

Making Kent Safer

Annual Report
2023 - 2024



Contents

Commissioner's Introduction	2
Making Kent Safer Plan	3
My priorities for the Chief Constable:	
• Work with residents, communities and businesses to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour	4
• Tackle violence against women and girls	4
• Protect people from exploitation and abuse	4
• Combat organised crime and county lines	5
• Be visible and responsive to the needs of communities	5
• Prevent road danger and support Vision Zero	6
• Protect young people and provide opportunities	6
The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner	7
My commitments as PCC:	
<i>Community engagement</i>	8
• Hold all agencies to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system	8
• Work in partnership with the police and others to prevent crime and anti-social behavior	11
• Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation	14
• Secure the funding that Kent needs through specific grants and the funding formula review	16
• Support volunteering	17
• Commission services for victims that are needs-led	18
National expectations:	
• Strategic Policing Requirement	23
• National Crime and Policing Measures	24
• Policing Vision 2025	25
• Legislation	25
Independent Review of Deaths and Serious Incidents in Police Custody	25
How to contact me	26

Commissioner's Introduction

As your Police and Crime Commissioner, it is my privilege to present the Annual Report for 2023/24, my eighth year in office.

The role of Police and Crime Commissioner covers a wide range of duties across policing, criminal justice and community safety, but the cornerstone is public engagement informing effective scrutiny. Through a comprehensive programme of visits and events I engaged with residents and businesses, listening to what they had to say, and holding the Chief Constable to account.

In this capacity I am delighted to report that Kent Police continued to improve its public call handling performance, with its national ranking for 999 calls answered in under 10 seconds improving from 28th in April 2023, to 2nd in March 2024. Importantly, this means the public are now receiving the service they expect and deserve. The Force also worked incredibly hard to address the areas for improvement identified in HMICFRS' most recent PEEL inspection, such as how it stores problem-solving plans and shares good practice. With some already discharged, I am confident progress will continue serving only to strengthen Kent Police's capabilities.

In 2023/24 Kent Police introduced a new Neighbourhood Policing Model. At its heart is early intervention and effective engagement with every Ward having a named police officer. Whilst it has taken time to fully resource, feedback has been positive, and I am confident that it will deliver a better policing service to the communities of Kent and Medway.

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, and I will continue to press for action that makes a difference locally and nationally.

With the support of my office, I was successful in securing additional funding of £3.2m for my commissioning budget. This enabled me to: provide support to victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse; help organisations to manage increased demand due to delays in the justice system; and to deliver services for young people at risk of youth violence and criminal exploitation. I also issued grants to the Community Safety Partnerships so they could support the priorities in my [Making Kent Safer](#) plan.

Kent is a high performing force, but I know they could achieve more with extra funding. Every penny is precious, and I will ensure Kent taxpayers get value for money. I also give you an assurance that I will continue to press for a funding formula that is fit for purpose to secure the funding and resources necessary to protect local communities – now and in the future.

Finally, I would like to thank every Kent Police officer, Police Community Support Officer, member of staff and volunteer for their tireless efforts during 2023/24. 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 keep it under constant review. PCCs also have a duty to consult victims and the wider community on their priorities. On 1 April 2022, I published '[Making Kent Safer – April 2022 to March 2025](#)'. It sets the priorities for Kent Police, partners and my Office, as well as the overall strategic direction of policing and community safety in the county to March 2025.

I have taken the decision to formally refresh my plan annually and am committed to encouraging feedback from as many of the 1.9 million people living in the county.

My Annual Policing Survey ran from July to November 2022. I received a total of 2,964 responses – this is a summary of the results.

Victim satisfaction surveys conducted by Kent Police for certain crime types¹ consistently show satisfaction ranging from 75-90%. This is more positive than the results of Q9, and will be an area of focus in my next Police and Crime Plan.

I would like to thank all those who took the time to have their say.

However, the survey was only one element of the consultation; it also took account of correspondence received by my Office, feedback from engagement events, emerging local threats and national guidance.

As a refresh, the plan was updated where necessary but not fundamentally altered. The consultation found strong support for the priorities (Q3) and the issues respondents felt were most important were consistent with the previous year (Q16). My refreshed plan was considered and supported by the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel. The plan was published on 1 April 2023.

At its core is integrity and transparency. As 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.

Q3. Do you agree with the priorities set for Kent Police?	
	% strongly agree or agree
Prevent crime & ASB	92.7
Tackle violence against women & girls	85.7
Protect people from exploitation & abuse	86.1
Combat organised crime & county lines	90.2
Be visible & responsive to needs of communities	90.4
Prevent road danger & support Vision Zero	74.2
Protect young people & provide opportunities	77.2

Q4. How safe do you feel where you live? (1 = very unsafe / 10 = very safe)
➤ Respondents felt 7.2 / 10 safe where they live [2021 = 7.0 / 10]

Q5. Have you been a victim of crime in Kent in the last year?
➤ 17.9% indicated 'Yes'

Q9. If you reported the crime, how satisfied were you with Kent Police?
➤ 21.6% very satisfied or satisfied
➤ 29.0% neutral
➤ 49.4% dissatisfied or very dissatisfied

Q16. Which of the following issues do you feel are the most important?
➤ Respondents could select up to six issues from a pre-defined list, the top five were:
1. Serious violence, incl. gangs / weapon offences
2. Sexual offences, incl. rape
3. Anti-social behaviour
4. Child sexual exploitation
5. Burglary / Robbery

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 my Office 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:

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

¹ Domestic Abuse, Hate Crime and Rape.

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.

- Tackling nuisance vehicles is a priority for the force and joint enforcement activity was planned throughout its 'Safer Summer' campaign. During 'days of action' it used a mixture of high-profile patrols, technological tactics such as drones and static cameras to bear down on repeat offenders and locations that regularly suffered from the problem. Kent Police was also the first force to use the Athena Problem-Solving Platform, allowing it to link data much more effectively and share it quickly with partners to achieve better outcomes.

Delivering results: *In August 2023, the force conducted a planned response to the anti-social use of vehicles in Medway. This resulted in:*

- 6 Section 59 warning notices being issued
- 2 vehicle seizures
- 1 person being reported for having no insurance
- 1 arrest for a racially aggravated public order offence
- 2 drug searches and 2 seizures
- 1 Community Protection Warning being issued
- 12 Intelligence reports being submitted

- From 16 October 2023, led by the National Business Crime Centre, Kent Police participated in 'Safer Business Action Week'. Examples of the impact include:
 - Proactive joint patrolling across the county with Local Council Enforcement teams such as Trading Standards as well as British Transport Police.
 - Over 75 premises visited in Maidstone alone; provided crime prevention advice and proactive interventions targeted at more vulnerable locations.
 - Over £3,000 worth of items recovered from proactive overt and covert patrolling with shoplifters detained in the act.
 - License visits conducted across the county and targeted operations such as that in Dartford, which advised local stores on selling alcohol to street drinkers due to concerns about ASB.

• 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.

- Kent Police engaged with over 7,000 women and girls to understand what it is like to live, work and socialise in the county. Events included: 40 Walk & Talks allowing officers to walk with women and girls to see the local area through their eyes; VAWG engagement events where members of the public and wider stakeholders could engage directly with the force; and engagement through sporting events, a Taylor Swift cinema event and Alice in Wonderland themed afternoon tea party.
- Kent Police adopted Project Vigilant, a nationally recognised tactic to identify predatory behaviour in the night-time economy - the aim being to prevent sexual offending by challenging individuals observed as being a potential risk. Officers and staff were trained and deployed throughout the year. Information obtained during the deployments was collated, and where the force could evidence a pattern of behaviour, it sought to secure civil orders that would prohibit individuals from behaving in ways that could cause harassment and distress to women and girls.

Delivering results: *Plain clothed officers observed a male in Canterbury acting suspiciously. He was seen to approach two women outside a restaurant. Following a brief interaction, he walked away. Uniformed officers spoke to the women. One of the females informed officers that the male had made lewd comments towards her. Based on the report, the male was arrested.*

• 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.

- Due to its geographical location, Kent acts as a gateway to and from the continent which organised criminals use for trafficking and exploitation. The Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) Team are part of the collaborated Serious Crime Directorate (SCD). They focus on developing intelligence and proactively targeting those criminals and Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) involved in the exploitation of vulnerable people, specifically with regards to MSHT and organised immigration offences.

Delivering results: A father (originally from Syria) kidnapped his four children from social services care in Austria. The children were brought across the Channel in a small boat and intercepted by Border Force who alerted Kent Police to a potential kidnap reported by the Austrian authorities. The defendant was charged and subsequently pleaded guilty to 1 x entering the country illegally and 4 x facilitation offences relating to the children.

- Fraud remains the most commonly experienced crime and accounts for over 40% of all crime in England and Wales. From forgery to misuse of funds or credit card scams, fraud perpetrators are increasingly finding new ways to trick people out of their money. In 2023/24, Kent Police continued to investigate offences of fraud, money laundering, economic crime, and cyber-crime.

Delivering results: SCD officers took part in an operation with warrants executed across the Southeast. This led to numerous arrests for suspected fraud, including:

- a 60-year-old man in the Maidstone area in connection with misuse of company funds;
- a 74-year-old man in East Sussex for allegedly forging a signature on legal papers relating to a house sale in Sevenoaks; and
- a 33-year-old man for alleged credit card offences, including a chargeback fraud around 28 tickets to a Kent tourist attraction; and

• **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. They investigate the county line activity which carries the greatest threat risk and harm and target those who supply controlled drugs.

Delivering results: In October 2023, investigators learned Ricardo Cain was travelling from Penge to Swanley to supply class A drugs. Officers found the 24-year-old used a specific phone number to send texts offering the drugs to local users. When officers raided his home, he was found inside with £250 in cash; he also threw heroin and wraps of crack cocaine out of a window, which were recovered. Cain, who was already on licence for a drug-dealing offence, was arrested. The drugs were estimated to have a street value of between £500 and £1,120. Cain was charged with being concerned in the supply of crack cocaine and heroin and pleaded guilty at Maidstone Crown Court. He was sentenced to 4 years in prison.

- The Serious Organised Crime Team has continued to pursue those offenders that cause the most threat, harm and risk, targeting 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. Such crimes have a significant impact on the public; OCGs ruthlessly target the most vulnerable, ruining lives.

Delivering results: In July 2023, an operation was launched to target a drugs supply network in the east of the county. A range of tactics were deployed, leading to the identification and targeting of David Allen, a 54yr old man from Marden. The investigation identified a container near Allen's home address which proved crucial in uncovering his criminality. On 27 July, officers arrested Allen before executing warrants which led to the recovery of 64kg of amphetamine, 1.2kg of cocaine, 33,000 diazepam tablets, £73,000 in cash, a large quantity of syringes, 2 firearms, various high-value watches, and other items. Allen was charged with a number of indictable offences and pleaded guilty at the earliest opportunity; he was sentenced to 6yrs imprisonment.

• **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.

- The new Neighbourhood Policing Model was launched in June 2023 and consists of Beat Officers, Neighbourhood Taskforces, Child Centred Policing Teams, the Rural Taskforce, and a Prevention Hub. A phased uplift in resources was planned to September 2024, with the first four phases of resourcing delivered by 31 March 2024. Whilst the model saw a reduction in PCSO posts, every Ward will have a named police officer and a higher proportion of resources will be owned at District level.

Delivering results: A report was received of a male wearing a balaclava, on an e-bike causing significant ASB in a town centre and a danger to road users. It was suspected the male was also using the e-bike to supply drugs. The Neighbourhood Taskforce conducted research and identified the male and his address. They conducted several operations to target and disrupt his activity and executed a warrant at his address, recovering the e-bike, drugs, cash, a Taser, and other weapons. The offender was charged and remanded with the Beat Officer providing reassurance patrols and engaging with those affected.

- 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. Investment from the Integrated Care Board has also improved provision including the launch of the crisis line 111 option 2, Safe Havens across Kent including two co-located within A&E departments and a new crisis house to avoid formal admissions. Whilst work continues, it has resulted in better outcomes for vulnerable people through a significant reduction in the use of police s.136 powers of detention:

2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
2,050	1,745	1,136	835	781

• **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.

- Kent Police is committed to supporting Vision Zero, the partnership road safety strategy that seeks to eliminate road deaths. The Vision Zero approach is incorporated into the daily business of the following teams: Roads Policing Unit, Roads Safety Unit, Serious Collision Investigations Unit, Safety Camera Team, Special Constabulary Roads Policing Unit and Community Speedwatch.

Delivering results: A multi-agency enforcement operation with the Roads Policing Unit, DVSA, HMRC and local authority Licensing Officers resulted in:

- 4 arrests for drug driving, offensive weapon plus other traffic offences
- 13 immediate vehicle prohibitions
- 13 delayed vehicle prohibitions
- 4 untaxed vehicles
- 4 mobile phone penalties
- 2 driver hour offences
- 12 seatbelt penalties
- 6 no insurance/MOT
- 1 overweight vehicle and 3 vehicle seizures

- On a daily basis the force continued to focus on those offences that have the most impact on road deaths. The following table summarises prosecutions by officers and the Kent & Medway Safety Camera Vans during 2023/24 compared to the previous year.

	Speed	Distraction	Seatbelt	Impairment
2022/23	22,004	1,493	1,172	3,521
2023/24	26,627	1,595	1,436	3,656
Difference	+4,623	+102	+264	+135

• **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.

- In 2023/24, an innovative, trauma informed child sexual exploitation joint training pilot project between the University of Kent and Kent Police was developed and delivered to investigators. The package followed the story of two young girls, Robyn and Molly, with officers interactively moving through the incident and investigation whilst trainers introduced topics such as childhood trauma, push and pull factors, the AWARE principles, victim blaming language and CPS advice. Around 100 officers across Missing Child & Exploitation Teams and Vulnerable Investigation Teams attended, with the course being well received by attendees and attracting national interest.
- The force increased the number of officers and staff working in the Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) to combat online child abuse. The new staff went through a comprehensive training programme and have access to enhanced welfare arrangements designed to support staff in roles where they are routinely exposed to trauma. In POLIT this is particularly acute due to the amount of indecent material they must view and the depravity of offenders they deal with.

Delivering results: A suspect repeatedly sent indecent images to two children. Despite receiving several replies, clearly stating their ages and that they were at school, he continued to bombard them with messages, urging them to engage in sexual activity and requested they send him indecent images. He also made efforts to meet one of them in Sevenoaks, where he planned to carry out abuse on a train. At Maidstone Crown Court, he admitted two counts of attempting to engage in sexual communication with a child and three counts of attempting to cause a child to engage in sexual activity and was found guilty despite a denial of a further charge of attempting to arrange or facilitate the commission of a child sex offence. He was jailed for seven years and upon release will be subject to an indefinite sexual harm prevention order. He was also added to the sex offender register for life.

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) supports me in discharging my statutory responsibilities and delivering my manifesto, as set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

The staff do not change with the election of a new PCC and are politically restricted. This means they are not allowed to support me, as the incumbent PCC, or any other candidate to stand for election or become involved in party political work on my behalf.

The OPCC is a separate organisation to Kent Police, and therefore staff also have no operational policing responsibilities.

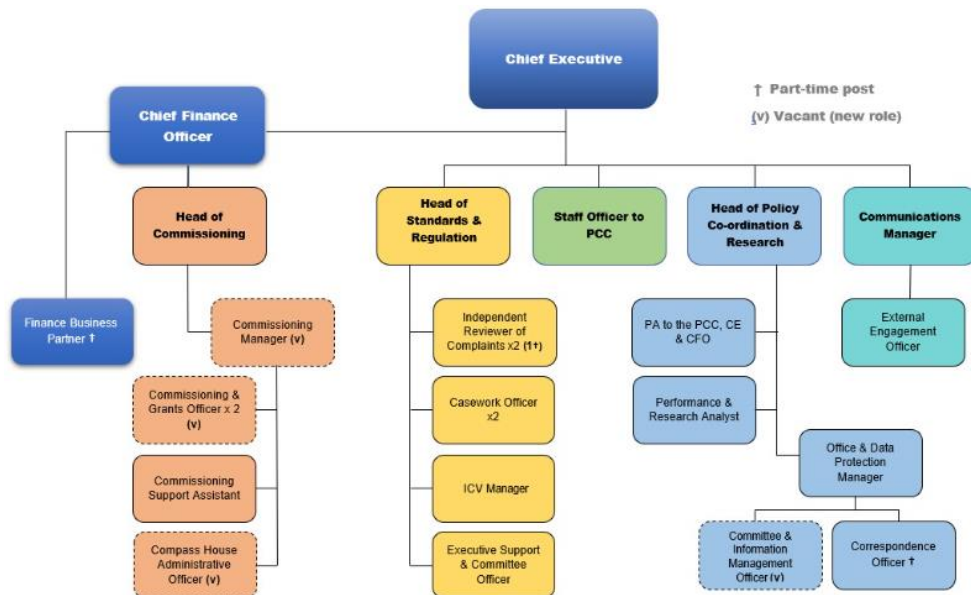
There are two statutory roles within the OPCC:

- the Chief Executive who leads the office and is responsible for all the staff; and
- the Chief Finance Officer who is responsible for the financial strategy and ensuring good value for money.

In addition, the OPCC senior leadership team consists of the following:

- Head of Standards and Regulations;
- Head of Commissioning;
- Head of Policy Coordination and Research;
- Staff Officer to the PCC; and
- Communications Manager.

The structure of the OPCC is shown below:



With 25 established posts, the OPCC is smaller than many offices around the country. However, its contribution in terms of holding Kent Police to account on behalf of the public, supporting victims of crime and improving community safety should not be underestimated. For example, in 2023/24, my Commissioning Team was successful in securing a total of £3,172,439 in additional funding from central government to ensure new and existing services could be supported across Kent and Medway.

In supporting me, the team operates under the 'seven principles of public life'. These principles were set out by Lord Nolan in 1995 and apply to anyone who works as a public-office holder. The seven principles are:

- Accountability
- Honesty
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Selflessness
- Openness
- Leadership

The OPCC is committed to providing value for money. In 2023/24 there was no increase in the cost of running the office, with the budget being maintained at £1.5m – the same level as in 2017. This was just under 0.4% of Kent's total, annual policing budget.

In 2023/24, the OPCC received:

- Over **5,000** pieces of correspondence via email, online through the website or in hard copy. This included requests for information, invitations to meetings/events, members of the public wishing to complain about Kent Police and promotional/sales material.
- Of which, **3,300** were casework requiring a response from my Casework Officers. A high proportion were members of the public wishing to make a complaint about Kent Police and therefore referred to the Kent Police Professional Standards Department (PSD). Examples of other issues raised include: the processing of Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks; the processing of firearms licensing applications/renewals; the use of e-scooters/e-bikes on roads and pavements; and the XL-Bully dog legislation.
- **230** requests from members of the public for an independent review into how their complaint against Kent Police was handled by PSD.
- **70** Freedom of Information Act requests and **20** Subject Access Requests.

My commitments as PCC:

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 corporate [@PCCKent](#) X account (formerly Twitter) had 11,500 followers, and interactions on the platform averaged at about 1,000 views per post. The number of people following the OPCC on [Instagram](#) grew to 855, and the [Facebook page](#) increased its reach to 911 followers. Videos were posted on the OPCC [YouTube](#) channel with the most popular content, including clips from my quarterly Performance and Delivery Board meeting, being viewed up to 1000 times. My office also utilised [Nextdoor](#) which has more than 350,000 members, with posts viewed regularly by in excess of 20,000 people. The OPCC and I also continued to engage via the website and a regular [e-newsletter](#) was circulated to more than 5,000 subscribers, almost 450 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 Tunbridge Wells, Maidstone, Bluewater and on the Isle of Sheppey. I have also attended various Parish Council, Women's Institute, Rotary Club and Public Meetings. In addition, I joined students at the Medway Freshers Fair and visited the Gravesend Gurdwara, Thanet Synagogue and Margate Mosque.

Visiting charities the OPCC supports is equally important and this year I met with representatives from a wide range, including: SATEDA and DAVVS, both charities supporting victims of domestic abuse (DA); Choices Support, a charity that supports autistic people, people with learning disabilities and/or mental health needs; Dandelion Time, a charity that supports children who have suffered traumatic experiences; and SignHealth, a service that supports deaf people to lead independent, safe and healthy lives.

A number of the charities were also invited to join the OPCC in our marquee at the Kent Police Open Days in July 2023, which was attended by over 15,000 people.

Following the launch in February 2023 of my Victim Voice pamphlet which is designed to help victims of crime find the support and help they may need, I have continued to raise awareness and delivered presentations to a range of groups. It has also been promoted widely via social media and the OPCC website, where [further information](#) is available.

Hold all agencies to account for delivery of an effective and efficient criminal justice system

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

This accountability is underpinned by a range of effective governance arrangements. However to build and maintain public trust and confidence, these arrangements must be visible and accessible. Therefore, they 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 me and the Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner. Keeps collaboration under review and holds both Chief Constables to account.
Complemented by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective assessments by HMICFRS • The OPCC conducting checks / audits • Feedback from Independent Custody Visitors • Regular meetings with public bodies & inspectorates 	

As my principle means of holding the Chief Constable to account, Performance and Delivery Board meetings were held on 7 June, 13 September, 29 November and 28 February 2024. Examples of topics discussed include:

Neighbourhood Policing Review: In light of the financial challenges and changes to the policing landscape and core neighbourhood policing (NHP) guidelines, the Chief Constable determined it was the right time to remodel NHP in Kent.

The force conducted extensive consultation and engagement with officers and staff, and the Business Case was one of the largest and most impactful on the

workforce for many years. The new model saw an uplift in police officer numbers and a reduction in police staff posts.

The new model consists of the following: Beat Officers, Neighbourhood Taskforces, Child Centred Policing Teams, the Rural Taskforce, and a Prevention Hub. At its heart is early intervention and effective engagement with every Ward having a named police officer.

The force formally moved to the new model on 7 June 2023, and to avoid impacting on other functions aims to be up to establishment by September 2024.

Throughout the review I took a particular interest in the welfare of those officers and staff affected, and since implementation have received regular updates on progress. This will continue in 2024/25 as the force moves to a fully resourced model.

Call handling: In 2022/23, Kent Police’s 101 non-emergency call handling performance deteriorated, with an increase in unanswered calls and the time callers were waiting. The force took immediate action to address this, and also developed a longer term programme of strategic transformation. Whilst by March 2023 performance had improved, I made it clear to the Chief Constable that I expected 999 and 101 call handling performance to be maintained and would continue to receive updates at my Performance and Delivery Board.

In 2023/24, the average abandonment rate for 999 calls was 0.35%, a marked improvement compared to the previous year’s 1.29%. The average time taken to answer also steadily improved over the course of the year and for the month of March 2024 was 2 seconds. As a result, Kent Police’s ranking nationally also improved: in April 2023, it was 28th for average answer time and calls answered and in March 2024 it was 1st and 2nd respectively.

Similarly, 101 performance improved significantly with 91.25% of calls answered compared to 66.61% in 2022/23. The average time to answer also improved, reducing to 1 minute 6 seconds from 7 minutes 19 seconds the previous financial year.

I would like to congratulate Kent Police for making a real step change in performance and thank all the officers and staff involved for their hard work .

PEEL 2023-25: In holding the Chief Constable to account I am not solely reliant on data, but also consider other feedback, including independent assessments of performance.

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 November 2023, HMICFRS published the [Kent PEEL 2023-25 inspection report](#) – this is an overview of the graded judgements:

Outstanding		
Good	Preventing crime	Police powers & public treatment
	Protecting vulnerable people	Disrupting serious organised crime
	Developing a positive workplace	Leadership & force management
Adequate	Managing offenders	Tackling workforce corruption
Requires improvement	Investigating crime	Responding to the public
Inadequate		

I was pleased HMICFRS found that solved rates were increasing, and whilst Responding to the public was graded ‘Requires improvement’, it was evident at the time of the inspection that 999 and 101 call handling performance was already improving.

HMICFRS also agreed that 14 of the 19 Areas for Improvement (AFIs) issued in the previous PEEL inspection could be closed, with the remainder being superseded.

Overall it showed a more positive outlook for Kent Police, but two areas being graded ‘Requires improvement’ was disappointing and the force clearly needed to do more to improve outcomes for victims.

In response to the 14 AFIs issued by HMICFRS, the force developed an Improvement Plan and I received regular updates on progress at each Performance and Delivery Board.

Over the course of the year the Force made good progress in addressing the AFIs, self-assessing a number as discharged. Moving into 2024/25, this work continues.

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

Police Complaint Reviews

Following changes to the police complaint system in February 2020, the OPCC is one of two ‘review’ bodies (along with the Independent Office for Police Conduct) to which members of the public may appeal after they have complained to Kent Police and had a response from the PSD.

Subject to the nature of the complaint, it is the role of the OPCC to determine whether the handling of the complaint was reasonable and proportionate; and if not, to make recommendations to Kent Police to redress any concerns. This may

be that Kent Police apologises to the member of the public, through to the identification of process failures that need to be addressed. It is not a reinvestigation of the complaint itself though, as this is not within the PCC's remit.

In 2023/24, the OPCC received 230 requests for an independent review into how a complaint had been handled by Kent Police. Of those:

- 35 were upheld;
- 76 were not upheld, with a further 62 not upheld but points fed back to PSD;
- 15 were out-of-time (the Act places a 28-day limit on complainants to request a review unless there are special circumstances to justify an extension);
- 26 did not have sufficient information to enable a review;
- 13 were passed to the IOPC as the correct review body;
- 2 were withdrawn by the complainant; and
- 1 request was held in abeyance awaiting the grounds for the review.

Custody Detention Scrutiny Panel

In 2023/24, the Association of PCCs, and National Police Chiefs' Council (with Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Independent Custody Visitors Association support), contacted all PCCs and Chief Constables, with an expectation that all areas create and implement Custody Detention Scrutiny Panels (CDSPs).

It was recognised that scrutiny of custody was limited to either infrequent, large scale inspections - such as by HMICFRS - or regular, more limited review by Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs). Therefore CDSPs were to provide a more frequent, in depth review of custody and the practices within suites by:

- assessing and reporting on detention and custody processes;
- reviewing and advising on matters of disproportionality; and
- assisting in generating a transparent product suitable for public consideration at the end of each annual Panel cycle.

In Kent, the meeting is co-chaired by the OPCC Chief Executive, and one of the ICV Panel Coordinators. It includes representation from Kent Police, the Independent Advisory Group, both Appropriate Adult organisations, ICVs as well as OPCC staff. The meeting scrutinises data from custody, looking at the numbers detained, broken down by sex, ethnicity, age and vulnerability; complaint outcomes; and ICV quarterly reports.

The Panel has received updates on Kent Police's response to Inquest outcomes, and information on key issues such as staffing and training. It also recently produced a report on the treatment of detainees with mental health issues.

Wider criminal justice system (CJS): 2023/24 was my sixth year as chair of the Kent Criminal Justice Board (KCJB). The Board brings together chief officers from criminal justice (CJ) agencies and wider partners and has responsibility for overseeing CJ across Kent and Medway with the purpose of delivering effective, efficient and fair justice.

Over the last year the Board has focused on doing all it could to limit the increase in outstanding caseloads in both Magistrates and Crown Courts, which continued to rise resulting in ever longer delays to justice. With the increase in police officer numbers, work entering the system is simply greater than the wider CJS can manage. Kent also remains short of key resources including Judiciary, Magistrate Court Legal Advisors, Prosecution, Defence Counsel and Court Probation Officers, contributing to a lower than required number of courts sitting.

With Kent a national priority for Judicial cover and new recruits across agencies coming on board, there is some optimism that the increase in caseload numbers will slow and perhaps fall slightly going forward. However, the fact remains that Kent is nowhere near being in a position to enter a period of sustained recovery.

Maidstone Crown Court remains a critical issue; it is accepted the court does not have the physical capacity to manage the volume of work. This is a priority for HMCTS, and findings are awaited from a review into whether extra courtrooms can be added within the confines of the current site.

Increased case numbers and delays to justice have dramatically impacted the force's Victim and Witness Care Unit. Despite an increase in staff numbers the team remains under immense pressure to manage the volume of work required to update victims and witnesses along with increased anger, upset and levels of attrition from victims.

Through the KCJB, work continued on delivering efficiency improvements including maximising the use of Out of Court Disposals which increased significantly, along with delivering early guilty pleas and reducing avoidable adjournments. 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 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) personnel to raise the recruitment issue in Kent and across the Southeast, including the need for a Southeast allowance. Unfortunately, until the staffing shortages are addressed, delays to justice will not improve.

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 Home Office (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. The aim of the VRU is to develop a public health, preventative approach to serious violence across the county. Its work is carried out in line with the HO's 'All Systems Approach', and the elements that underpin it are:

- Driving and coordinating a multi-agency response to serious violence.
- Sophisticated data sharing.
- Involving young people and communities.
- Commissioning and delivering evidence-based activities and evaluating those activities where an evidence base does not yet exist.

The VRU identifies what is driving violent crime through the sharing of data. Using this model, it is better able to understand which partners are best able to support with a prevent or protect response.

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 the VRU is an evidence-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.

In 2023/24, the VRU has worked with young people and used their feedback to address issues in places where they felt most at risk. The young people have also provided support by designing resources for campaigns. This work used a place-based approach to drive a contextual safeguarding response to harm, and focused on building strengths in individuals, families, communities, and spaces.

The VRU commissions county-wide and locally designed services to deliver its prevention and intervention approach. In some cases, this is supported through my Commissioning budget. In 2023/24, examples included:

- Sports Connect, who to date have engaged with over 2,000 young people aged between 11 and 24 across eight districts. The programme creates bespoke sessions based on the needs of the area and the young people in attendance. It offers 1:1 mentoring and coaching sessions and delivers the Level 1 Sports Activator in Multi Skills course to increase social value and improve employment opportunities. Boxing sessions have also been rolled out and seen fantastic engagement.
- Catch 22, co-commissioned with my own Commissioning budget this delivered both preventative and protective interventions, supporting those up to the age of 25 at risk of exploitation 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. These responsibilities, coordinated through the OPCC, enable me to use my convening powers to chair the Board meetings which support its development, implementation, and the sharing of best practice.

The VRU was chosen as the lead to create and agree a Strategic Needs Assessment and Strategy which were both finalised and published in January 2024. The three main strands of the Strategy are:

- Serious Youth Violence – A 0-25 Approach (Board lead – KCC)
- Sexual Violence (SV) and DA (Board lead – Kent Police)
- Violence linked to Drugs and Alcohol (Board lead – Medway Public Health)

The Board leads have developed detailed plans for these strands to establish the actions required by the specified authorities in 2024/25.

Young Peoples Prevention Service (£75,000)

This was commissioned during 2022/23, with the service commencing on 1 October 2022. It is a 3-year contract to September 2025 with the option to extend.

The service provides age-appropriate messages to children and young people (C&YP) to support them make better, informed choices by highlighting risk factors which can increase the likelihood of a negative outcome. This approach also supports C&YP by showing them how they can de-escalate situations to help keep themselves and others safe.

Targeting C&YP aged 9 to 14 years, the service is delivered by two separate providers who cover the following topics:

- Collaborate Digital: Healthy Relationships (attitudes, behaviours, and safety), Online Harms and Cyber Safety and Cyber Bullying.
- St Giles Trust: Gangs, County Lines, Violence, Knife Crime and Criminal Exploitation.

Outcomes

Between September 2023 and January 2024, Collaborate Digital:

- *Delivered interactive assemblies and media workshops in 33 schools across North Kent – 18 primary and 15 secondary schools. To complete work commissioned earlier in the year, they also delivered to a further 3 primary and 5 secondary schools.*
- *The assemblies covered the most relevant and up-to-date information on online harms and the impact on young people. They highlighted Kent case studies to emphasise the message and described potential consequence. In the workshops, students were guided through a creative writing process in which they researched and produced scripts for short podcasts as a way of ensuring their understanding of the material.*
- *Of 629 surveys completed by students, the majority strongly agreed or agreed they had enjoyed the workshop, learnt new information and were more aware of issues around online harms.*

- *Positive feedback was also received from teachers stating the young people found the assemblies and workshops to not only be highly relevant, but an easy, enjoyable way to engage with the topic.*

Between September 2023 and July 2024, St Giles Trust:

- *Delivered 46 workshops across North Kent, reaching 5,276 young people.*
- *Delivered 5 workshops in professional settings, with another 4 scheduled for the end of July 2024.*
- *Feedback from school staff reflected a strong overall satisfaction with the student sessions.*
- *After attending workshops, teachers reported feeling more empowered to support their students with exploitation issues. They also felt better equipped to identify the signs and indicators of young people involved with gangs and county lines.*

Gangs and County Lines Preventative and Protective Interventions (£350,000)

This was commissioned in 2021, with the service commencing on 1 July 2022. It is a 3-year contract to 30 June 2025 with the option to extend.

The service is funded through the VRU funding I am allocated and my commissioning budget.

It provides age-appropriate, trauma informed, needs led support to 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.

During 2023/24, Catch22 extended provision to Maidstone whilst continuing to cover West Kent, Medway, Thanet, Swale, Canterbury and Ashford.

Outcomes

In 2023/24:

- *The service received 168 referrals, with 59.8% of the C&YP having complex needs.*
- *17 out of the 168 referrals were female – an increase of 10.1% on the previous year.*
- *18 C&YP successfully re-entered an education setting and 3 were referred to Catch22's Maidstone Skills Centre.*
- *100% felt more confident in their ability to make positive changes in their life and 90% felt safer because of the support provided by Catch22.*

Home Office Domestic Abuse Perpetrator Interventions Programme (£801,367)

In August 2021, my Commissioning team and I were successful in securing funding from the HO to implement DA and stalking perpetrator programmes in Kent. Delivery was focused on developing a coordinated response to DA and stalking perpetrators, with a focus on managing risk and ensuring the wellbeing and safeguarding of victims and their children. We were successful in securing funding for a further two years enabling the programme to continue until 31 March 2025.

Delivery is a collaborative approach between Interventions Alliance, Kent Police, Look Ahead and Victim Support. It provides the following:

- Intensive multi-agency case management to coordinate and sequence interventions for perpetrators, their victims, and their children.
- Early Response to provide targeted motivational, denial and minimisation work to increase engagement with programmes. This is supported by the Challenging Unhealthy Relationships Beliefs and Behaviours Programme (CURBB).
- Two 1:1 behaviour change interventions; Healthy Relationships (HR) and Compulsive Obsessive Behaviour Interventions (COBI). HR is based on cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT) and COBI is based on dialectical behaviour therapy (DBT).
- Victim Protection and support delivered by a Victim Link Worker (Qualified IDVA) in line with Safelives Standards, a Step-Down Worker, and the Stalking Advocacy Service.

Outcomes

In 2023/24, the programme:

- Received 51 referrals and conducted 25 assessments.
- 17 individuals completed the programme and 3 partially completed it. The reasons for non-completion were assessed resulting in additional training for staff.
- A total of 147 victims (plus children) were supported.
- The Step-Down Worker provided extended support to victims whose ex-partner/partner withdrew support, and to those who required further assistance with housing, benefits, and budgeting, even after completing the service. As a result, the time spent in service increased from the standard 180 days to an average of 300 days.
- Referrals were also made to counselling/therapy sessions and there was positive engagement with the 10-week Phoenix Programme resulting in improvements in self-care and DA awareness.
- The Project Mirabel questionnaire indicated a 61% reduction in perpetrator risk for those completing Healthy Relationships and a 44% increase in awareness of attitude and behaviours.

Cookham Wood – Haven 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. It concluded in 2023/24 when a safe exit was managed for those being supported.

Delivery of the project highlighted the challenge of young people being able to identify as victims. Alongside this, they were reluctant to engage in victim support on release, mainly because they had a lot of licence conditions they had to adhere to, so adding more requirements was a barrier.

Outcomes

In 2023/24, of the Kent individuals supported:

- 40% reported an increase in their wellbeing score, with 60% remaining the same.
- 80% reported a reduction in violent behaviour.

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 funding is provided to support them deliver against the priorities set out in my Making Kent Safer plan.

Total allocated spend for 2023/24 across the 14 CSPs was £558,385, and £828,889 was allocated to other statutory partners or providers such as Kent Youth justice Team, the Kent and Medway Drug and Alcohol Partnerships and Crimestoppers.

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.

Examples of the types of projects delivered include:

- Gravesham CSP - 'Aloud to laugh' delivered by The Gr@nd Project
There were 4 'Aloud to laugh' music/entertainment events held in 2023/24 with 1,540 young people engaged.

The events were held at Blakes Nightclub in Gravesend with music provided by Capital Xtra 'DJ Teeshow'. Whilst billed as a 'social event', the events provided a useful opportunity to engage with young people about a range of personal safety issues, including hate crime, DA and VAWG. As well as raising awareness, the events helped to build confidence and trust in young people so they feel empowered to report and seek help should they experience issues.

- Maidstone CSP 'Safety in Action' delivered by Project Salus CIC
Safety in Action' (SIA) is an interactive multi agency event to which Year 6 children are invited to learn about some of the dangers they may face as they become more independent and prepare for transition to secondary school. The event covers a number of scenarios and aims to support the pupils to become responsible young adults, free from peer pressure and capable of making the right decisions to keep themselves, family, and friends safe.
In 2023-24, SIA was delivered to over 5,000 pupils, with 1,551 year 6 pupils attending the event from Maidstone.
- Thanet CSP 'Knife Crime Programme
This is part of Thanet CSP's school offer, including Pupil Referral Units, and is run with small groups through to large assemblies. Run in schools throughout Thanet, it aims to increase understanding on the dangers of carrying a knife, the impact of knife crime and build confidence and knowledge as well as empathy and positive decision making.
In 2023/24, 9 schools received the input with over 900 pupils engaged.

Be responsive to emerging issues and trends through innovation

Operation Voice

Kent Police focuses on the offences that are most likely to contribute to death and serious injury on our roads, including speed, the use of mobile phones, seatbelts and impairment through alcohol or drugs. They also deal with drivers for other offences including no tax and insurance.

Tackling road danger is also a priority for me which is why I was pleased to secure £100,000 funding from the Department of Transport to run a pilot initiative involving officers from the Roads Policing Unit stopping drivers who had a history of violence towards women and girls.

The activity took place in December and focused on drivers in Ashford, Chatham, Gillingham, Margate, Ramsgate and Dover.

A number of drivers stopped had a history of prior offending, including for violence against women and girls and drug driving. As this initiative proves, roads policing also has other applications and can be used to target a multitude of offenders to make the county's roads and neighbourhoods safer.

The initiative has continued into 2024/25 at various locations around Kent.

Outcomes

83 stops conducted resulting in:

- *55 Traffic Offence Reports or Graduated Fixed Penalty Notices.*
- *Ten drivers arrested for being impaired.*
- *Three vehicles seized.*

MoJ Local Integration of Women Services (£118,197)

In October 2022, Kent Police and the OPCC submitted a collaborative bid to the MoJ to develop a Whole System Approach to 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; in total £208,954 for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

As a result of the funding Kent Police have recruited a temporary Women's Justice post to lead on the creation of a Women's Justice Strategy for Kent, with a focus on proportionality in CJ outcomes and understanding root causes of offending. Through the established Women's Forum in Kent and Medway, links have been made with a number of providers and agencies to map the current support offer for women across a range of topics including homelessness, debt, education, recruitment, DA, and mental health.

Outreach has initially been focused on the custody environment, speaking to women, and understanding the range of needs they require support with. An

advocacy offer has been developed with a provider who will deliver the single point of contact for all women (aged 18+) who have additional support needs identified or have been issued with a police caution.

Safer Streets Fund 5 – Protecting Public Spaces

The HO launched the fifth round of the Safer Streets Fund in July 2023, with a focus on: tackling neighbourhood crime (domestic burglary, robbery, theft from person, vehicle crime); ASB; VAWG in public places, including inside night-time economy (NTE) venues; 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, three districts were identified and evidence-based bids developed. I was successful in securing funding for all three bids, totaling £1.4 million over the period 1 July 2023 to 30 September 2024.

Below are examples of activity delivered in each area:

Folkestone & Hythe – Folkestone Central Ward (£149,440)

- Provision of 24/7 monitoring of Folkestone Town Council CCTV network through a collaborative agreement with Swale Borough Council.
- Active Bystander Training, with 77% of participants stating they were 'very likely' to recommend to a friend or colleague.
- VAWG Training and Contextual Safeguarding Training, with most attendees strongly agreeing or agreeing they now had a better understanding of VAWG, where to get help and how to provide support.
- Engagement with 839 C&YP in more than 10 locations through youth outreach. Issues identified included drugs, alcohol, violence and sexual activity.
- Removal of graffiti and litter every week supported by the Town Sprucers.
- Development of a Safe Routes Scheme, now known as Folkestone Connected, to be delivered during 2024/25. Includes a Safe Taxi Scheme and improvements to the taxi ranks.
- Purchase and distribution of 50 Hollie Guard Apps to vulnerable women and girls.

Swale – Sittingbourne & Sheerness Town Centres (£154,686)

- Active Bystander Training, with 77% of participants stating they were 'very likely' to recommend to a friend or colleague.
- In Partnership with TMS Protection, Street Marshals patrolling Sheerness and Sittingbourne High Streets and surrounding areas during school holidays.
- Purchase and installation of a booster aerial for Business Crime Reduction Partnership (BCRP).
- Target hardening of empty premises attracting ASB, including permanent shuttering and fences.

- Purchase of 17 CCTV cameras - 6 re-deployable and 11 to be installed across the Borough.
- Youth outreach to challenge behaviour and perceptions of young people regarding ASB and VAWG. Two youth centre sessions each week and outreach at The Skate Park in Sittingbourne. Sessions also after school to promote the Vibe Youth Club, with attendance increasing by 61%.
- Additional lighting and environmental improvements in parks.

Medway – Chatham Town Centre (£118,006)

- New CCTV cameras installed to the rear of the High Street.
- Training planned for door and security staff in VAWG, drink spiking and welfare / vulnerability. Will commence in 2024/25.
- Youth Outreach including in Chatham and Luton and gaming sessions to support young people explore their consequential decision making. Positive feedback received on these activities.
- Environmental improvements, including removal of graffiti and fly-tipped rubbish. 875 total jobs for the period October 2023 to March 2024, with 16.2 tonnes of rubbish removed. 163 pieces of evidence also recovered to support future fly tipping investigations.
- Community outreach to raise awareness around VAWG particularly. Talks provided by Kent Police and KFRS on VAWG and safety in the NTE. Provision of promotional materials and safety items such as purse tags, card and key protectors, high-visibility key chains and waist bags, as well as information on the Hollie Guard App and how to be safe online.

Youth Survey

In April 2023 I launched an online survey to understand the online and offline experiences of young people.

The survey link was circulated to all schools and colleges in Kent by email, as well as youth groups and police cadet units.

All information was provided anonymously to encourage honesty and to protect the privacy of those taking part.

In total 4,400 responses were received revealing:

- 29.1% had been bullied online (up from 18% five years ago).
- Of those bullied online, 53.7% had told a parent /guardian, 44.1% a friend, but 22.1% told no-one.
- 90.5% of those bullied online still used the App on which the abuse took place and 56.9% knew the culprit.
- 11.5% had bullied someone online.
- 26.2% had been bullied, picked on or harassed on their way to or from school/college.

The results showed how important it is to educate young people about online safety and what constitutes a healthy relationship and appropriate behaviour. Young

people's lives are dominated by Apps and social media and so it is important to arm them with the tools they need to protect themselves.

As a result of the survey, and because of their ability to open the door to honest conversations with young people, the Collaborate Digital schools' programme was extended.

The [Survey Report](#) can be found on the OPCC website.

Victim Voice

I continued to promote my Victim Voice scheme which highlights 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. 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](#) was updated in 2023/24 to ensure it remained accurate and current and can be accessed via the OPCC website. I also delivered Victim Voice presentations to groups and at meetings all over the county.

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

As PCC, all funding for policing in Kent and Medway comes through my office including that which I give to the Chief Constable to deliver policing. I have always argued that the funding formula is out of date and inherently unfair on some PCC areas; Kent is one of those areas.

There was no clearer representation of this than the distribution of government funding for the 2023/24 pay award. As funding was allocated based on the existing funding formula and not on actual police officer numbers, one area with 900 fewer officers than Kent Police received approximately £12.0m more in funding.

I sent a letter to the then Chancellor, Jeremy Hunt for consideration ahead of the Autumn Statement 2023 requesting; the implementation of a new formula to be brought forward; for PCCs to receive a power of competency to enable revenue generating opportunities; and continued funding for BlueLight Commercial to explore further possibilities to save revenue across policing nationally.

Throughout the year, I have actively raised this issue at national forums and meetings including through the Association of PCCs (APCC). My Chief Executive (CEX) and Chief Finance Officer (CFO) have also fed into regional discussions and national mechanisms via the Association of Policing and Crime Chief Executives (APACE) and the Police and Crime Commissioners Treasurers' Society (PACCTS). In addition, my CFO and CEX, along with the force's CFO have held regular meetings with HO officials to discuss funding issues and the unique challenges of policing the county. I am also grateful for the support of the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel who wrote to the Government to highlight the inequity in the funding formula.

The previous Government's plans to review the Police Funding Formula were effectively 'timed' out' due to the General Election in July 2024. The new Government has launched a Comprehensive Spending Review to be announced in Spring 2025, so work on the funding formula is still on hold. However, my senior OPCC staff and I will continue to engage with Ministers and officials to set out the case for Kent to ensure the review is not forgotten and the county receives a fair share of national police funding.

Notwithstanding the issues with core government funding, funding opportunities do arise during the year, and I have been successful in bidding for additional funding.

My Commissioning team are tasked with identifying and applying for funding opportunities and attracted £3,172,439 of additional funding to my Commissioning budget for 2023/24 to deliver victim services, Safer Streets, and DA perpetrator interventions.

The services I commission, and grant fund range from community-based organisations that provide diversionary activities through to multi-year contracts that provide support to victims regardless of when the crime took place or if it was reported to the police. The additional funding was for specific service delivery during the year and meant the Commissioning budget was 93% greater than in 2015/16.

The force also continues to attract funding outside of government, although these funds tend to be time limited or specialist posts which means recruitment can be difficult. I have challenged the Chief Constable to maximise the use of external funding, and I monitor and scrutinise this on a regular basis.

Support volunteering

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

The purpose of the Cadets is not to recruit police officers of the future, but to encourage the spirit of adventure and good citizenship.

- The Senior Cadet programme is for young people aged 13 to 18 years and provides opportunities to develop life skills and prepare for future careers both within the police and other professions. As at 31 March 2024, there were 390 Senior Cadets located at 12 units across Kent and Medway.
- Whilst not every force has a Junior Cadet programme, it offers those aged 11 to 13 years an opportunity to learn about the police and get involved in supporting the local community. As at 31 March 2024, there were 39 Junior cadets located at units in Maidstone and Dover.
- The Mini Cadet programme is open to those aged 8 to 11 years and is run through primary schools. It is designed to teach about good citizenship and concentrates on building self-esteem as well as breaking down barriers with the police. With funding from the OPCC, since its launch in April 2021, over 80 schools have enrolled and more than 800 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 2024, there were 182 Special Constables who volunteered over 70,000 hours of policing in 2023/24.

Introduced in 2018/19, Community Police Volunteers (CPVs) provide direct support to specialist policing teams and help maintain a police presence in local communities. As at 31 March 2024, there were 62 trained CPVs who volunteered over 6,000 hours in 2023/24.

As at 31 March 2024, Kent Police also had 84 Police Support Volunteers in roles which made good use of their skills. Examples of work undertaken include provision of administrative support in various departments, vehicle maintenance and role-playing for student officer training.

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

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

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 2023/24, ICVs conducted 196 visits to custody suites and engaged with 630 DPs.

Areas of good practice identified by ICVs included:

- Distraction items – the range available including headphones and inner ear protectors for those with sensory issues, chalk boards on the walls and books in a number of different languages for different reading levels. North Kent's vulnerability room has comfortable chairs, books and multiple distraction items for those who need a break from their cell.
- Inclusivity items – the creation of picture cards for those DPs who may be non-verbal, unable to speak English, or with other challenges such as learning disabilities or autism to help them indicate their needs, concerns or general mood. Provision of the Rights and Entitlements in braille for those with sight loss, alongside an Easy Read version already available. The use of double handled 'Sippy' cups for those who may struggle to hold a normal cup due to health issues or shaking from being under the influence.

Areas requiring improvement identified included:

- Staffing – on several occasions ICVs noted that suites were running at minimal staffing levels, with no resilience. The Kent Police custody team submitted a report to the Chief Constable requesting more staff and included the ICVs concerns. An uplift in custody staff has been agreed and the force has a plan; the ICVs will continue to monitor staffing levels as it is implemented.
- Inspector reviews – ICVs found several instances where Inspector reviews were late, often with no reason given as required under PACE. Additionally, they found occasions where the DP was sleeping at the time of the review and there was no evidence in the custody record to suggest the detainee was informed of the outcome.

Overall, ICVs found the care to be excellent, with staff focused on the dignity and wellbeing of DPs.

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 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 2023/24 core commissioning budget consisted of a grant of £2,237,093 from the MoJ to deliver services to support victims. However, my Commissioning team worked hard to secure additional funding from central government and were successful in securing £1,830,742 to increase the provision of DA and SV victim support services.

All services and projects funded, regardless of whether they are contracts or grants are subject to oversight and governance by my Commissioning Team. This is to ensure they operate to an appropriate set of standards and the impact of delivery can be fully recognised.

Governance is proportionate to the level of funding provided but it is important that any service or project operates effectively and to the benefit of those accessing it. In addition, my commissioning processes and governance are subject to independent audit which enables learning and improvements to be identified.

My Commissioning Team also respond to any complaints raised about funded services or projects, with a recent example resulting in funding being withdrawn.

Victims Funding

I received several different funding streams from the MoJ for the delivery of services that support victims of crime. They consisted of the following:

- Victim Services Core Grant
- DA/SV Funding
- Independent Sexual Violence Adviser (ISVA) /Independent Domestic Violence Adviser (IDVA) Baseline Funding (700)
- ISVA/IDVA Additional Funding (200)
- ISVA/IDVA Additional Funding 23/24 (50)
- Male Rape Support Service Fund. (MRSSF)

The above funding streams were allocated through application processes which assessed the evidenced need, reach, delivery approach, impact, and cost of each proposal.

The following are examples of the organisations and services funded in 2023/24:

- Advocacy After Fatal Domestic Abuse (AAFDA) (£23,421) - 1 to 1 advocacy and peer support for those bereaved by suicide or unexplained death linked to DA and Domestic Homicide Reviews.

Supported 8 families with 100% reporting they were better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life.

- DA Volunteer Support Services (DAVSS) (£52,668) - to deliver the Support to Court Project for DA victims in West Kent engaged in civil and criminal court processes. Also the provision of advocacy support and a High Needs Coordinator.

- Brake (£40,325) — support for family members of those killed or seriously injured in road traffic collisions.

My team worked with Brake and Kent Police to change the referral mechanism to an opt-out process which resulted in a greater number of road victims and their families being able to access support. In one case Brake was supporting several different members of a family following a road death. All the family members were referred by Kent Police's Family Liaison Officers.

○ Received 124 referrals, of which 21 were onward referred for additional mental health support.

○ Of those supported, 87% reported they were better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life.

- East Kent Rape Crisis Centre (EKRCC) (£219,075) - 1 to 1 therapy and family counselling for victims of sexual abuse (SA). Provision of an Adolescent ISVA, a combined ISVA / IDVA, a Student ISVA and a Child ISVA specialising in complex mental health issues. Collaboration with Family Matters to increase support capacity for men and boys who had experienced rape or SA at any point in their lives.

- Choices Support (£36,289) - delivery of the Jigsaw Hate Crime Project to support hate crime victims with learning disabilities, mental ill health and autism.

○ Supported 59 victims, with 4 feeling empowered to report the crime to police during or following engagement with the service.

○ Compared to 2022/23, referrals and engagement increased by 65%.

○ Of those supported, 100% reported they were better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life.

- Kent Integrated DA Service (KIDAS) (£259,800) - provision of 4 IDVAs, 2 Outreach Workers and an IDVA in East Kent to support young people impacted by DA.

- Rising Sun DV & Abuse Service (£189,311) - to provide 1 C&YP Trauma Informed Worker and 1 Young Women's Trauma Informed Mentor to support those impacted by DA, 1 IDVA Manager and 2 IDVAs to support those experiencing DA and SA living in unstable accommodation, at risk of homelessness or homeless and with multiple needs. Funding for a women's counselling project in Canterbury, Ashford, Folkestone, and Hythe.

Of 133 individuals supported, 26 felt empowered to report the crime to police during or following engagement with the service.

- Oasis DA Service (£129,912) - provision of 2 IDVAs to increase capacity within the Medway Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (MIDAS) and to pilot a Connections IDVA focused on engaging with the Asian community in Medway.

- Daisy Chain (£47,475) - provision of a pro-bono legal advice service for DA victims not eligible for legal aid. Support with documentation related to special measures in court, non-molestation orders and child related orders.

Supported 601 victims, of which 103 needed additional support and were onward referred to appropriate services.

- Rubicon Cares (£76,489) - provision of 1 to 1 trauma counselling for victims of all crime, regardless of whether the crime was reported to the police.

- Dandelion Time (£70,517) - a nature-based charity providing therapeutic services and support to children and families impacted by the trauma of DA and SA.

To support increased demand, introduced weekend sessions and offered telephone assessments rather than face to face where suitable. Also piloted an engagement programme with schools' pastoral staff.

53 individuals reported they were better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life.

- SATEDA (£132,113) - to increase capacity in the following services: Support to Court, Therapeutic Support, Outreach and IDVA provision, including for C&YP.

- Sign Health (£72,447) - provision of 1 IDVA to support Deaf victims of DA through BSL or other communication methods and 1 Young Persons Violence Advocate (YPVA) to support Deaf victims of DA aged 8 to 18 years.

- The Mary Dolly Foundation (33,580) - provision of online therapeutic support for adult and C&YP victims of DA and SA.

Key outcomes against all victim services funded in 2023/24 include:

- 102,736 victim referrals, with 102,479 supported. A 4.3% increase in the number of victims referred and a 2.2% increase in the number supported. All services reported increased complexity in cases, with cost of living adding to this, alongside long wait times for specialist support such as trauma specific therapy and delays within the CJ system.
- 4,420 DA victims, both adults and C&YP were supported by 16 specialist DA services.
- 2,965 SV victims were supported, both adults and C&YP across 2 specialist SV support services. Additional funding increased the number of ISVAs resulting in 318 more victims being supported and 72 feeling able to report to the police after engaging with support services.
- Of those supported, 87,833 had reported the crime to the police prior to engagement with a service and 891 felt empowered to do so following engagement. Overall, this was a 1.3% decrease in the number of victims reporting to the police across the victim services from 2022/23.
- The main reasons for not reporting included: fear it would make the situation worse; existing distrust of police; lack of confidence in the police and CJS; fear of not being believed; fear of repercussion; previous experience of lack of contact / updates from the police; and fear of being judged.
- 6,966 victims reported they were better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life following engagement with a service.

Victims Contracts

In addition to the examples outlined in the previous section, I have several contracts that have been commissioned to provide the core offer of support to victims across Kent and Medway.

- **Kent Advocacy and Support Service** (£1.1m)

This was commissioned during 2022/23 and the service commenced on 1 April 2023. It is a 4-year contract to 31 March 2027 with the option to extend.

It is delivered by Victim Support and provides a trauma informed, needs and risk led approach. The service is available to all victims of recorded crime resident in Kent and Medway, including C&YP regardless of when the crime took place or if it was reported to the police.

Support is also available to close relatives (spouse, partner, relatives in direct line, siblings, and dependants of the victim) particularly those aged 18 years and under.

Specific delivery requirements for the service are:

- The provision of initial referral and triage for all victims accessing support, this includes supporting the Kent Integrated Domestic Abuse Service (KIDAS) and Medway Integrated Domestic Service (MIDAS) by providing referral and triage for DA victims.

- Provision of short and long-term support to victims in the immediate aftermath of crime, or when support is accessed to help them move forward with their lives.
- Advocacy support for specific groups (e.g. Stalking and Hate Crime).
- Short or long-term support to standard and medium risk DA victims should they choose to remain with the service.
- Direct support for C&YP.

Outcomes

In 2023/24

- A total of 91,222 referrals were received – an average of 22,805 per month – with 73,245 contacted and offered support.
- Support provided included practical (e.g. provision of security items), emotional, safety planning and safeguarding. It also included information on the CJS, the rights of those with protected characteristics, restorative justice, and advocacy with statutory and non-statutory agencies.
- Improvements were seen in all outcomes measured by the distance travelled survey for victims engaged in the service. The survey tracks their position at the start and end of support against the following six outcomes: ability to cope; experience of the CJS; feeling informed; perception of safety; reintegration; and wellbeing.

- **Kent Restorative Justice (RJ) and Mediation Service** (£267,700)

This was commissioned during 2022/23 with the service commencing on 1 October 2023. It is a 4-year contract to 30 September with the option to extend.

It is delivered by Restorative Solutions and provides a trauma informed, needs and risk led approach. The service is accessible to all victims of recorded crime resident in Kent and Medway, regardless of when the crime(s) took place. Provision was extended from the previous contract to include mediation and Adolescent to Parent Violence and Conflict (APVC) interventions. This followed learning and feedback which identified the need for consistent provision in these areas.

The service delivers in the interest of all individuals involved, but is victim led, which at no time should lead to increased risk. Specific risk assessments are conducted for harm related cases such as DA and SA to ensure the risk to the victim is not increased, and delivery is by staff with enhanced training.

The service consists of the following elements:

- Direct, indirect, and informal RJ interventions.
- APVC interventions.
- Mediation processes for repeat and persistent neighbour and community based ASB and crime issues.

The service has experienced some challenges engaging with HM Prisons; in 3 out of 4 cases referred between January and March 2024, they were unable to obtain

permission to progress the case with the offender. This can negatively impact on victims as it is a barrier to delivering a direct RJ outcome.

Outcomes

From 1 October 2023 to 31 March 2024:

- 180 referrals received – 67 for RJ, 50 APVC and 10 Mediation.
- 70% of all referrals were closed with an RJ outcome, which equates to 114 interventions being facilitated.
- The conversion rate for APVC was 100%.
- Of feedback surveys completed, 4 reported satisfaction with the RJ process, 3 reported an improvement in being able to cope with aspects of everyday life and 7 parents reported satisfaction with the APVC intervention.

Case study

Referral to the RJ service by the Youth Justice Team, following an incident where an object was thrown and caused damage. The victim was vulnerable due to several factors and was extremely shaken. The harmer was identified as a young person who may not have considered the impact of their behaviour.

RJ provided a platform for the victim to speak with the harmer and for their wider family to be aware of the incident. Restorative Solutions held a meeting with the harmer via their Early Help worker. It was established that they had already started working on a letter of apology, but RJ provided an opportunity to help them learn from the victim about the impact of their actions. The harmer expressed regret and remorse, considering how their own family may have felt if in the same situation.

The victim felt that it had been useful to talk about what happened and felt well supported through the process.

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

This service was commissioned during 2017/18 and commenced on 1 April 2019. It was a 3-year contract to 31 March 2022 with the option to extend. The service was due to be re-commissioned in 2023/24, but due to funding uncertainty the contract has been extended for 12 months from 1 April 2025. Re-commissioning will now commence in 2025.

The service is delivered by Family Matters and provides support to victims of rape and SA across Kent and Medway regardless of when the crime took place or if it has been reported to the police. The service supports both adults and C&YP, including their close family members if needed. It provides dedicated ISVAs who deliver independent support, advocacy and impartial advice and information. The service also provides specialist counselling for those that have experienced rape and SA, which can be accessed with or without ISVA support. Most referrals are received from Kent Police and the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (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 be further impacted by funding uncertainty beyond 31 March 2025. To support the management of demand, Family Matters extended their helpline service to include support sessions for those clients on the waiting list and for family members needing additional specialist support.

Outcomes

In 2023/24:

- 716 ISVA, 255 Child ISVA and 831 therapy referrals received – a 29% increase on 2022/23.
- 27% of clients seen by the ISVA service were 17 years or under and 44% aged between 19 and 35.
- 9% of ISVA clients had not reported the crime to the police at the time of engagement but requested support to do so.
- Only 14% of ISVA and CISVA cases ended up going to trial.
- Feedback from client satisfaction surveys indicated the support improved overall health and wellbeing, the ability to manage close relationships and connections with loved ones, and the capacity to cope.

Quotes from clients

- *Every week has gotten easier, and things are now better with her help. She has given me the strength to believe that things will be ok. I owe her a lot.*
- *I feel I'm much better at speaking with my friends and family and everyone else. I used to run away from people. It has been great for me.*
- *I feel a lot better. I feel a lot calmer and settled with a lot of things, and just a lot more able to cope with emotions and communicate them.*
- *I feel a lot better; my ISVA was my point of contact for everyone, which was really helpful.*
- *My ISVA stayed with me from start to finish, the continuity was brilliant. My ISVA is very good at what she does and is very down to earth, It made it so much easier for us knowing she was there, especially at court.*

- Family Welfare Service

This was commissioned in 2021 and is delivered by Victim Support.

It is a bespoke offer, providing tailored support and specialist interventions for close relatives impacted by the offending of David Fuller. It provided a 24/7 support line in the initial stages of notification to the families impacted and at significant points during the CJ process.

During 2023/24 the service continued to provide case worker led support and access to specialist therapeutic services. It has provided much needed and valuable support to the families impacted and has therefore been extended to 31 October 2024.

- Appropriate Adult Service (£250,000)

This service was commissioned in 2022 and commenced on 1 October 2022. Initially a 2-year pilot, the contract has been extended until 31 March 2025.

The service is delivered by The Appropriate Adult Service (TAAS).

Appropriate Adults (AAs) were introduced under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE) to safeguard and reduce the risk of miscarriages of justice.

AAs must support all juveniles (aged under 18) and vulnerable adults, as defined by PACE Code C who are detained in police custody or attend voluntary interviews as a suspect, and they must be independent from policing. The service ensures the rights, entitlements, welfare, and participation of those detained or attending a voluntary interview, in custody or a non-custody setting, are effectively safeguarded.

Outcomes

- *October 2022 to September 2023, TAAS provided AAs to 2,705 individuals eligible to receive the service (2,379 vulnerable adults and 326 juveniles).*
- *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 56% of adults and 41% 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 the national policing capabilities needed to counter them. 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. With the addition of VAWG to reflect the threat presented to public safety and confidence, the 2023 SPR sets out seven national threats. They are as follows:

- Violence Against Women and Girls
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Terrorism
- Cyber
- Child Sexual Abuse
- Public Disorder
- Civil Emergencies

In April 2022, prior the revised SPR, I published my Making Kent Safer plan which included VAWG as a priority for the Chief Constable. My office also ensured that consideration was given to the other threats when developing the plan, and it also forms part of the annual refresh process.

The Chief Constable is responsible for having due regard to both the Police and Crime Plan and the SPR when exercising their functions, and I hold the Chief Constable accountable for doing so through my governance arrangements.

VAWG is a strategic priority for Kent Police with a strong governance and reporting structure in place and clear alignment to the national delivery framework. Best practice developed for rape and serious sexual offences – through Operation Soteria – has been implemented and the force overachieved on the national requirement to train staff to the rape investigation improvement standard. It engaged with over 7,000 women and girls, including through 'walk and talk' events that allowed officers to experience the local area through their eyes.

Kent Police adopts the 4P approach to tackling Serious and Organised Crime and it was another productive and successful year. The collaborated SCD's Serious and Organised Crime Unit made 111 arrests, executed 60 warrants, laid 49

charges and saw offenders receive a total of 3,103 months in court sentences. A strong relationship also exists with the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) to build intelligence, identify organised crime groups and provide a cohesive response to the highest threats.

Strong national and regional collaboration via ERSOU and other blue light services exists to respond to the threat of terrorism with a real focus on prevention and preparedness, as well as regular assurance activity. This includes Armed Response Vehicle training, and exercises to test the command and control function as well as plans for responding to a Marauding Terrorist Attack.

Kent Police has a dedicated Cyber-crime Unit that investigates cyber dependent and cyber enabled crime, and works closely with digital forensics. Cyber Protect and Prevent officers engage with victims of cyber-crime and carry out proactive work with individuals, groups and organisations. The force has also developed expertise in cryptocurrency to support investigations and assist asset recovery, and continually seeks to keep up with the latest digital and technological advances.

Child Centred Policing is at the heart of the force's Control Strategy and it has clear allocation policies which ensure child SA and exploitation cases are allocated for investigation by specialist officers. Paedophile online investigation teams (POLIT) manage the force response to online child sexual exploitation and in 2023/24, the force increased the number of officers to further enhance its investigative capability. The OPCC also commissions a number of services to support child victims.

Kent Police has an experienced Public Order capability to respond to spontaneous and planned events, with appropriate and relevant training provided throughout 2023/24. It also has effective methods of community engagement and tension monitoring through local policing teams and the capacity and capability to respond to mutual aid requests received via the National Police Coordination Centre.

The response to Civil Emergencies is coordinated through the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) formed under the 'Civil Contingencies Act 2004'. The LRF is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from local public services, including the emergency services, local authorities, the NHS, the Environment Agency, and others. Throughout 2023/24, the force worked closely with the LRF to prepare for emergencies and participated in a programme of joint exercises and training.

I am confident I have given due regard to the seven threat areas in my role of holding the Chief Constable to account. I am equally assured that Kent Police has sufficient capacity and capability to meet the responsibilities outlined in relation to the national threats.

National Crime and Policing Measures

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

The [Beating Crime Plan](#) was the Government's strategy to do this; it made 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 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 used year ending December 2019 as a baseline.

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

Reduce murder and other homicides

In 2023/24, there were 18 murders and other homicides; an increase of 20% (or 3) on the previous year.

Reduce serious violence

- [Firearms offences](#) (excluding 'Air Weapons')

In 2023/24, there were 113 offences classified as Gun crime; an increase of 2.7% (or 3) on the previous year.

- [Knife related offences](#)

- Data from the NHS regarding u25 admissions for assault with a sharp object is not available.
- The VRU monitors knife enabled Serious Violent Crime for under 25s. In 2023/24, there was a 20% decrease compared to the previous year.

- [Violence with injury](#)

In 2023/24, there were 17,227 offences; a decrease of 4.6% (or 832) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline of 19,768 offences, a decrease of 12.8% (or 2,541).

- [Robbery](#)

In 2023/24, there were 1,084 offences; a decrease of 14.0% (or 177) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline of 1,949 offences, a decrease of 44.4% (or 865).

Disrupt drugs supply and county lines

In 2023/24, there were 5,141 drug offences; an increase of 6.5% (or 315) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline of 3,552 offences, an increase of 44.7% (or 1,589).

[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 decreased by 0.7% (or 14) on the previous year; and increased by 88.6% (or 977) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Possession of drugs (excl. Cannabis) increased by 29.3% (or 212) on the previous year; and increased by 59.5% (or 349) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Possession of Cannabis increased by 6.1% (or 122) on the previous year; and increased by 14.2% (or 263) on the December 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 2023/24, there were 15,967 NHC offences in total; a decrease of 4.1% (or 675) on the previous year. Compared to the December 2019 baseline, a decrease of 35.9% (or 8,947).

- Personal robbery decreased by 13.9% (or 166) on the previous year; a decrease of 42.6% (or 759) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Theft from the person decreased by 3.9% (or 41) on the previous year; a decrease of 27.3% (or 375) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Vehicle crime decreased by 1.6% (or 153) on the previous year; a decrease of 31.5% (or 4,359) on the December 2019 baseline.
- Residential burglary decreased by 6.6% (or 315) on the previous year; a decrease of 43.6% (or 3,454) on the December 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 2023/24, there were 70 online related offences where the victim was an organisation; a decrease of 38.6% (or 44) on the previous year.

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

Kent Police conducts three satisfaction surveys:

- DA - in 2023/24, overall victim satisfaction was 90.9%; an increase of 2.5 percentage points on the 12 months to March 2023 (88.4%).
- Hate Crime - in 2023/24, overall victim satisfaction was 87.5%; an increase of 4.8 percentage points on the 12 months to March 2023 (82.7%).
- 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 2023/24, 98.4% of victims felt that officers treated them with dignity and respect; an increase of 4.8 percentage points on the previous 12 months.
 - In 2023/24, 93.3% of victims felt they had been treated fairly throughout the case; an increase of 4.2 percentage points on the previous 12 months.

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 either delivered, or is on the path to delivering the Policing Vision 2025.

Whilst funding nationally remains difficult, the force has continued to increase its accessibility and visibility with the introduction of a new Neighbourhood Policing Model that forms 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 2023/24, I am satisfied that Kent Police embraced new legislation such as the Investigatory Powers (Amendment) Act 2024 for the benefit of protecting local communities and keeping the county 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 2023/24, a total of 26,941 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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