

Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP
Home Secretary
Home Office
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Dear Sajid

HMICFRS – Crime Data Integrity re-inspection 2018

I am pleased to present my comments in response to the above report within the meaning of section 55(5) of the Police Act 1996 (as amended by section 37 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017).

I very much welcome this report in which Kent Police was found to have substantially improved its crime recording accuracy since the 2017 inspection. To be rated 'Outstanding' for recording reported crime, with an overall accuracy rate of 96.6% - the highest of any force in England & Wales - is a fantastic achievement.

HMICFRS considered the improvements to crime recording arrangements not only impressive, but proof that a force can really excel with the right focus and hard work. It is also clear to me that the Chief Constable and his senior officer team have installed a culture whereby all officers and staff understand their roles and responsibilities with regards to crime recording. I congratulate Kent Police on leading the way in this vital area.

Importantly, the findings mean that substantially more victims are having their reported crime recorded, receiving an improved service and being offered additional support through Victim Support, my commissioned service. I was particularly pleased to see that for reports of the most serious crimes and those which often involve the most vulnerable, HMICFRS found:

- 95.7% of reported violent crimes were recorded;
- 92.1% of domestic abuse incidents were recorded (of those not recorded, safeguarding was provided in all cases);
- more than 98.2% of reported sex offences, including rape, were recorded; and
- all aspects of rape recording had improved, with 62 of 63 audited reports accurately recorded.

Overall, the report is testament to how far Kent Police have come; I am pleased that HMICFRS also acknowledged the strengthened governance arrangements under the leadership of the Deputy Chief Constable, as well as the impact of the change programme in addressing all of the issues raised in the previous inspection.

Whilst HMICFRS made no recommendations in the report, they did identify two specific areas where further work was needed; namely the recording of crime reports within 24 hours of receipt, and the recording of all third party professional reports at the first point of contact. Following discussion with the Chief Constable, I am reassured that Kent Police have already taken action to address these areas, including process changes and training for officers and staff.

There is no room for complacency though and the Chief Constable is committed to making further progress to provide the best service possible to the people of Kent. To ensure the high level of recording accuracy is sustained, in addition to consolidating existing practices that have proved so effective, Kent Police is providing additional bespoke training together with structured feedback for staff within the Investigation Management Unit, building resilience within the audit function, and enhancing officer and staff knowledge through guidance and regular internal communications. Strong oversight and governance of crime recording, under the direction and leadership of the Deputy Chief Constable, also remains as a central pillar.

I also took the decision to increase the 2018/19 policing precept by the maximum allowable amount to enable the recruitment of up to 200 additional officers, as well as over 80 new police staff to boost resourcing within the Force Control Room and the Investigation Management Unit. Indeed, it is one thing for Kent Police to record crime accurately, but another to deliver a quality service by responding and dealing with it effectively. That is why, with the support of residents, I have taken the difficult decision again to increase the 2019/20 policing precept by the maximum allowable amount, thus enabling the Chief Constable to recruit a further 180 police officers who, on a daily basis, will protect the communities of Kent and put victims at the heart of everything that they do.

Kent Police is committed to developing its close and respected links with HMICFRS. Ahead of the next "State of the Nation" report by Sir Thomas Winsor, HMICFRS have visited the force to explore the journey and gain an understanding of what worked in terms of improving accuracy. The force have also provided computer based training assistance to the HMICFRS auditors ahead of the remaining Crime Data Integrity inspections, and the Deputy Crime & Incident Registrar has worked in three different forces as a peer reviewer to support the inspections, proving invaluable in terms of both his own development and insights gained. As testament to the judgment of 'Outstanding', several forces have now contacted the Crime & Incident Registrar to understand the key developments that lead to the significant improvement in accuracy.

As the locally elected Police and Crime Commissioner, I believe that Kent Police have turned a weakness into a strength. That the people of Kent can rest assured that when they report a crime it will be recorded quickly and accurately, opening up access to vital support services that victims may need to help them through a difficult time.

However, by receiving regular updates and holding the Chief Constable to account at my quarterly Performance and Delivery Board, importantly, I will ensure that Kent Police continues to maintain a high level of recording accuracy and provides the quality service that the people of Kent rightly expect and deserve.

Kent Police should take great pride in its 'Outstanding' grade; it is a testament to the hard work and dedication of Kent officers and staff who strive to provide a first class service every day, protecting and serving those who live, work and visit the county.

Yours sincerely



Matthew Scott
Kent Police and Crime Commissioner