCC considered the June 2017 findings totally unacceptable, and stated at the time:
"I welcome HMIC's independent report on this matter as it has highlighted some serious issues that need to be resolved as a matter of urgency.

What this shows is that really vulnerable victims of crime were not always getting the service that they should rightly expect... I will continue to monitor progress closely."
7. The Chief Constable also apologised to any victim who did not receive the service they were entitled to and approved a comprehensive improvement plan. This has resulted in the Force implementing processes to effectively monitor data integrity, and making considerable progress against all the recommendations and the AFI. So much so, that in January 2018, the Deputy Chief Constable wrote to HMICFRS asking that they be discharged.

¹ Formerly Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC).

8. On Tuesday 28 August the Force received formal notification from HMICFRS that the next Crime Data Integrity inspection would commence on Monday 1 October 2018 for two weeks with fieldwork undertaken from Monday 29 October 2018 for three days.

RECORDED CRIME:

9. In the twelve months to July 2018, all crime types experienced an increase compared to the previous 12 month period. Overall there was a 20% increase in victim based crime (27,281 more crimes), with the Force recording 160,769 crimes in total.

10. In summary:

- The increase was predominantly driven by a 38% rise in violent crime (22,414 more offences), with 80,929 crimes in total.
- Theft and handling increased by 7% (2,129 more offences), with 32,604 crimes in total.
- Vehicle crime increased by 5% (552 more offences), with 10,732 crimes in total; theft of motor vehicle increased by 61 to 3,247 crimes, and theft from motor vehicle by 491, to 7,484 crimes.
- Criminal damage increased by 7% (1,449 more offences), with 22,651 crimes in total.

11. Other crime types experienced lesser increases, and were affected in part by improved recording processes, but also increased confidence to report, and alternative methods of informing the police, such as online reporting and third party reporting.

12. Levels of malicious communications, which includes some offences of 'sexting' and revenge porn, increased by 124.7% (+4,960 offences); a total of 8,939 recorded offences.

13. Violent crime covers a varied and broad spectrum of offending which is complex in both investigation and crime recording. It is made up of 55 different Home Office crime codes and divided into 3 separate categories:

- violence against the person (VAP) increased by 20,496 offences, with 72,525 crimes in total;
- sexual offences increased by 1,578 offences, with 6,721 crimes in total;
- robbery increased by 340 offences, with 1,683 crimes in total.

In the twelve month period to July 2018, violent crime accounted for 42% of all recorded crime in Kent.

14. VAP accounts for almost 90% of violent crime and contains 30 Home Office crime codes which can be broadly categorised as violence without injury, violence with injury and stalking and harassment.

15. The increase in violent crime was largely due to increases in violence without injury and stalking and harassment. Violence without injury accounted for 48% of VAP offences, and saw a 38% (+9,607) increase. Violence 'without injury' includes common assault, malicious communications, child cruelty and threats to kill. Stalking and harassment saw an increase of 96% (+8,491).

16. There was a 13% (+2,390) increase in 'with injury' VAP. This category includes the most serious violent crimes such as murder, assault with intent to cause serious harm and attempted murder. The increase was predominately influenced by assault with intent to cause serious harm.

17. Whilst the VAP increase appears high, there were a number of recording and process changes, including:

- Third-party reporting, especially within areas of domestic abuse and hate crime;
- Crime data integrity;
- Inclusion of malicious communications;
- Modern slavery which was introduced in 2015 and has subsequently been made a Force priority.

18. The Force recognises these changes positively regardless of whether they lead to an increase in the number of crimes recorded; they allow greater safeguarding opportunities and increased understanding of strategic issues in order to align resources and priorities appropriately.

19. The increase in precept has allowed the Force to increase resources and tactical activity, including:

- Divisional interventions and pursuit of gangs, including county lines, that present the most risk;
- Investment of more officers into Local Policing teams;
- Additional capacity within each division to support and coordinate the partnership response to organised crime groups.

CRIME OUTCOMES:

20. The Home Office introduced the outcomes framework in April 2013. Since then it has developed to cover a broader range of outcome types for police forces to use. Whilst every crime will eventually have an outcome, this may take some time; those under active investigation will not have an outcome assigned to them.²
21. In the twelve months to July 2018, the Force recorded 44,431 more outcomes than the previous 12 month period; representing a 30% increase.
22. Whilst the overall number of people arrested fell by 1%, arrests for violent crime increased by 3% (775 arrests), sexual offences by 16% (331 arrests) and public order offences by 38% (977 arrests). This is in line with the Force's ethos of targeting resources towards the most vulnerable.
23. When a suspect is identified for an offence, officers will seek to bring about the best outcome for the victim. Whilst 41% of crimes had a suspect identified, there are a number of reasons why this may not have necessarily resulted in them being charged. The best outcome is not always a prosecution and aligned to the Safer in Kent Plan, the Force is committed to ensuring victims are at the heart of everything it does and that their wishes, which may include not supporting a prosecution, are taken into account.
24. Other reasons why a suspect may not be prosecuted include:
 - Being below the age of criminal responsibility;
 - The victim, witness or suspect being too ill to give evidence; and
 - Insufficient evidence to prove the suspect committed the offence.
25. It is important to note that one in every six crimes recorded in Kent relates to domestic abuse; a crime where the suspect will be known to the victim. Rolling year figures to July 2018 showed an increase of 8,978 crimes of domestic abuse, as a result, the number of crimes with an identified suspect also increased.
26. In 2013/14, 10% of all crime was domestic abuse related (1 in 10); in 2017/18 the proportion was 16% (1 in 6). As a result of this, the outcome profile has changed with a larger proportion of victims reporting domestic abuse in order to obtain safeguarding and referrals to third party partnership support rather than prosecution.
27. Overall, the Force is charging more offenders for DA, but proportionally, due to the increase in crimes and more accurate recording, the percentage has decreased. Additionally the focus on safeguarding and vulnerability of victims ensures they are at the centre of the investigation, and where there is a strong desire not to support a prosecution but to access support, a different outcome will sometimes be more appropriate.
28. Over the last year, the number of offenders charged in relation to DA has increased by over 1,100 compared with 2013/14, a 52% increase. In respect of the outcome "victim does not support a prosecution" the proportion of DA crime has remained relatively stable at 43% in 2014 compared with 48% in 2018.
29. Changes in the recording process have also led to an increase in other offences where a lack of evidence is the predominant outcome, such as common assault and public disorder. This has therefore had an impact on the total number of crimes that are filed without a prosecution.
30. Overall, in the 12 months to July 2018, the Force charged 2.2% fewer people than in the previous 12 month period. This equates to 130 fewer charges. The largest reductions in the number of people charged were seen in shoplifting (-136 charges), criminal damage (-65 charges) and drug offences (-55 charges). There was however an increase in VAP (+69 charges, primarily in relation to stalking and harassment).
31. The outcome 'Investigation Complete – No Suspect Identified' has fallen by 3.4%, meaning more crimes have a suspect identified. That said, suspect details can be scant, often just a description or a first name which limits investigative opportunities. This is reflected in the outcomes of 'Evidential Difficulties Prevent Action' which has increased by 2.1%. Evidential difficulties can include only having a basic description of a suspect such as gender and height, no CCTV opportunities, no witnesses or just one person's word against another with no corroborating evidence.

² Further information on police outcomes can be found [here](#).

HOLDING TO ACCOUNT:

32. One of the principle ways the PCC holds the Chief Constable to account is through the quarterly Performance and Delivery Board.
33. Open to Panel Members and the public, on a non-participating basis, the meeting is chaired by the PCC and papers are submitted by the force in advance and published [here](#). The Chief Constable is required to attend the meeting in order to present and discuss the papers, and answer questions about delivery of the Safer in Kent Plan and policing generally in the county.
34. Initially a paper in its own right, and now included within the 'Safer in Kent Plan: Delivery & Performance' paper, the Force has regularly submitted comprehensive updates on crime data integrity. This has included substantive updates on action taken, governance and the latest crime data accuracy position. Indeed, at the most recent meeting held on 31 May 2018, the Chief Constable said the compliance rate was around 92%, and that if HMICFRS were to re-inspect now, he was confident that they would come to the same conclusion.
35. The governance framework around crime and outcomes is well established, with the Office of the PCC (OPCC) having:
- access to internal Force data, as well as external data, such as the quarterly [ONS Crime in England and Wales Statistical Bulletins](#); and
 - a Research Officer who can extract data from Force systems, and is able to provide analysis and interpretation to identify areas of specific interest.
- However, within the Safer in Kent Plan, the PCC makes it clear that progress will not be judged on stipulated numerical targets, but will instead consider other feedback, including HMICFRS' reports and other independent publications.
36. In addition to the Chief Executive attending the Force Performance Management Committee where the Deputy Chief Constable rigourously challenges performance internally, at the 31 May Performance and Delivery Board, the Force provided an update on recorded crime, with a particular focus on violent crime.
37. At the time of writing, the next Performance and Delivery Board is scheduled for 26 September; the Force has included the latest recorded crime and outcome data in the 'Safer in Kent Plan: Delivery & Performance' paper, and the Chief Constable is expected to provide further commentary at the meeting.
38. The PCC has, and will also continue to hold the Chief Constable to account via their regular 1:1 meetings which are held in the OPCC, and allow discussion of a wide variety of subjects, including significant operational matters and delivery of the Safer in Kent Plan.
39. Linked to the Government's [Serious Violence Strategy](#), the PCC is also bringing a wide range of stakeholders together to better understand the causes of violent crime in Kent and agree ways in which it can be prevented and tackled.
40. The year-long 'Violence Reduction Challenge' has a core steering group which is chaired by the PCC, with senior representation from the Force, National Crime Agency, Kent Fire & Rescue Service, SECamb, Kent County Council and Medway Council. It also has a larger advisory panel made up of interested parties which meets in public. Both groups are tasked with assessing the reality of violent crime in Kent and looking at how the Force and partners can most effectively work together to address the issues raised.