

Making Kent Safer

Annual Report 2022 -2023



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Commissioner's Introduction

Welcome to my Annual Report which looks back at the 2022/23 financial year, my sixth year in office.

In December I was delighted to appoint Tim Smith as Chief Constable. Tim was selected as my preferred candidate following a thorough selection process to replace his predecessor Alan Pughsley QPM. Tim has already made changes to how policing is delivered in the county, and I am determined to provide him with the resources he needs to make Kent safer by ensuring the force goes from strength to strength.

Thanks to your contributions via the council tax precept, and the Government's three-year uplift programme, there are now more police officers than ever before in Kent. At the end of March 2023, Kent Police had 4,203 officers; 1,021 more than when I came into office in spring 2016. The force did an amazing job recruiting in a tough job market and I want to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved.

The force has invested over 900 officers to work in areas specifically investigating offences related to violence against women and girls, such as domestic abuse and rape. It has also introduced Proactive Domestic Abuse Teams and a Domestic Abuse Hub which utilises video technology to virtually secure evidence and safeguard victims.

The role of Police and Crime Commissioner covers a wide range of duties across policing, crime, criminal justice and community safety, but none is more important than being the public's voice. I have continued to engage with residents and businesses, listening to what they have to say and holding the Chief Constable to account.

In this capacity, it became clear during the year that a large proportion of 101 calls were either not being answered or it was taking a long time. I raised this with the Chief Constable and am pleased to report the force took immediate action which led to significant improvements. I am reassured this performance has been maintained and there is now a longer-term plan around managing public contact in the future.

As Chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board, one of the biggest challenges continues to be the backlog in cases. Despite efforts by criminal justice partners and engagement with Ministers, caseload numbers remain unacceptably high. Victims and witnesses should not have to wait months, or years, for their case to be heard in court.

With the support of my office, I was successful in securing additional funding for my commissioning budget of £3.5m. This enabled me to provide further support to victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse and to help organisations manage the increased demand due to delays in the justice system.

I am very conscious of the increases in cost of living and will always do my best to ensure that Kent taxpayers get value for money for the contributions they make. I have continued to work with both Kent Police and the Government to help mitigate the cost pressures that policing faces.

Finally, I would like to thank every Kent Police officer, Police Community Support Officer, member of staff and volunteer for their tireless efforts during 2022/23. My thanks also to the staff in my office for their hard work and support to me as your elected Police and Crime Commissioner.

Matthew Scott

Kent Police and Crime Commissioner

Making Kent Safer Plan

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

For me, consultation commenced in the lead up to the May 2021 PCC election as I developed the Manifesto commitments upon which I was re-elected. Having been re-elected though, with circa 1.9 million people living in the county, I was keen to encourage further feedback to inform my Police and Crime Plan. Therefore, in autumn 2021 I conducted a survey to reach out to as many Kent communities as possible.

A total of 2,848 responses were received and the following is a precis of the results:

Q2. How safe do you feel where you live, on a scale of 1 to 10? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)

- Respondents felt 7.0 / 10 safe where they live

Q3. Have you been a victim of crime in Kent in the last year?

- 16.8% indicated 'Yes'

Q4. If so, how satisfied were you with the service from Kent Police? (1 = very unsatisfied / 10 = very satisfied)

- On average victims rated the service 4.3 / 10

Q7. Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important?

- Respondents could select up to six issues from a pre-defined list of 22; the top five were:
 1. Sexual offences, incl. rape
 2. Serious violence, incl. gangs / weapon offences
 3. Child sexual exploitation
 4. Burglary / Robbery
 5. Anti-social behaviour

Q9. To what extent do you feel safe on the roads where you live?

- 21.2% felt either unsafe or very unsafe

Q11. To what extent do you agree that offences which occur on the roads require more enforcement?

- 76.5% strongly agreed or agreed

This formed only one element of the consultation; it also took account of the results of other surveys, correspondence received by the Office of the PCC (OPCC), feedback from engagement events, emerging local threats and national guidance.

In light of my Manifesto commitments and personal views, feedback from surveys and the national and local context, I developed the 'Making Kent Safer Plan – April 2022 to March 2025'. Whilst committed to refreshing it each year, in principle it sets the priorities for Kent Police, partners and the OPCC, as well as the overall strategic direction of policing and community safety in the county for the next three years.

The Making Kent Safer Plan was considered and supported - with a couple of minor amends - by the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel at their meeting on 2 February 2022. It was published on 1 April 2022.

At its core is integrity and transparency. As an elected PCC, the public rightly expects the highest standards of behaviour from me, therefore strong ethics, integrity and transparency must be at the heart of all I do. From Chief Constables to police officers on the street, there is also a need to strengthen public trust and confidence, with the importance of integrity and transparency in policing never greater.

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

Crime is important no matter where it takes place – urban, rural or coastal communities: Kent Police must have the right resources in the right place so every crime can be investigated appropriately and proportionately, with the right outcome secured for the victim.

Victims and witnesses at the heart of everything we do: victims and witnesses must feel confident to report crime to Kent Police; when they do, they must be treated with care, respect and dignity and have confidence in the criminal justice system.

Ensure that vulnerable people and those suffering mental ill health get support from the right agency: through multi-agency working Kent Police and the OPCC will work to reduce demand on policing and ensure the vulnerable or those suffering mental ill health receive the right help from the right agency at the right time.

The plan then outlines the priorities I have set the Chief Constable and myself over the next three years:

My priorities for the Chief Constable:

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

My commitments as PCC:

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

The plan also recognises that the priorities do not sit in isolation but must be delivered in the context of national expectations, and in particular:

- The Strategic Policing Requirement
- National Crime and Policing Measures
- Policing Vision 2025
- Legislation

My priorities for the Chief Constable to deliver

Considering the enormity and complexity of policing across the county, from numerous possible options, the following have been selected to illustrate how the Chief Constable has delivered on my priorities.

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

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

- Levels of recorded crime and ASB:

	April to March		% change	
	2021/22	2022/23		
Victim based crime	154,608	150,153	▼	-2.9
Violent crime	91,471	84,302	▼	-7.8
Sexual offences	6,886	6,583	▼	-4.4
ASB	32,640	27,617	▼	-15.4

- Formed in February 2019, the Chief Constables' Crime Squad is a dedicated team of officers which investigate serious acquisitive crime offences, including burglary and robbery. In 2022/23, the Crime Squad executed 171 warrants, made more than 260 arrests, laid in excess of 550 charges and secured 345 years in court sentences.

Example: The Crime Squad investigated an aggravated burglary offence in Sevenoaks where the offenders entered a house by force, armed with firearms and weapons and caused injuries to those inside whilst stealing money and items of property. Within three weeks the officers identified, conducted warrants and secured charges against seven individuals who originated from different parts of London.

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

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

- Between October 2021 and March 2022, Kent Police held 15 district based public engagement events, with over 1,000 members of the public having the opportunity to see and hear how it was tackling VAWG. As a result, a new strategy to tackle VAWG was implemented with the force investing over 900 officers to work in areas specifically investigating offences related to VAWG,

such as domestic abuse (DA) and rape. Kent Police also introduced a new officer identity verification check process enabling members of the public, if concerned about an officer's identity, to request a check be made through the Force Control Room (FCR).

- The force has established specific Rape Investigation (Phoenix) Teams. It has also invested in Sexual Offence Liaison Officers (SOLOs) to ensure victims receive the highest standards of care and providing a single point of contact for any victim entering into the Criminal Justice System (CJS). The SOLOs attend reports of rape, secure and oversee initial evidence capture, provide key support, and safeguard victims all the way through the investigative process, culminating in attending and remaining with them through the duration of court hearings.

- **Protect people from exploitation and abuse**

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

- From May 2022 Kent Police introduced the following:

- **Proactive DA Teams** – focused on those posing the greatest harm by targeting DA offenders, working with partners to identify the best 'problem solving' approach to manage them, referring suitable individuals to the perpetrator programme and providing support to victims.

Example: A DA offender, career criminal with links to gangs and drugs, assaulted his partner and damaged her vehicle. The Team gathered intelligence and arrested the suspect as he re-entered the UK. They recovered a large quantity of cash, expensive clothing and mobile phones. The suspect was charged with money laundering and subject to a confiscation order to recover seized assets. The DA victim was safeguarded through bail conditions.

- **DA Hub** – focused on becoming a centre of excellence for DA, utilising video technology and telephony to virtually respond to non-immediate calls to secure evidence and conduct risk assessments and referring victims to the most appropriate support service.

Example: A DA victim called the police to report harassment, stalking and public order offences. Within 4 hours, a full account was secured via video, safeguarding was completed, a statement taken and the suspect arrested. The suspect was charged and remanded for multiple offences.

- Due to its geographical location, Kent acts as a gateway to and from the continent which organised criminals use for trafficking and exploitation. Kent Police is committed to working with partners to tackle this crime and through its Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Team and a myriad of training programmes, has provided officers with a better understanding and ability to identify victims and implement safeguarding. This has helped ensure more victims are referred through the National Referral Mechanism, generating more investigative opportunities and providing the vulnerable with effective support.

Example: A Vietnamese male called 999 reporting he had been kidnapped and bundled into the back of a lorry. The male's phone identified his location in Kent and patrols attended the area and located two Vietnamese males in the back of a HGV. As a result of enquiries, 4 males were arrested, charged and remanded for conspiracy to kidnap and conspiracy to commit the offence of kidnapping or false imprisonment with the intention of human trafficking.

• Combat organised crime and county lines

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

- Kent has three divisional County Lines and Gangs Teams (CLGT) who provide a proactive and preventative capability to reduce the harm caused to Kent communities from county-line criminality and gang activity. In 2022/23, the CLGT achieved the following results:
 - 329 arrests
 - 244 warrants executed
 - 474 charges laid
 - 141 weapons seized
 - 397 years and 4 months in court sentences

Example: In October 2022 the CLGT took part in a national county lines intensification week, during which the team targeted 25 county lines, resulting in the arrest of 26 offenders and the securing of 30 charges. Kent Police also recovered more line handsets than any other force in the Eastern region.

- The Serious Organised Crime Team has continued to pursue those offenders that cause the most threat, harm and risk, targeting Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) that erode the economy and communities and are responsible for drug importation and supply, firearms offences, aggravated burglary, and theft of ATMs amongst other offences. OCGs ruthlessly target the most vulnerable, ruining lives.

Example: A known member of an OCG was arrested and subsequently sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court to life imprisonment to serve a minimum of 18 years for the violent attack, sexual assault, burglary and false imprisonment of an elderly victim in their own home.

• Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities

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

- Kent Police continued to focus on improving the partnership response to people in mental health crisis and ensuring they receive a first-class service from the relevant agency at the point of contact. The force improved its collection and use of data, to deliver enhanced training, ensuring appropriate interventions were made when dealing with someone in crisis. This work resulted in better outcomes for vulnerable people through a significant reduction in the use of police s.136 powers of detention:

2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
1,775	2,050	1,745	1,136	835

- Each of the 13 Districts continued to be served by its own dedicated Local Policing Team and Community Safety Unit (CSU). CSUs focus on prevention, deterrence and community engagement, working in partnership to problem solve local issues, particularly where there is vulnerability and community-based crime and ASB. Supplementary to regular officers, Special Constables on average attended 60 events within their communities each month as well local policing duties. Such events included pro-active traffic enforcement, community safety duties, community events such as the force Open Day and the Kent County Show and working with cadets. In 2022/23, Community Policing Volunteers also volunteered over 3,000 hours to specialist policing teams.

• Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero

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

- The Road Safety Unit worked in partnership with Ashford Community Policing Team, East Kent Special Constabulary, the Rural Task Force, DVSA and Ashford Borough Council Waste Enforcement Team. This was a proactive roads-based operation which incorporated a stop site on Henwood Industrial

estate as well as partner agencies crewing with officers in mobile patrols. Vehicles were searched, examined and offences investigated. 18 vehicles were stopped at the stop site and further vehicles stopped on the roads around Ashford resulting in one arrest, 9 vehicle seizures and 35 Traffic Offence Reports for various offences.

- On a daily basis the force continued to focus on those offences that have the most impact on road deaths, commonly known as the 'Fatal 4' (speed, not wearing seatbelts, drink / drug impaired driving and use of mobile phones). In 2022/23, the following were recorded:

Speed enforcement	Mobile phone enforcement	Seatbelt enforcement	Drink drive arrests	Drug drive arrests
78,828	2,094	2,289	2,426	1,091

- **Protect young people and provide opportunities**

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

- Child centred policing is at the heart of the Force Control Strategy and in October 2021, Kent Police launched its Child Centred Policing Plan setting out the strategy to continue the journey of embedding a child centred policing culture, enabling staff and officers to effectively talk to children, safeguard them and identify vulnerabilities. Version 2 of the Plan launched in January 2023 with an updated focus on early help, prevention and identifying and managing hidden harm. The vision of child centred policing is to support trauma informed working across a range of professional settings and services to provide a consistent approach to trauma informed practice.
- The Cadet Programme seeks to create opportunities for young people to be involved in the policing family whilst strengthening safeguarding processes. Regardless of background or circumstances the force welcomes all young people and seeks to provide them with opportunities to thrive. As at 31 March 2023, there were 408 cadets located at 12 units across the county and in 2023, they completed over 15,000 hours of volunteering. In October, the first ever Kent Police Lord Lieutenant's Cadet was appointed.

Example: *During summer 2022, cadets took part in various activities including a Football Tournament, two days at Bewl Water and a trip to the Ninja Warriors park. They also assisted with the training of probationary officers by taking part in role plays and assisted with summer fetes, Paws in the Park and Leaflet drops. Cadets also assisted with the PCC's Blue Light Job fair.*

My commitments as PCC:

- **Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient CJS**

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

The OPCC and I continued to engage via the website which on average received 1,100 visits per month. The corporate @PCCKent Twitter account remained stable at 11,700 followers and the number of people following the OPCC on Instagram grew to 738. The Facebook page grew to 830 followers and posts on Nextdoor which has more than 300,000 members, were frequently viewed by up to 20,000 people. In addition the OPCC has a YouTube channel and continued to circulate a regular e-newsletter to more than 4,700 subscribers, 700 more than last year.

I have actively sought opportunities to engage face-to-face with residents by holding street stalls across the county, including in Gravesend, Larkfield, Northfleet, Paddock Wood, Aylesford and Dartford. I have also held walkabouts in Herne Bay, New Ash Green and Sevenoaks and attended various Parish Council, Women's Institute, Rotary Club and Public Meetings. In addition, I visited the Mosque in Tunbridge Wells and have spent time on patrol with various policing teams, including the Rural Task Force.

Visiting charities the OPCC supports is equally important and this year I met with representatives from a wide range, including Collaborate Digital, Dads Unlimited, Family Matters, Interventions Alliance, Rubicon Cares, Victim Support and Catch 22. A number were also invited to join the OPCC in our marquee at the Kent Police Open Days in July, which were attended by about 12,000 people. The OPCC also secured a stall at the Kent County Show, which boasts a turn-out of around 80,000 over 3 days. At both events, members of the public were invited to complete my Annual Policing Survey which included

questions on how safe they felt where they lived and whether they thought Kent Police performed well. It also coincided with the appointment of a new Chief Constable, so there were questions about the qualities people thought the individual should possess. The survey was promoted widely on social media and in total 2,964 people had their say.

In February 2023, I launched a pamphlet and presentation called Victim Voice, designed to help victims of crime find the support and help they may need. To raise awareness, I held a street stall in Maidstone and have delivered presentations to a range of meetings and groups. It has also been promoted widely via social media and the OPCC website, where further information is available.

Kent Police: One of my key duties is to secure an efficient and effective police force by holding the Chief Constable to account.

Accountability arrangements must be visible and accessible to build and maintain trust and confidence. My governance arrangements are outlined below:

Key Principles: dynamic & risk-based; takes account of, & has due regard for each parties distinct role	
Informal Interaction (Daily)	Spontaneous discussions between the OPCC & Kent Police.
Joint PCC & Chief Constable Briefing (Weekly)	A closed briefing which enables dialogue & discussion on a routine frequent basis.
Performance & Delivery Board (Quarterly)	Held in public & enables me to formally hold the Chief Constable to account for delivery of the priorities & related matters.
Joint Audit Committee (Quarterly)	Combined committee with Kent Police. Scrutinises internal processes, spending & risk management policies.

Kent & Essex Collaboration Oversight Meeting (6 monthly)	Co-chaired by myself & the Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Keeps collaboration under review & holds both Chief Constables to account.
Complemented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The OPCC conducting checks / audits • Feedback from Independent Custody Visitors • My completion of the Chief Constable's PDR • Regular meetings with public bodies & inspectorates • Objective assessments by HMICFRS 	

As my principle means of holding the Chief Constable to account, Performance and Delivery Board meetings were held on 8 June, 31 October, 30 November and 15 March 2023. Examples of topics discussed include:

Crime and ASB: Compared to the previous year, in 2022/23 the force recorded a 2.9% decrease in victim-based crime (4,455 fewer offences). This was predominantly driven by a decrease in violent crime of 7.8% (7,169 fewer offences).

In 2022/23, Kent Police recorded a 15.4% decrease in ASB incidents compared to the previous year, equating to over 5,000 less incidents across the county.

Call handling: During the year, Kent Police's 101 non-emergency call handling performance deteriorated, with an increase in unanswered calls and the time callers were waiting. Primarily the result of staff leaving the FCR and an increase in 999 emergency calls which will always be prioritised, I received regular updates and challenged the Chief Constable on how it was been addressed. Activity including the posting of police officers into the FCR was prioritised and as a result, 101 non-emergency call handling performance improved. Longer term, I am reassured there is a programme of strategic transformation underway that will build a FCR which delivers a first class service whilst meeting future public demand.

I have made it clear to the Chief Constable that I expect 999 and 101 call handling performance to be maintained and will continue to receive updates at my Performance and Delivery Board.

The number of 999 emergency calls received by Kent Police in 2022/23 was 382,689, an increase of 27,802 on the previous year. The number of 101 non-emergency calls received was 312,321, a reduction of 47,860. The percentage of 999 calls answered was 98.7% and the average answering time 18 seconds – compared to 98.6% and 16 seconds the previous year. For 101 calls, 66.6% were answered and the average answering time was 7 minutes 19 seconds – compared with 79.4% and 4 minutes in 2021/22.

The use of digital channels of communication continued to increase in 2022/23, with 70,523 Live Chats and 48,728 ‘Report a Crime’ submissions (up 61% and 23% respectively on the previous year).

Officer recruitment: Through the Government’s national uplift programme, Kent Police continued to recruit police officers in 2022/23.

Whilst some of those recruited replaced officers that left during the year, officer strength (i.e. actual number of officers) as at 31 March 2023 stood at 4,203 Full Time Equivalent (FTE)¹.

As a result of the national uplift programme and funding raised through the Council Tax precept, the force now has the highest number of officers in its history and 1,021 more full-time officers than when I came into office in spring 2016. This is a fantastic achievement and I would like to congratulate the Chief Constable and thank all the officers and staff involved for their dedication and hard work.

PEEL 2021/22: In holding the Chief Constable to account I do not judge progress on arbitrary targets; whilst cognisant of data, I consider independent assessments of performance equally as important. His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) independently

assesses and reports on the efficiency and effectiveness of police forces and fire & rescue services in the public interest. In April 2022, HMICFRS published the Kent PEEL 2021/22 inspection report – an overview of the graded judgements is below:

Outstanding	Recording data about crime	
Good	Preventing crime	Treatment of the public
	Developing a positive workplace	Good use of resources
Adequate	Protecting vulnerable people	
Requires improvement	Investigating crime	Responding to the public
	Managing offenders	
Inadequate		

While the force were to be commended on some elements such as its outstanding performance in the recording of crime, other findings were disappointing, particularly those in respect of DA and the investigation of crime.

In response, the force developed an Improvement Plan and I received regular updates on progress at each Performance and Delivery Board. In addition, the meeting on 31 October focused specifically on the force’s response to the report enabling me to robustly hold the Chief Constable to account.

I am pleased to report that over the course of the year, significant improvements were made by the force and I am reassured that all areas of concern identified by HMICFRS have now been addressed.

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

Wider CJS: 2022/23 was my fifth year as chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB). The Board brings together chief officers from criminal justice agencies and wider partners and has responsibility for overseeing criminal justice across Kent and

Medway with the purpose of delivering effective, efficient and fair justice.

The CJS in Kent continued to see outstanding case numbers rise and delays in justice. The main issue remained a lack of resource across agencies with shortages in Judiciary, Magistrate Court Legal Advisors, Prosecution, Defence Counsel and Court Probation Officers all contributing to a lower than required number of courts sitting and case adjournments. Not as acute, but neighbouring counties including Sussex and Surrey faced the same issue. The Southeast remains an expensive place to live and as such, many much needed practitioners choose to work in London.

The delays impacted on the force’s Victim & Witness Care unit. The need for them to continue updating victims and witnesses whilst also seeing an increase in new cases created additional pressures. With Kent Police having the highest number of officers in its history, the number of prosecutions will continue to grow increasing the pressure on an already overburdened CJS.

Through the KCJB, work continued to deliver efficiency improvements including maximising the use of Out of Court Disposals where appropriate, delivering early guilty pleas, making sure cases entering the system needed to be there and that cases reaching court proceeded effectively. Work also focused on ensuring rehabilitation programmes and other work delivered positive outcomes to prevent further offending.

As PCC and Chair of the KCJB I continued to lobby and meet with senior government ministers and personnel within the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) to raise the recruitment issue here and across the Southeast including the need for a Southeast allowance. I am hopeful that national and local recruitment campaigns will see some success in the future.

However, unfortunately the reality is until the staffing shortages are addressed, the level of outstanding cases and therefore delays to victims and witnesses will not improve.

¹ [Police workforce, England and Wales: 31 March 2023](#)

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

Violence Reduction Unit (VRU)

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

The Kent and Medway VRU is a partnership between the police, local councils, health service providers and other key partners. It aims to tackle the root causes of violence using a multi-agency, public health based preventative approach.

Its mission is to make Kent's communities the safest they can be through a long term co-ordinated approach to preventing serious violence from occurring. It aims to achieve this by:

- Driving collaboration between services and ensuring the response is not inhibited by geographical, age or service boundaries.
- Building the capacity of communities to be involved in finding the solutions to violence and play an active part in how violence is prevented.
- Making best use of technology and evidence to improve everyone's understanding of why violence occurs, how it can be prevented and what works.

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

The public health approach adopted by VRUs is a science-based four step process:

- What's the problem? - gather data to reveal the who, what, why, where and when of the problem. This can be crime data but also information from hospitals, schools and a range of other sources.

- What are the causes? - look for evidence on the factors that put people at risk of experiencing, or perpetrating, violence as well as the factors that can protect them.
- What works and for whom? - using the data gathered design, implement and (crucially) evaluate interventions.
- Scale it up! - if an intervention works, then scale it up while evaluating how well it works and its cost-effectiveness.

The VRU commissions county-wide and locally designed services to deliver its prevention and intervention approach. In 2022/23, examples included:

- Charlton Athletic Community Trust (CACT) diversionary activity, including 1:1 mentoring for 36 weeks / 30 ball court sessions. Originally in the Dartford area following a fatal stabbing in April 2022, it moved around to areas most in need. CACT also provided Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) talks to schools in the Dartford area.
- Catch 22 delivered both preventative and protective interventions, supporting those up to the age of 25, who were at risk of CCE and county lines. Delivered by specialist caseworkers, the interventions took a holistic, trauma-informed approach appropriate to the age, risk and experiences of the young person.
- The use of Buddi Tags for those at risk of gang / criminal exploitation or identified as high harm offenders with a wish to be supported to lower their risk of being exploited or reoffending. Over 80 young people up to the age of 25 engaged in the programme which supported partnership working to divert individuals away from the risks associated with crime.

Serious Violence Duty (SVD)

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

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

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

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

A workshop held on 22 February 2023 with all specified authorities agreed a strategic board should be established for the purposes of monitoring and reporting against the SVD, but delivery itself should sit at local partnership level. The board was built on the existing VRU Oversight Board arrangements but with refreshed Terms of Reference and attendance.

The workshop also agreed the following definition of serious violence: *'Specific types of crime such as homicide, knife crime, robbery and gun crime, and areas of criminality where serious violence or its threat is inherent such as in DA, sexual offences, gangs, county lines and drug supply'*.

I am currently working with Crest Advisory to refresh the Terms of Reference for the new Serious Violence Prevention Partnership Board, to enable the strategy to be progressed.

Violence Reduction Fund (VRF)

One of the recommendations from my Violence Reduction Challenge in 2018 was to create a VRF. This was a 3-year fund open to statutory organisations, voluntary groups and charities to

deliver projects focused on preventing or reducing violence in the county.

The fund closed in September 2022, but the work has continued through the VRU.

The organisations funded were:

Organisation	Project Brief	Amount
Total Insight Theatre	My Choice Matters: A 60-minute drama performance about knife crime for young people aged 12-15.	£9,747
Crimestoppers	Fearless: Educating 11-16-year-olds by increasing their awareness of weapons, street crime and child sexual exploitation.	£35,000
Rising Sun	Guiding Lights: Support for girls aged 11-16 at risk of child sexual exploitation or being in coercive and controlling relationships.	£35,000
Forward Trust	Mentoring programme for clients accessing their East Kent Community Drug and Alcohol Services.	£15,000
Uprising Youth & Community	Knife crime awareness campaign in East Kent aimed at reducing violent crime through engagement with young people, parents and communities.	£32,000
Folkestone Youth Project	The Shed: Social, emotional and physical support for young people who had made unhealthy and negative life choices.	£7,850
Reform Restore Respect	I Didn't Know That: 90-minute workshops for Year 6 pupils on gang violence and knife crime.	£15,000
Kent Police	Mini-Cadets: Nine-week programme delivered in schools, concluding with a social act project.	£36,814

Outcomes

- *Total Insight, Crimestoppers, Uprising Youth & Community, Reform Restore Respect and Mini Cadets reached 9,386 young people in 153 settings on topics such as the consequences of carrying weapons, hate crime, bullying, cyber-crime, gangs, county lines, exploitation and insight into policing.*
- *Rising Sun, Forward Trust and Folkestone Youth Project reached 191 young people who were supported in building resilience and awareness of risky behaviours whilst engaging in positive activities.*

Gangs and county lines service

Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Service (£41,264)

Delivered by St Giles Trust to 30 June 2022.

This service consisted of three elements:

- Outreach support for young people on the periphery of criminality and committing low level ASB in West Kent.
- 1 to 1 casework and a Peer Mentor scheme for those involved in gangs and county lines.
- Crime prevention inputs in schools on gangs, county lines, knife crime and exploitation and mentoring for those identified as being at risk.

Outcomes

In the period 1 April 2021 to 30 June 2022:

- *The team managed a total caseload of 213, with 160 engaging in interventions.*
- *72 of those supported reported improved wellbeing, 63 increased self-esteem and 60 enhanced protective factors such as improved relationships with family and greater school attendance.*
- *53 schools received inputs and over 220 mentoring sessions were delivered.*

Gangs and county lines service (£103,716)

Delivered by Catch22 and commenced 1 July 2022.

In early 2022, in conjunction with the VRU, I released a tender for the delivery of an age-appropriate trauma informed, needs led service. It would provide long term support to children and young people (C&YP) and their close relatives or immediate support network to reduce risk and prevent serious youth violence, exploitation and gang and county line activity.

The service is divided into two elements,

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

The value of the 3-year contract is £350,000 which I part fund with the VRU.

Catch 22 were awarded the contract and currently deliver the service in Canterbury, Ashford, Maidstone, Medway, Swale and Thanet.

Outcomes

In the period 1 July 2022 to 31 March 2023:

- *The service received 209 referrals, with 95.1% being male and 43.8% having complex needs.*
- *87% of those supported showed progress in 1 positive outcome and 80% in 2 positive outcomes, with family and safety seeing the most positive progress.*
- *Feedback on the service has included:*
 - *“Your support has included me the parent and this is the first this has happened during this difficult time” (parent)*
 - *“...this has been a complex and difficult case, your caseworker has shown compassion, persistence, and professionalism throughout. The results we are seeing is due to them” (professional)*
 - *“...they have helped me understand my actions and consequences” (young person)*

Home Office Perpetrator Programme (£378,967)

In August 2021, I was successful in securing funding from the HO to implement DA and stalking perpetrator programmes in Kent and Medway. Delivery focused on developing a co-ordinated response to DA and stalking perpetrators, with a focus on managing risk and ensuring victims and their children were safeguarded.

During 2022/23 I was able to secure further funding to develop and embed perpetrator approaches. Delivery continued as a collaborative approach between Interventions Alliance, Kent Police and Look Ahead, alongside the following:

- Healthy Relationships (HR) Programme for DA Perpetrators - 1 to 1 and group work.
- Compulsive Obsessive Behavioural Interventions (COBI) - Stalking Perpetrator Programme 1 to 1.
- Dedicated support to victims and their children.

Outcomes

Since the programme commenced:

- *Over 100 individuals have been referred to the HR Programme or COBI, with 93 sessions delivered during Q4 2022/23.*
- *All interventions have been completed on a 1:1 basis providing greater flexibility to respond to needs, vulnerabilities and risks.*
- *Of the 29 individuals analysed for re-offending, 16 saw an improvement in offending rates and 7 remained the same.*
- *This equates to a 79% success rate in terms of reported offences for the 6 months pre programme compared to 6 months post programme.*
- *Over 90 victims have been supported through the dedicated victims' resource.*

Cookham Wood Project (£15,000)

Initially this was a tripartite project between the MoJ, the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) and Kent to deliver a through the gate service for young offenders within Cookham Wood to address victimisation. During 2022/23 it became a joint project between MOPAC and Kent, focused on helping staff

identify victimisation and how to respond, as well as delivering a through the gate service and mentoring support to assist young people with recognising their needs and helping them move into the community.

Following a commissioning process managed by MOPAC, Open Road was awarded the through the gate service and mentoring support. The service went live in November 2021 and became fully operational in March 2022. The service aims for 90% of the young people supported to have increased engagement with services and family and to also have a better understanding of risk and victimisation. 11 of the 12 closures reported an improvement in this area, however, there remains a challenge with young people identifying themselves as victims.

During 2023/24 further work will be undertaken to understand the impact of the service on those young people from Kent supported.

Crime Reduction Grants

Each year I allocate a portion of my commissioning budget to the Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and other statutory partners or providers. The money must be spent on projects that support delivery of my Police and Crime Plan priorities.

Total allocated spend in 2022/23 across the 14 CSPs was £548,385, and £838,889 was allocated to other statutory partners or providers.

The projects delivered as a result of this funding generally aligned to the following themes:

- Preventative and diversionary activities for C&YP.
- DA projects.
- Community engagement and awareness raising activities.
- Crime prevention and reduction activities.
- Strengthening partnership approaches.

- **Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation**

Providing information to C&YP

Amelix 'Is it worth it' School Tour (£50,000)

The School Tour started in 2009 and I took over its management in 2017. The contract ended on 30 September 2022.

It was delivered in collaboration with the music industry which provided match funding and performers. The Tour was a unique offer with messages delivered in an engaging format capturing the attention of young people. The content delivered in 2022/23 focused on cyber-crime and e-safety.

Outcomes

Delivery in 2022/23:

- *31 schools received 87 sessions reaching over 16,500 children aged 11-14 years.*
- *83% enjoyed the Tour and reported they had more awareness of online bullying and a greater understanding of what they were sharing online.*

Re-commissioning of C&YP messaging

During 2022 I undertook engagement with young people, parents / carers, and schools to understand:

- what crime / safety and ASB issues were impacting on C&YP;
- what works when engaging with C&YP;
- at what age and when safety messages should be delivered; and
- what support should be provided to parents / carers and professionals.

Almost 70% of responses were from parents / carers, 10% from young people and 8% from teachers.

Key findings were the need to engage with C&YP earlier (e.g. within primary schools) and ensuring parents / carers, teachers, and other professionals understood the messages to enable continued support. The work also identified key topics of concern and what works when engaging with C&YP.

My team used these findings to support the commissioning process for a new Young Persons

Prevention Service. The new contract was awarded to Collaborate Digital on 1 October 2022 for an initial 3-year period.

The service aims to provide age-appropriate messages for C&YP to support them in making better, informed choices by highlighting risk factors which can increase the likelihood of a negative outcome. It also supports C&YP by showing how they can de-escalate situations to help keep themselves and others safe.

The service covers the following topics for C&YP aged 9 to 14 years:

- Healthy relationships (attitudes, behaviours and safety), online harms, cyber safety and cyber bullying.
- Gangs, county lines, violence, knife crime and criminal exploitation.

Women in Justice (£27,164)

In October 2022, Kent Police and I submitted a collaborative bid to the MoJ to develop a Whole System Approach for improving the outcomes of women in, or at risk of contact with the CJS.

Kent was one of a small number of areas to secure funding until 30 March 2025; in total £208,954 for 2022/23 to 2024/25 (£27,164 for 2022/23). The funding will be used to support the development of a Kent Women's Justice Strategy focused on reducing reoffending, early intervention to prevent women entering the CJS and capturing linked children for early support. It will also enable the design of a Women's Justice multi-agency panel process to develop an evidence base of interventions with the aim of reducing re-offending and supporting early intervention.

Safer Streets Fund 4 – Protecting Public Spaces

The HO launched the fourth round of the Safer Streets Fund in March 2022, with a focus on targeting: neighbourhood crimes (domestic burglary, robbery, theft from person, vehicle crime); ASB; VAWG in public places; and improving feelings of safety from VAWG or ASB.

Funding had to be targeted within defined geographic areas where evidence demonstrated a disproportionate impact from the defined crime types. Following an extensive data review, four districts were identified and evidence-based bids developed. I was successful in securing funding for all four bids, totaling £1.4 million over the period 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2024.

The delivery areas are as follows:

<p>Canterbury (£589,042) Dane John Gardens, City centre and main routes into town</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Extension of the Safe Zone App ○ 34 x additional CCTV cameras in Parkwood area of the university and City centre ○ Introducing a Safe Haven in Whitefriars open during night-time economy (NTE) and creating a safe space for women and girls ○ Increasing Best Bar None within the NTE ○ Safe Night Out activities to support university students, including provision of Stop Topps, non-alcohol events and Walking Taxis ○ Support to increase number of Street Pastors to provide further patrols in the NTE ○ VAWG survey to understand needs ○ Additional police operations, particularly during refresher days
<p>Gravesham (£74,942) Area around town centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Installation of eight new CCTV cameras ○ Street lighting improvements in the town centre ○ G-Safe free trial and upgraded radio link to support engagement of new businesses ○ Overgrown vegetation and rubbish cleared at the Overcliffe ○ Thames Way footpath and floodlighting installation ○ NTE Safe Space Scheme with some retailers having later opening hours ○ Active Bystander training

<p>Maidstone (£565,877) Town centre and Brenchley Gardens</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Conversion of disused toilet block into outreach hub and associated equipment ○ Summer Warden for Brenchley Gardens ○ Active Bystander Training ○ Shop front wraps installed at key locations ○ Youth Outreach Officers for town centre ○ Best Bar None (Safer Socialising scheme) ○ Safer Streets education / awareness campaign ○ Street Pastor and Urban Blue Bus recruitment ○ Hollie Guard App and Krav Maga self defence classes ○ Two additional CCTV cameras in High Street ○ Extending Midsafe radios and body worn cameras for NTE support staff
<p>Medway (£203,230) Targeted areas within Chatham, Rochester and Luton</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Youth diversionary work in Chatham and Rochester town centre's, including Medway Night Lights Event - interactive family activity for distribution of crime prevention / safety products and to understand feelings of safety ○ Kick & Connect - Sport on your doorstep, delivering weekly sessions for young people ○ Improvements to Luton Millennium Green including new tarmac area and provision of sports equipment ○ Private Sector Housing Intelligence Database to support identification of risk factors ○ Additional CCTV cameras in Rochester multi story car park ○ Refurbishment of Ball Cage in Ship Wrights Avenue ○ Illicit Tobacco Post to undertake pro-active operations ○ Active Bystander Training ○ Target Hardening through provision of safety and crime prevention equipment ○ Street Scene Improvements, including removal of fly tipping, graffiti and other environmental issues

Victim Voice

At the beginning of 2023 I launched the Victim Voice scheme to highlight the help and support available to victims of crime in Kent and Medway.

Victim Voice provides information on the Victims' Code, navigating the CJS and how to access independent advice and support. It also explains how to contact the police, what to expect from the various CJS agencies and what to do if the service received falls short of expectations.

Victims have repeatedly told me they feel their voice is not heard and that reporting a crime often does not lead to appropriate action. Victim satisfaction levels in my Annual Policing Survey showed almost half of those who experienced a crime and reported it to police, were dissatisfied with the service they received; my VAWG survey also found only 37% of victims reported the crime.

I want people to feel confident that when they report crime, they get the information and support they deserve, and are legally entitled to. And to make people aware they can access help, even if they have not reported the incident.

[Victim Voice](#) can be accessed via the OPCC website, or as a pamphlet which can also be downloaded.

More than 1,000 copies of the pamphlet have been distributed, the online version has been viewed nearly two thousand times and the [Victim Voice presentation](#) on the OPCC YouTube channel has been watched over 500 times. I have also delivered Victim Voice presentations to groups and at meetings all over the county.

Providing accessible information for victims of crime was one of the recommendations from my VAWG Inquiry.

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

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

Within the OPCC I have a Commissioning Team who are responsible for commissioning services, issuing grants and managing contracts. They are also responsible for attracting additional funding through successful bid writing.

During 2022/2023 several additional funding streams were offered by the Government and my team worked hard to ensure Kent got its fair share to enable new and existing services to be delivered.

Overall, I and my team were successful in securing additional funding of:

- £1.7m for victim services;
- £1.4m for Safer Streets;
- £378,967 for Perpetrator Programmes; and
- £27,164 for local integration of women's services.

This brought the total additional funding for my commissioning budget in 2022/2023 to £3.5m.

The Government has also previously announced plans to review the Police Funding Formula – this determines the amount of funding each PCC receives.

In May 2022, my Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and I travelled to the HO for a meeting with the Director of Strategy, Capabilities and Resources to discuss Kent's specific needs. I also wrote to the Chancellor ahead of the Funding settlement announced in December and have actively taken part in discussions with colleagues through the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC).

My Chief Executive and CFO have also fed into regional discussions and national mechanisms via

the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives (APACE), the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society (PACCTS) and APCC. In addition, my CFO and the force's CFO have held meetings with HO officials working on the Funding Formula to set out the unique challenges associated with policing the county.

Whilst a slow process, work on the funding formula will continue throughout 2023/24. Senior OPCC staff and I will continue to engage with Ministers and officials to set out the case for Kent in an effort to ensure the county receives a fair share of national police funding.

• Support volunteering

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

The Cadet scheme is open to young people aged 13 to 17, who live in Kent irrespective of background or financial circumstances, including those vulnerable to crime or social exclusion. As at 31 March 2023, there were 408 cadets located at 12 units across the county. In 2022/23, the cadets completed over 15,000 hours of volunteering.

The Mini Cadet scheme is a nine-week programme for children aged 8-11 delivered in schools. It is designed to teach about good citizenship and concentrates on building self-esteem as well as breaking down barriers with the police. They are taught about online safety, take part in drills and produce a Social Action Project. Funded by the OPCC, the scheme launched in April 2021 and since then, over 50 schools have enrolled and more than 500 children taken part.

I am very supportive and appreciative of the work of Special Constables; unpaid volunteers who wear a uniform, have the same powers as regular officers and put themselves in harm's way like their paid colleagues - but all because they just want to give something back to their communities. As at 31 March 2023, there were 204 Special Constables who provided over 95,000 hours of policing in 2022/23.

Introduced in 2018/19 Community Police Volunteers (CPVs) continued to be a popular strand of volunteering. As at 31 March 2023, there were 78 trained CPVs providing support to specialist policing teams; in 2022/23, they volunteered over 3,000 hours.

As at 31 March 2023, Kent Police had 187 Police Support Volunteers in roles conducive to their skills. Examples include within the FCR, Recruitment and Local Policing Teams.

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

Office of the Kent Police & Crime Commissioner

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

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

Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs)

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

In 2022/23, ICVs conducted 224 visits to custody suites and engaged with 737 DPs.

Areas of good practice identified by ICVS included:

- Distraction items – reading books, word searches, sudoku puzzles and colouring books being available to DPs based on a risk assessment. Also footballs and tennis balls for use in the exercise yard and 'fidget popper' toys to help calm neurodivergent DPs.
- Care of females – female DPs being assigned a female member of staff as a 'carer', helping them to feel more comfortable discussing sensitive matters. Also, feminine hygiene packs being offered to female DPs as standard practice.
- Arrows to Mecca – only some cells had arrows pointing to Mecca, aiding Muslim detainees in prayer. Under the annual maintenance programme, all cells apart from those at North Kent and Medway had a dot painted in them to indicate East for Mecca. North Kent has a green line at the custody desk and most prayer mats now also have a compass built in.

Areas requiring improvement identified included:

- Inspector Reviews – reviews not taking place on time and custody records stating 'no review officer readily available'. Custody management

worked hard during the year to address the issue and improve the quality of reviews; as a result, ICVs noted a decrease in frequency.

- Stock of food – food orders being received with missing or substituted items and food being near, or past its use by date upon delivery. The most popular item, the All-Day Breakfast, was often low on stock. Over the course of the year, food stocks improved.
- General infrastructure - various issues with the condition of suites, including peeling paint, electrical faults, water leaks and broken locks. Custody staff were generally aware of the faults and had already logged them, with some rectified in a timely manner and others being addressed as part of the annual maintenance cycle.

Overall, ICVs found the care to be excellent, with staff focused on the dignity and wellbeing of DPs. Most concerns related to the facilities themselves and this will continue to be monitored with any serious issues escalated as appropriate. It is evident that custody management take on board ICVs' concerns and make every effort to rectify issues.

ICVs frequently reported how helpful and supportive the custody staff were on their visits and would like to thank them for being so accommodating and transparent.

The Dogs Trust asked all OPCCs to join the Animal Welfare Scheme, to ensure police forces are treating their police dogs well and in line with the Animal Welfare Act. Having asked ICVs to take part and provide independent oversight, during the year I am pleased that significant progress was made towards formally launching the Kent scheme in 2023.

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

Commission services for victims that are needs-led

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

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

My 2022/23 commissioning budget consisted of a core grant of £2.3m from the MoJ to deliver services to support victims. The Government made further funding available for victim services and the OPCC was successful in securing an additional £1.7m.

1. Victim Services

1.1 Victims Specialist Services (VSS)

I set aside £213,940 to fund organisations that provide specialist support to victims of crime, these ranged from trauma counselling to therapeutic support for families. These services were complementary to other victim services that I funded and ensured enhanced support was available for specific groups or those with a specialist need.

The organisations funded were:

- Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) (£22,200) - 1 to 1 advocacy and peer support for those bereaved by suicide or unexplained death linked to DA and Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- Choices Support (£34,398) - Jigsaw Hate Crime Project, provided intensive support to victims with learning disability, mental health and autism.
- Dads Unlimited (£35,000) - 1 to 1 Mentoring Service, supported men to rebuild their lives following domestic / emotional / financial abuse.
- Dandelion Time (£35,000) - A therapeutic service for children and families affected by DA and sexual abuse (SA).

- DA Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) (£25,000) - Support to Court Project, supported DA victims through civil and criminal court processes.
- East Kent Rape Crisis Centre (EKRCC) (£30,200) - 1 to 1 therapy and family counselling for victims of SA.
- Rubicon Cares (£32,142) - 1 to 1 trauma counselling for victims of crime.

Outcomes

- *AAFDA supported 6 families impacted by domestic homicide, all of whom reported being better able to cope and build resilience moving forwards with daily life.*
- *Choices Support supported 30 individuals, with two feeling able to report the crime to police after receiving support. 100% reported improved health and wellbeing and better able to cope with aspects of everyday life.*
- *Dads Unlimited received 138 new referrals, with 63 engaged with other support services, 5 feeling able to report the crime to police after receiving support and 45 reporting they were better able to cope and build resilience moving forwards with daily life. Also saw increased complexity of cases, including high levels of suicide ideation.*
- *Dandelion Time supported 32 children and their families, with 28 reporting they were better able to cope and build resilience moving forwards with daily life.*
- *DAVSS received 429 referrals, with 173 referred to other support services following the identification of additional needs. The service provided support with legal advice including obtaining non molestation orders, prohibitive steps orders and child arrangement orders, pro bono solicitor appointments and provision of Mackenzie friends.*
- *EKRCC received 100 referrals, with 98 clients reporting they were better able to cope and build resilience moving forwards with daily life.*

- *Rubicon Cares received 41 referrals, with 15 referred to other support services following the identification of additional needs.*

1.2 DA / SV Ringfenced Funding

In March 2022, the MoJ announced an additional £15.7m funding for PCCs nationally to provide tailored support to female and male victims who had experienced DA, rape, or SA at any point in their life. The funding was for both adults and C&YP.

My team submitted a detailed Needs Assessment setting out the demand for services and were successful in securing £664,540.39 per annum for three years (2022/23 to 2024/25).

The organisations and projects funded are:

- Dad's Unlimited (£96,512) - 1 x Mentor, 1 x Court Support Worker and 1 x DA Caseworker to support men rebuild their lives following DA.
- Daisy Chain (£45,000) - Pro-bono legal advice for DA and SA victims not eligible for legal aid.
- Dandelion Time (£31,841) - 1 x Caseworker to support delivery of the family support programme for children and families affected by DA and SA.
- DAVSS (£24,922) - 2 x Support Workers to provide advocacy and legal support to DA victims in West Kent.
- Family Matters (£28,460) - 1 x Therapist to support SA victims and reduce waiting times.
- Health Action (£27,282) - Support for African males suffering DA in North Kent.
- Innovating Minds (£40,000) - Delivery of the Healing Together Programme in schools to support C&YP impacted by DA.
- Kent Integrated DA Service (KIDAS) (£49,000) - 2 x Outreach Workers to increase capacity within the countywide DA service.
- Mary Dolly Foundation (£31,830) - Online therapeutic support for DA and SA victims, both C&YP and adults.
- Restorative Solutions (£45,000) – Adolescent to Parent Violence Conflict (APVC) Service across Kent.

- Rising Sun (£63,683) - 1 x C&YP Trauma Informed Worker and 1 x Young Women's Trauma Informed Mentor to support those impacted by DA.
- Rubicon Cares (£40,360) - Increased DA and SV 1:1 trauma counselling capacity.
- Salus (£34,240) - Provision of earlier intervention for C&YP impacted by DA within safe settings through a 1 x C&YP Support Officer.
- SATEDA (£55,797) - Increased capacity in Support to Court, Therapeutic Support and Outreach Services.
- The Bloomers Trust (£8,800) - Provision of vital needs for DA victims on low incomes or in financial difficulties not fully covered by emergency grants.
- Victim Support (£41,810) - Increased capacity within Stalking Advocacy Service through 1 x Stalking Officer and provision of Independent Stalking Advocacy Caseworker (ISAC) training.

Example outcomes

- Case study 1 - *'My child and myself were victims of DA and my child was really struggling with their confidence as well as depression and anger issues. The way Dandelion Time deals with childhood trauma via outdoor activities brings a sense of peace and allows children's confidence to shine through. They focus solely on the benefits that the activities bring to the child without talking about the trauma. This place saved my child, saved my family, and ultimately restored happiness in our lives and for that I will be eternally grateful.'*
- Case study 2 - *B had witnessed violence and abuse and arrived at Dandelion Time with their adoptive parent. Guided by the therapists, the family began to build a connection, gradually working to bring down the barriers. At the end of their support B had taken huge steps forward, was more engaged at home and school and began to trust those around them. The relationship with the parent had strengthened and B now provides hugs for the first time.*

Across all the services funded, 6,464 victims of DA and SV were referred, with 5,537 supported. Of those, 3,780 reported to the police prior to engagement and 262 felt able to report during or following engagement with the service.

1.3 Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) and Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) Baseline Funding (£821,750) and ISVA / IDVA Additional Funding (£186,123)

The Baseline Funding was a continuation of the grant award received in 2021/22; in addition, a further opportunity was made available to PCCs in 2022/23 to secure 100 additional IDVAs and ISVAs nationally. This funding was in recognition of the increased demand for SA and DA support and issues with the CJS resulting in victims requiring greater and longer-term support.

Organisations supported through Baseline Funding were:

- Dads Unlimited (£73,698) - 1 x IDVA and 1 x IDVA Manager to deliver the only dedicated male IDVA service in Kent known as DA Victim Empowerment (DAVE) Service.
- EKRCC (£125,880) - 1 x Hybrid IDVA / ISVA, 1 x C&YP Mental Health ISVA and 1 x Student ISVA working with schools, colleges, and universities.
- Family Matters (£103,322) - 1 x ISVA Manager supporting victims of SA aged 5 and over and a Gangs ISVA working with those impacted by SA in Gangs and County lines.
- Kent & Medway NHS and Social Care Partnership Trust (KMPT) (£34,107) - 1 x Health IDVA (HIDVA) / Sexual IDVA (SIDVA) to support those accessing secondary mental health services.
- KIDAS (£160,000) - 4 x IDVAs to increase countywide DA service capacity, particularly tailored support (e.g. diverse communities, older and male victims, honour-based violence, the traveller community, complex DA cases including APVC and Eastern European communities).

- New Leaf Support (£34,560) - 1.5 x IDVAs to deliver outreach and family support to those impacted by DA within Swale.
- Oasis (£42,525) - 1 x IDVA to increase capacity within the Medway Integrated DA Service (MIDAS).
- Rising Sun (£114,846) - 1 x IDVA Manager and 2 x IDVAs to support those experiencing DA and SA, who were at risk of homelessness or homeless and had multiple needs.
- SATEDA (£63,738) - 1 x IDVA Co-ordinator, providing dedicated family provision, including specialist outreach for families impacted by DA. 1 x C&YP IDVA providing dedicated support to those accessing family DA support provision, including outreach. 1 x IDVA providing dedicated support to adults accessing family DA support provision including outreach in Swale.
- Sign Health (£69,073) - 1 x IDVA to support Deaf victims of DA through BSL or other communication methods and 1 x Young Persons Violence Advocate (YPVA) to provide support for Deaf victims of DA aged 8 to 18 years.

Organisations supported through ISVA / IDVA Additional Funding were:

- Dads Unlimited (£30,639) - 1 x IDVA to increase capacity in the DAVE Service.
- EKRCC (£24,715) - 1 x specialist Adolescent ISVA to respond to increased referrals involving peer-on-peer SA. Also provided support to the LGBTQ+ Community.
- Family Matters (£38,578) - 1 x Child ISVA (CISVA) to support victims of SA aged under 18.
- Hourglass (£32,298) - 1 x IDVA to provide support to older victims of DA and SA.
- KIDAS (£28,000) - 1 x IDVA in East Kent to provide additional capacity to manage increase in young people impacted by DA.
- Oasis (£31,893) - 1 x IDVA to increase capacity in MIDAS.

Outcomes

- A total of 3,063 referrals were received across all IDVA and ISVA services, resulting in 2,272 individuals receiving needs-led support.
- Of those cases supported and closed 1,731 reported they were better able to cope and build resilience moving forwards with daily life.
- On average ISVA clients were supported for 424 days, with ISVAs having an average caseload of 42 clients.
- IDVA clients engaged with support for 119 days on average, with IDVAs having an average caseload of 33 clients.

1.4 MoJ Core Uplift Funding

In June 2022, the MoJ confirmed an additional £6m for PCCs nationally to uplift their 'core' funding to commission local victim support services. This funding was allocated across the 42 PCC areas using a population-based formula, resulting in Kent receiving an additional £187,696 (also provisionally confirmed for 2023/24 and 2024/25).

The funding was proportionately allocated across existing service providers as follows:

- AAFDA (£1,221) - To continue supporting families bereaved by DA, suicide or unexplained death.
- Brake (£825) - To continue supporting family members of those killed and seriously injured in road traffic collisions in Kent.
- Choices Support (£1,891) - To continue providing intensive support to victims with learning disabilities, poor mental health and autism.
- Dads Unlimited (£11,286) - To increase the DA team capacity x 2 and a small contribution towards rent costs until March 2023.
- Daisy Chain (£2,475) - To continue providing pro-bono legal advice to DA victims.
- Dandelion Time (£3,676) - To extend the Therapeutic Support Programme for children & families impacted by DA by providing 3 additional intensive placements (in addition to 32 part-funded placements).

- DAVSS (£2,745) - To cover deficit in MARAC / High Needs Co-ordinator's salary; role responsible for co-ordinating high risk cases, including preparation of paperwork, advocating for clients and ensuring actions completed.
- EKRCC (£8,584) - To increase counselling capacity at their main office in Canterbury.
- Family Matters (£31,998) - To increase service capacity including provision of counselling.
- Health Action (£1,500) - To continue support for African male victims of DA through the Hidden Truth Support Group.
- Hourglass (£1,776) - To provide awareness materials, community engagement events and support operational costs for older victims of DA.
- Innovating Minds (£2,200) - To train 2 x Healing Together Facilitators and a third facilitator for frontline services.
- KMPT (£1,875) - To fund overtime for the HIDVA to increase training and to support access to the Phoenix Programme.
- KIDAS (£8,800) - To increase capacity within the countywide DA service.
- Mary Dolly (£1,750) - To increase online tailored counselling capacity for DA and SA victims.
- New Leaf (£1,900) - To continue providing support to DA victims in Swale.
- Oasis (£2,338) - To increase capacity within the MIDAS service.
- Restorative Solutions (£16,335) - To support APVC staff overtime / travel costs and upgrade technology to meet cyber essential requirements.
- Rising Sun (£10,781) – To help fund a full-time qualified C&YP counsellor to increase capacity.
- Rubicon Cares (£3,987) - To support core costs impacted by cost-of-living increase (e.g. staffing, ad hoc room hire and travel fares).
- Salus (£1,883) - To provide support for a further 2 x C&YP Support Officers.
- SATEDA (£6,574) - To support overtime to increase capacity and cover an uplift in salaries and core costs.

- Sign Health (£3,405) - To support increased staff (YPVA and IDVA) salaries.
- The Bloomers Trust (£484) - To provide additional care packages to victims of DA and SA and fund general awareness raising of service.
- Victim Support (£49,446) - To support salary uplift and purchase of security items.

Overview

This funding was used predominately to enhance and increase capacity within existing commissioned services.

All services reported increased pressures during 2022/23, with the cost-of-living increase significantly impacting on operating costs and retention of staff. The impact was also felt by those accessing services, particularly for DA, and being able to secure funds to flee or end abusive relationships. Services also reported a significant increase in complex cases that required crisis intervention and immediate tailored safety plans.

Services reported improvements in monitoring client needs resulting in adaptations to the hours of counselling services to better meet demand, alongside reviewing external meeting venues to minimise the carbon footprint and maximise outreach appointments. Some victim support services expanded their provision of family work due to an increase in demand, recruited additional therapeutic counsellors and opened additional family centres.

I and my team promote collaborative working across commissioned services. This enables greater wrap around support for individuals so they do not have to repeat information multiple times. It also increases interagency signposting to improve the journey for clients, for example: joint home visits with a HIDVA, mental health and social care services; the development of hate crime awareness sessions to unpaid carers of learning-disabled clients; delivery of deaf community DA awareness raising sessions; and raising awareness of DA with older people.

1.5 MoJ Male Rape Support Fund

In June 2021, the MoJ made funding available to provide specialist support to men and boys who had experienced rape or SA at any point in their lives.

Nationally, £1.4m was made available and I worked collaboratively with EKRCC and Family Matters to develop an evidence-based bid. As a result, Kent was awarded £31,504 with delivery focused on awareness raising, improving confidence to report and increasing capacity.

This funding was extended into 2022/23 and £31,504 was divided equally between EKRCC and Family Matters to continue delivering the service provided during 2021/22. It was estimated that 40 men and 20 boys would be supported because of the additional funding, with the extra capacity also reducing the waiting list which stood at 28 men and 14 boys.

In addition, direct engagement with males was undertaken to understand the barriers to reporting / seeking support. Key findings from this work highlighted the need to make literature and websites accessible for male victims, training for first contact staff in engaging males with support and in the terminology and practices used to ensure the support offer was relevant to their circumstances.

In total the funding enabled 46 males to receive bespoke support, with 100% reporting feeling better able to cope.

1.6 Victim Services Contracts

I have several contracts with providers for essential victims' services. The contracts were commissioned at different times and are subject to performance and contract management by my team.

• Kent Victims' Engagement and Support Service (£1.1m)

Delivered by Victim Support (commissioned 2015).

Provides the main referral, triage, and support service for all victims of crime regardless of whether they have reported the crime or not.

The service provides emotional and practical support, safety planning, safeguarding, advice and

signposting. Referrals are received automatically from the police but can also be made by other professionals or directly from individuals requiring support.

The service also provides a dedicated Stalking Advocacy Service and Hate Crime Advocacy Service for Kent and Medway. Additionally, I have a collaborative commissioning arrangement with Kent County Council (KCC) whereby Victim Support provide the initial triage and referral service for all DA victims as part of KIDAS.

2022/23 was the final extension year for the contract and significant work was undertaken to recommission the service. The new Kent Victim's Advocacy and Support Service commenced on 1 April 2023.

Outcomes

- Support provided ranged from practical needs, immediate emotional support, management of safeguarding concerns, referral to specialist support services and advocacy support.
- A total of 103,650 referrals were received with 80,614 contacted and offered support.
- 90% of those who received support would recommend the service to someone else impacted by crime.
- 89% said the service had helped them cope and recover more quickly from the impact of crime.
- 91% were highly satisfied or satisfied with the service.

• Restorative Justice (£207,000)

Delivered by Restorative Solutions (commissioned 2017).

Provides victim focused RJ across Kent and Medway and is available to victims of all crime types with specific risk assessments in place for harm related cases such as DA and SA.

The service aims to reduce the harm caused to individuals and communities by preventing further harm being caused, supporting victims long term recovery and supporting offenders to understand the impact of their actions.

The service has been impacted by the challenges in the CJS which has resulted in many victims feeling disillusioned and failing to engage with support services. The service is also holding cases for longer due to the difficulty in progressing to a court outcome.

Outcomes

- 182 referrals received relating to offences ranging from murder to common assault.
- Of the 287 victim cases closed, 129 resulted in a restorative conversation, 7 in-direct RJ (either shuttle or letter) and 10 in a direct RJ conference.

It also offers a dedicated APVC Service to address growing demand. This exceeded expectations with 139 referrals, leading to a positive conversion rate of 27% for direct and indirect conferences as well as over 90% engagement by service users.

Case study

A blended family were referred to the service with all having suffered past trauma including some historic DA.

A child in the family would become verbally and physically aggressive if challenged or chastised, arguing a lot with a sibling which often escalated resulting in the child lashing out at the parent.

The facilitator held detailed individual discussions with all family members to understand their perspectives and concerns, which then led to a family meeting.

The child explained how they got frustrated and lashed out because they didn't feel listened to at times, with the parent explaining they could always come and talk to them.

Facilitated discussions continued and they became more confident in stating how they felt and being honest with each other. The family members then agreed actions as individuals and as a family to help them move forward, including spending more time talking so issues could be aired when they were calm.

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

Delivered by Family Matters (commissioned 2018).

Provides support to victims of rape and SA across Kent and Medway regardless of when the crime took place or if reported to the police.

The service supports both adults and C&YP, including their immediate family members if needed. It provides dedicated ISVAs who offer independent support, advocacy and impartial advice and information. This might include information on reporting to the police, accessing Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) services, or other services such as health. The service also provides specialist counselling for those who have experienced rape and SA, which can be accessed with or without ISVA support. Most of the referrals into the service are from Kent Police and the SARC, but individuals can also self-refer for support.

Demand for therapeutic support continued to grow significantly and unfortunately this has led to extended wait times. It is a growing area of risk and one that will continue to be reviewed during 2023/24.

Outcomes

- 694 ISVA and 497 counselling referrals received.
- For those engaging with ISVAs, emotional support, communication with the police, legal / court information and keeping safe were the main areas of need.
- For C&YP, support for families and their wider support network were high areas of need, alongside emotional support.
- A high number of victims supported reported improved health and wellbeing, being better able to cope with managing aspects of everyday life and better informed and empowered to act.

- **Family Welfare Service**

Delivered by Victim Support (commissioned 2021).

This service was commissioned to provide tailored support and specialist interventions for close relatives

impacted by Operation Sandpiper (the investigation into offences committed in hospitals by David Fuller). It provided a 24/7 support line in the initial stages of notification and support at significant points during the criminal justice process. It continues to provide case worker led support and access to specialist therapeutic services.

The service has and continues to provide much needed and valuable support to the families impacted; it has been extended to 30 April 2024.

- **Appropriate Adult Service (£222,522)**

Delivered by The Appropriate Adult Service (TAAS) (commissioned 2022).

In January 2022, KCC advised it would no longer provide Appropriate Adults (AA) for vulnerable adults in Kent Police Custody Suites as their statutory duty related to juveniles only.

Following discussions, I undertook a commissioning process to provide AAs for vulnerable adults within the KCC area and out of hours support for both vulnerable adults and juveniles when required across the county.

The service commenced in October 2022 and ensures the rights, entitlements and welfare of those detained or attending a voluntary interview in custody or non-custody setting, are effectively safeguarded.

Outcomes

- October 2022 to March 2023, TAAS provided AAs to 1,237 individuals eligible to receive the service.
- Vulnerabilities of those supported include mental health, anxiety, learning disabilities, depression, self-harm and unable to read or write.
- Whilst due to the nature of the service it is not always appropriate to request feedback, it has been overwhelmingly positive with 52% of adults and 44% of juveniles stating the support was excellent.

National expectations:

The strategic Policing Requirement

The Strategic Policing requirement (SPR) sets out those threats which, in the Home Secretary's view, are the biggest threat to public safety and must be given due regard by PCCs when issuing or varying Police and Crime Plans. It supports PCCs as well as Chief Constables to plan, prepare and respond to these threats by clearly linking the local response to the national, highlighting the capabilities and partnerships that policing needs to ensure it can fulfil its national responsibilities.

A revised version of the SPR was published in February 2023 which provided strengthened detail around the action required from policing at the local and regional level to the critical national threats. The 2023 SPR sets out seven identified national threats. These are as follows:

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

These remain from the 2015 version, but the 2023 SPR saw the addition of VAWG, reflecting the threat it presents to public safety and confidence.

Given this Annual Report is for the year April 2022 to March 2023, it will not respond in detail to the revised SPR due to the timing of its publication. However, as PCC, I am confident I have given due regard to the seven threat areas identified in the 2023 SPR in my Police and Crime Plan and in my role holding the Chief Constable to account.

An assurance statement outlining how I have had regard to the SPR and it has influenced the strategic direction and objectives set for the force will be included in future Annual Reports.

National Crime and Policing Measures

The Government is clear that PCCs must achieve significant reductions in crime and restore the public's confidence in the CJS.

The [Beating Crime Plan](#) is the Government's strategy to do this; it makes clear, evidenced-based and targeted interventions, underpinned by common sense policing lay at the heart of reducing crimes such as burglary and robbery. The Home Secretary has also made it clear to Chief Constables and PCCs that they must get the basics right and improve forces' performance across the country.

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

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

Reduce murder and other homicides

In 2022/23, there were 15 murders and other homicides; an increase of 7.1% (or 1) on the previous year.

Reduce serious violence

• Firearms offences

In 2022/23, there were 156 offences classified as Gun crime; a decrease of 27.8% (or 60) on the previous year.

• Knife related offences

- Data from NHS regarding u25 admissions for assault with a sharp object is not available; Kent Police use proxy measures based on recorded offences.
- In 2022/23, tier one and two knife related offences decreased by 6.6% (or 62) compared to the previous year.
- The VRU monitors knife enabled Serious Violent Crime for under 25s. In 2022/23, there was a 15.6% increase compared to the previous year.

• Violence with injury

In 2022/23, there were 18,059 offences; a decrease of 1.3% (or 232) on the previous year. Compared to year ending June 2019 baseline, a decrease of 10.8% (or 2,182).

• Robbery

In 2022/23, there were 1,261 offences; an increase of 5.8% (or 69) on the previous year. Compared to year ending June 2019 baseline, a decrease of 36.4% (or 721).

Disrupt drugs supply and county lines

In 2022/23, there were 4,826 drug offences; an increase of 16.2% (or 674) on the previous year. Compared to year ending June 2019 baseline, an increase of 52.2% (or 1,656).

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

- Trafficking in controlled drugs increased by 85.3% (or 964) on the previous year; and increased by 111.3% (or 1,103) on the June 2019 baseline.
- Possession of drugs (excl. Cannabis) increased by 9.7% (or 64) on the previous year; and increased by 37.9% (or 199) on the June 2019 baseline.
- Possession of Cannabis reduced by 15.2% (or 358) on the previous year; and increased by 20.7% (or 342) on the June 2019 baseline.

Reduce neighbourhood crime (NHC)

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

In 2022/23, there were 15,332 NHC offences in total; an increase of 4.2% (or 614) on the previous year. Compared to the year ending June 2019 baseline, a decrease of 33.5% (or 7,730).

- Personal robbery increased by 15% (or 161) on the previous year; and decreased by 32.1% (or 584) on the June 2019 baseline.
- Theft from the person increased by 4.8% (or 48) on the previous year; and decreased by 18.6% (or 237) on the June 2019 baseline.
- Vehicle crime increased by 7.2% (or 562) on the previous year; and decreased by 27.5% (or 3,151) on the June 2019 baseline.
- Residential burglary decreased by 1.3% (or 63) on the previous year; and decreased by 43.8% (or 3,714) on the June 2019 baseline.

Tackle cyber-crime

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

In 2022/23, there were 114 online related offences where the victim was an organisation; a decrease of 29.2% (or 47) on the previous year.

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

Kent Police conducts three satisfaction surveys:

- DA - in 2022/23, overall victim satisfaction was 88.4%; a small reduction on 89.2% in the 12 months to March 2022.
- Hate Crime - in 2022/23, overall victim satisfaction was 82.7%; a reduction on 87.5% in the 12 months to March 2022.
- Rape - there are two key elements based upon whether a) the victim felt they were treated with dignity and respect, and b) they felt they were treated fairly throughout the case.
 - In 2022/23, 93.6% of victims felt that officers treated them with dignity and respect; a reduction on 96.2% in the 12 months to March 2022.
 - In 2022/23, 89.1% of victims felt they had been treated fairly throughout the case; a reduction on 90.9% in the 12 months to March 2022.

Policing Vision 2025

First published in 2016 by the APCC and the National Police Chiefs' Council, [Policing Vision 2025](#) set out a decade-long plan for policing to shape decisions about how police forces use their resources to keep people safe.

It set out what a police service should look like in 2025:

- Local policing tailored to society's complex and diverse needs.
- Specialist capabilities better prepared to respond to existing and emerging crime types.
- A workforce of confident professionals able to operate with a high degree of autonomy and accountability.
- Digital policing will make it easier for the public to make contact with the police.
- Joined up business delivery of policing support services and community safety.
- Clear accountability arrangements.

As evidenced through this report, I am satisfied that Kent Police is either delivering, or on the path to delivering the Policing Vision 2025.

Whilst funding nationally remains difficult, the force has the highest number of officers in its history, has continued to increase its accessibility and visibility with local neighbourhood policing forming the bedrock of its service, and delivered appropriate specialist capability to tackle all forms of criminality. Accountability arrangements are also clear and transparent with opportunities for the public to observe them in practice.

[Policing Vision 2030](#) has now been published and builds on the successes of Vision 2025.

Legislation

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

During 2022/23, I am satisfied that Kent Police embraced new legislation such as the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act which received Royal Assent on 28 April 2022 to keep local communities safe.

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

Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody

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

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

In recognition of PCCs being accountable to the public, and responsible for holding police forces to account, the report included the following recommendation:

'Recommendation 53 - PCCs should report annually on deaths and serious incidents in police custody in their jurisdictions'.²

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

In 2022/23, a total of 24,473 people were processed through Kent custody suites. I can report the force recorded no deaths in police custody and 28 serious injuries. The majority involved no lasting injury and they predominantly related to self-harm and collapses caused by prior consumption of drugs or alcohol.

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

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

² The report does not include a definition of 'serious incident' and it is not a term that the IOPC or forces use.

As your Police and Crime Commissioner, I'm happy to help or answer your questions.

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