



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Crime inspection 2014

Kent Police

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How effective is the force at cutting crime?

Overall summary

Kent Police has seen larger increases in the levels of recorded crime over the last four years than elsewhere in England and Wales. This is mainly due to the changes the force has made to ensure that crime recording is in line with national recording standards.

These changes stem from concerns raised by HMIC as a result of the police and crime commissioner for Kent commissioning a review into the force crime figures.

The force works well with partner organisations particularly at a local level and has worked hard to develop community safety units across the county.

There is a clear commitment from the force to put the victim at the centre of the way it provides services; this is led by the chief officer team. The levels of victim satisfaction are higher than the average across England and Wales. The force has made good progress in steps to ensure that the most vulnerable are protected, but still has work to do to improve the service it provides to the public.

Reducing anti-social behaviour is one of the priorities for the force, and the force has invested in this area including introducing a case management system to increase effectiveness.

Force leaders set and drive clear strategic priorities to reduce crime and prevent reoffending. Furthermore the force places victims at the centre of everything it does; this includes working with partners to safeguard vulnerable victims.

This year, HMIC undertook an inspection into the crime data integrity of all 43 police forces, to determine the extent to which police-recorded crime information can be trusted at a national level. HMIC found Kent Police's approach to crime recording is good, with a high degree of accuracy. Individual force reports are available at <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/>.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

Good

The force has a victim-centred approach and a strong focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable victims receive a comprehensive service from all agencies. HMIC found good evidence of frontline staff working with partners to find ways to divert offenders and prevent crime.

The force has introduced predictive analysis or 'pred pol', which allows it to analyse crime patterns and ensure that resources are targeted at preventing crime.

The force has undertaken an extensive programme of staff training in crime prevention. Kent Police has also embarked on long-term initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

Good

There is a strong focus on the victim in the way Kent Police provides services. The force has developed the way it identifies repeat and vulnerable victims. It provides a good service to those who are most at risk but needs to do more to support those who are assessed as medium and standard risk. This is particularly so in cases of domestic abuse.

HMIC found the force has undertaken training of supervisors in order to increase the quality of investigations and the standard of case files submitted for presentation at court.

The force needs to improve procedures to manage criminals who are likely to reoffend and cause the most harm in society.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Good

Kent Police has developed its response to community policing by working with partners including local councils and voluntary agencies. Across Kent there has been an investment in community safety partnerships, which allows the force to work together with partners to deal with community issues and identify creative solutions.

The safer neighbourhood teams have a good understanding of local concerns and priorities. Neighbourhood officers are visible in their community and responsive to local concerns. They are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

Good

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

Good

The force needs to do more to learn from what works in crime fighting and crime prevention tactics.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Good

Across the county there have been reductions in the levels of reported anti-social behaviour. HMIC found that the force, with partners, has invested in a case management system that allows them to identify best practice in tackling anti-social behaviour locally.

When good practice is identified, the force could do more to ensure that it is shared more widely so that all can learn from good practice.

HMIC found good local practice of engagement with 'emerging' and 'hard-to-reach' communities. However, we feel there is more scope for effective co-ordination at strategic level.

Introduction

This inspection looks at how effective police forces are at cutting crime. The public expects the police to reduce, prevent and investigate crime, bring suspects to justice and, in conjunction with other services and agencies, care for victims. To assess each force's effectiveness, we looked at three specific areas:

- How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?
- How effective is the force at investigating offending?
- How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

Methodology

During our inspection we analysed data and documents from forces, and conducted in-force inspections. We interviewed the senior officers responsible for crime, neighbourhood policing and victim care in each force. We held focus groups with frontline police officers, investigators and police staff, and observed their activities first hand. We also reviewed 20 crime investigations in each force and interviewed heads of partner organisations such as local authorities. We focused on anti-social behaviour and the offences of: burglary dwelling; serious sexual offences; and violence with injury on this inspection. We chose to focus on these offences because they cover the areas of acquisitive and violent crime and the protection of vulnerable people. This has allowed us to make an assessment of how well the force treated the victim throughout the investigation – examining in particular how well officers gathered evidence and how well they were supervised.

Victims are at the heart of this inspection. Victims are entitled to a service from the police; this includes regular information about their case, an opportunity to provide an impact statement where relevant and to be consulted on potential criminal justice outcomes. When the police provide this service to victims, it increases victim satisfaction and builds trust and confidence in the police.

As part of this inspection, we considered how well forces deal with domestic abuse, alongside other offence types. HMIC published a report in March 2014 on how well forces tackled domestic abuse and provided support to victims. As a result of that inspection all forces were asked to provide an action plan setting out how they were improving services to victims of domestic abuse and we have reviewed the action plans developed by forces. The action plans have not informed the judgments made in these reports.

The crime inspection provides HMIC with the first opportunity to test whether the force's approach to improving how it tackles domestic abuse is beginning to have an effect and this forms part of our overall assessment of the force.

How effective is the force at reducing crime and preventing offending?

HMIC looked at how the leadership of the force deploys its resources to reduce the volume of crimes being committed, maximise the quality of victim contact, and ensure that the force focuses on community priorities while mitigating national threats.

We looked at how the force prevents crime, how it uses police tactics such as stop and search powers to prevent and detect crime and reduce offending. We also looked at how the police work with other agencies such as social services to reduce crime.

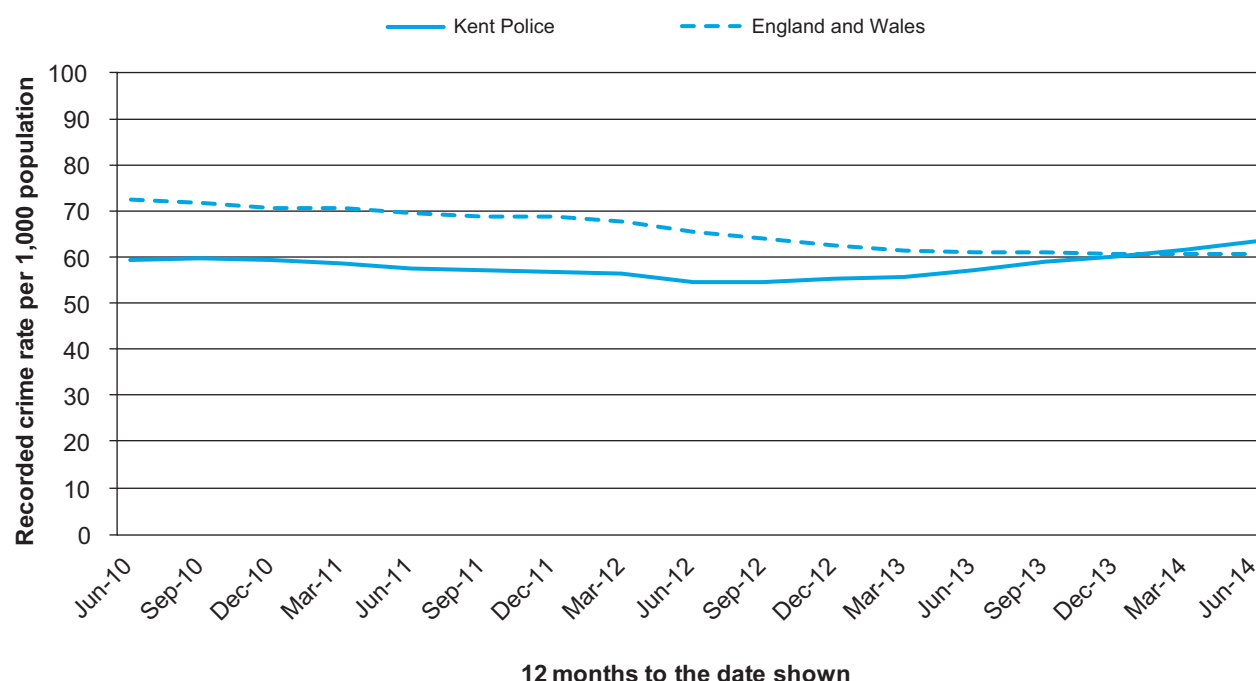
Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. When compared with the 12 months to June 2010, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in the 12 months to June 2014 increased by 7 percent in Kent compared with a reduction of 16 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this period, victim-based crime (i.e., crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) increased by 7 percent in Kent, compared with a reduction of 16 percent across England and Wales.

During the 12 months prior to the end of June 2014, recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Kent increased by 11 percent, compared with a 1 percent reduction across England and Wales.

Figure: Recorded crime rate (per 1,000 population) between June 2010 and June 2014.



By looking at how many recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour occur per 1,000 population, we get an indication of how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Kent (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to June 2014	Kent Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	63.5	60.7
Victim-based crime	58.5	53.9
Sexual offences	1.4	1.2
Violence with injury	7.2	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	8.4	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	29.0	36.8

***Note that anti-social behaviour data is for the 12 months to March 2014 and the rate for burglary in a dwelling is the rate per 1,000 households, not population.**

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in the force area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on recorded crime rates only. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/crime-and-policing-comparator

Kent's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 25 percent, which was broadly in line with the 26 percent for England and Wales.

The new crime outcomes framework was introduced in April 2014. It replaces a previous framework for recording how the police finalise investigations through what was known as 'sanction detections' (e.g. charges and/or summons). The new crime outcomes framework is designed to support police officers to use their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely outcome which reflects the harm to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community, and which deters future offending. Data on the full range of outcomes achieved as a result of investigations (not just detections but also, for example, community resolutions such as mediation known as restorative justice) will be available from July 2015 and used in future HMIC inspections.

Meeting the needs of the community

The force is working hard to achieve the strategic objectives set out in the police and crime commissioner for Kent's police and crime plan. Kent Police has strong governance structures that support the way it works on the priorities. These include cutting crime and catching criminals, preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, reducing repeat victimisation and offending, and putting victims and witnesses at the heart of processes. The force has recently introduced a new way to measure the effectiveness of its work called the 'quality service delivery framework'. This focuses on six key outcomes including reducing threat, risk and harm, standards and integrity. In their performance meetings, the force regularly scans areas of business to assess any potential risk. This helps the force to realign resources to areas and priorities where they are most needed. Examples of this were observed at daily management meetings, which were an effective forum to move resources to meet demand.

The force has recently undertaken a fundamental shift from an approach in which performance management was measured. It used to be based primarily on meeting numerical targets for serious acquisitive crime such as burglary. This meant officers were not necessarily focused on meeting the needs of the victim and community. The force now prioritises resources according to the assessed levels of threat, harm and risk. HMIC found that, while this new way of working is generally understood, there are still residual areas where prioritisation of resources is still dependent on the type of crime that has been committed, rather than any risk factors associated with the victim. This means the force may overlook vulnerable individuals who need greater support.

Quality of victim contact

The force promotes a victim-centred approach through its mission, vision, values and priorities. The force has put in place mandatory training for staff on the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime. The force monitors compliance through performance meetings to ensure that victims are kept up to date with the progress of investigations. However, staff from partner agencies raised concerns about the regularity of updates to victims of domestic abuse and serious sexual offences. The force has introduced 'track my crime', which is an innovative way of allowing victim's access to the progress of their investigation online.

There is strong and visible leadership from the top of the organisation for improving public confidence and satisfaction. Kent Police communicates with the public through social media including Facebook, Twitter and email. Staff regularly hold meetings with the public in their local community, as well as using mobile police stations to ensure that there is a visible presence in rural areas.

An important measure of the impact of changes to service delivery for the public is how satisfied victims are with the overall service they receive when they seek police assistance. In the 12 months to the end of June 2014, Kent Police had a victim satisfaction rate of 86.7 percent (± 1.2 percent), which is higher than the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent (± 0.2 percent). Its current rate is broadly in line with the 87.5 percent (± 1.2 percent) recorded for Kent in the previous year.

Use of police tactics

Kent Police uses a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and reduce reoffending. For example, the new police power to issue domestic violence protection notices has been widely used in Kent to prevent domestic abuse offenders from having contact with their victims for a prescribed period of time. The value to the victims of this tactic is widely understood by officers.

The force communicates with its staff through 'yellow orders', which are notices regularly sent to staff throughout the force to highlight priorities. These include briefings about new legislation. The force has also set up information pages on its internal website. These include toolkits that help staff understand what tactics are available when trying to resolve a crime or community issue. While the force undertakes some analysis of which police tactics work, HMIC found that the force can do more to systematically evaluate the tactics to ensure that good practice and learning are shared throughout the force.

The force has recently introduced a predictive crime analysis tool known as 'pred pol'. This analytical tool allows the force to more accurately map where officers should patrol in order to prevent and reduce crime.

Partnership working and information sharing

There is good and purposeful partnership working across the county to prevent crime and offending both at a strategic and tactical level. Close working relationships with partners have produced some positive initiatives including 'street weeks' where agencies come together to concentrate on resolving issues in a specific geographic location in the county. The force has recently undertaken an initiative to promote responsible drinking in West Kent in conjunction with partners, including trading standards. The force also works with partners to provide diversionary schemes aimed at young people. In March 2014 the police and crime commissioner for Kent introduced a youth diversion fund aimed at providing the opportunity for voluntary organisations to support the activities in the police and crime plan.

The force rape investigation team works well with partners. The force has worked with partners to set up a sexual assault referral centre (SARC) in order to improve the quality of care for victims of sexual offences.

The force and its partners have put in place a multi-agency central referral unit. This unit, which brings together agencies including police, education and local council services, allows the partners to more effectively share information and work together to jointly develop better approaches to supporting vulnerable people.

The force has introduced THEMIS, a database that both the police and other public sector agencies, such as local authority community wardens, can access. It allows for better sharing of information in order for more effective problem solving. The force plans to work with partners to increase the number of organisations that can use and contribute to the system. HMIC found that, while the system is used locally for the identification of good practice, this could be more co-ordinated and shared across the force area. This means that opportunities to learn from what works may be missed.

Domestic abuse

In March 2014 HMIC published the results of its inspection of 43 forces on the effectiveness of the police approach to domestic violence, with a focus on outcomes for victims and whether risks to victims are adequately managed, this included clear recommendations for each force about improvements it should make. As a result of this inspection all forces were required to produce and publish an action plan setting out the steps they were taking to improve the services to victims of domestic abuse. This plan should demonstrate that HMIC recommendations are being addressed and also explain how:

- the leadership will ensure the changes necessary and hold the right people to account;
- the police response when a victim first contacts them (by a 999 call or by visiting a police station) and when they first attend the scene of the incident is improved;
- the force will ensure there is a high quality investigation of all domestic abuse crime;
- victims will be properly supported and offenders properly managed; and
- the training and learning provided to officers ensures they can give the best available response to the victim.

HMIC has made an initial consideration of the action plan produced by Kent police. We found the force has submitted a tactical plan that contains satisfactory detail of what the force will do to improve its response to domestic abuse. However, although the activity is generated from the HMIC recommendations, some of those recommendations are not fully documented because the force had already discharged the required action immediately after our inspection but before the publication of our report. The force has carried out a full self-assessment against the national requirements to ensure that its action plan is fit for purpose.

The crime inspection provided us with our first opportunity to test whether changes in the force's approach to domestic abuse were beginning to have a positive effect.

During the crime inspection, HMIC found examples of high-quality investigations for victims considered to be high risk. However, for those assessed as medium and standard risk, investigation was inconsistent, which reinforces our findings from earlier this year. A concern was raised that safeguarding plans are left for partner service providers to develop, and that partner organisations believe that the lead agency for safeguarding plans should be the police.

Recommendations

- Building on activity set out in its action plan, Kent Police should take immediate steps to ensure in relation to domestic abuse investigations that:
 - (a) there is clarity in relation to police and partner roles and responsibilities for safeguarding planning and action, and that this is communicated to relevant staff;
 - (b) investigating officers are aware of the standards required, especially in relation to investigations assessed as medium and standard risk, and have the professional skills and knowledge to fulfil their duties;
 - (c) there is an effective process for dealing with offenders who have breached the conditions of their bail or restraining order; and
 - (d) supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards.
- Within six months Kent Police should ensure that there are methods in place to:
 - (a) systematically review and evaluate the benefits from both current tactics and new crime fighting and anti-social behaviour initiatives;
 - (b) systematically capture learning and good practice in crime prevention and local problem solving; and
 - (c) share learning and good practice across the force and with partners.

Summary



Good

- The force has a victim-centred approach and a strong focus on ensuring that the most vulnerable victims receive a comprehensive service from all agencies. HMIC found good evidence of frontline staff working with partners to find ways to divert offenders and prevent crime.
- The force has introduced predictive analysis or 'pred pol' which allows it to analyse crime patterns and ensure resources are targeted at preventing crime.
- The force has undertaken an extensive programme of staff training in crime prevention. Kent Police has also embarked on long-term initiatives aimed at achieving sustainable reductions in crime and anti-social behaviour.

How effective is the force at investigating offending?

HMIC looked at the range of police tactics and powers used by the force to investigate offending, including how investigations are conducted, whether persistent offenders are diverted from crime and how people vulnerable to repeat crime are supported. We looked at how the force learns from experience in order to improve professionalism in operational practice and leadership.

Vulnerability, risk and victims

HMIC found that the chief officers provide strong focus on the victim and the need to protect those most at risk. The force has taken steps to ensure that those vulnerable members of the community, whose circumstances make them the most susceptible to becoming victims of crime or anti-social behaviour, are identified and that steps are taken to ensure that they get the level of service they need. Some frontline officers have received training to raise awareness about how to deal more effectively with victims of rape. HMIC found officers have a strong awareness of so-called hidden crimes such as human trafficking, hate crime, and sexual assault, and there were some good examples of local officers identifying potential offences of child sexual exploitation. HMIC is concerned about the delay in officers taking appropriate action when a domestic abuse offender breaches their conditions of bail or conditions of a restraining order. This was reported to us by partner agencies working with the police and potentially increases the risk to the victim.

Investigation

Kent Police is focusing on improving the quality of investigations. The force has invested in a two-day training course for supervisors. This is aimed at improving investigations as well as ensuring that the quality of prosecution files presented to the crown prosecution service (CPS) is of the best evidential standard. The force has also adopted national accreditation training for 'professionalising the investigative process'. New recruits are receiving basic training and there are different levels of accreditation for those investigating more serious offences. Officers are required to use a template to develop the initial investigation strategy in which they set out potential lines of enquiry. HMIC undertook a review of crime files and found that there is effective supervision in most investigations.

Kent Police is one of the highest users of 'out-of-court disposals' nationally. This is when offenders are cautioned or the case is otherwise concluded without accused persons being required to attend court. The force has introduced a scrutiny group to ensure that there is consistent quality in the way out-of-court disposals are used. The group meets quarterly and provides strong governance in ensuring that cautions and community resolutions are used effectively and appropriately.

Kent Police has recently changed its policy of attending every report of crime or anti-social behaviour; some allegations are now referred to telephone investigation teams. However, the force will always attend a report of crime if it is identified that the victim is vulnerable, if there has been repeat offending or if requested to do so by the victim. Furthermore, it is force policy that a detective will attend reported allegations of burglary.

Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

The force is developing its partnership arrangements for managing the most prolific offenders who pose a risk to the public. The force recognises that preventing reoffending requires them to work with local partners through the integrated offender management (IOM)¹ arrangements. This IOM approach is led by police and the probation service. As of July 2014, there are 243 offenders being managed through this approach and the force reports that there has been less reoffending within this group than experienced in other forces. HMIC found a varied approach to IOM arrangements across the districts in Kent; some are better established than others. The IOM teams are not co-located and case management is recorded on several unconnected databases, which could have an impact on efficiency.

The force has recently introduced a pilot for voluntarily tagging offenders and believes this is a useful tool in preventing reoffending. The offenders are not required by law to wear a tag as a consequence of a court sentence. Voluntary tagging of offenders means that those individuals wearing a tag find it easier to stop committing crimes knowing that the police are aware of their whereabouts. They describe using the tag as a way to resist peer pressure to go and commit crime.

Organised crime groups (OCGs) are managed through the joint Essex and Kent Serious Crime Directorate, which has a rigorous approach to identifying and closely monitoring the highest risk OCG activity. They use intelligence to disrupt criminal activity. However, there is limited understanding and activity to disrupt OCGs at a neighbourhood level.

¹ There is no standard national definition of who should be considered for IOM arrangements. Kent Police decides who needs to be managed under these arrangements using its own scoring system.

Learning from experience

HMIC found that the force undertakes some analysis of results with good practice shared in meetings (including the local policing partnership board and divisional commanders' meetings) and through community safety units. However, the current activity within the force to evaluate the success of what works in crime fighting and crime prevention tactics is not extensive or co-ordinated. The force needs to do more to understand what works and share learning and good practice.

Recommendations

- Within three months Kent Police should ensure that there is clarity of roles and responsibilities in relation to the tackling of organised crime groups at neighbourhood level with relevant staff being made aware of the tasks they need to perform in order to disrupt and dismantle the groups' criminal activity.
- Within three months, Kent Police should review the operation of the integrated offender management schemes, especially in relation to co-location and the recording of case management. By March 2015 the force should have developed and commenced the implementation of an action plan to improve performance against prolific offenders.

Summary

Good

- There is a strong focus on the victim in the way Kent Police provides services. The force has developed the way it identifies repeat and vulnerable victims. It provides a good service to those who are most at risk but needs to do more to support those who are assessed as medium and standard risk. This is particularly so in cases of domestic abuse.
- HMIC found the force has undertaken training of supervisors in order to increase the quality of investigations and the standard of case files submitted for presentation at court.
- The force needs to improve procedures to manage criminals who are likely to reoffend and cause the most harm in society.
- The force needs to do more to learn from what works in crime fighting and crime prevention tactics.

How effective is the force at tackling anti-social behaviour?

HMIC looked at how the force prevents and tackles anti-social behaviour; in particular the way victims are treated. We looked at the quality and consistency of victim contact across the force and whether victims of anti-social behaviour were dealt with in a comparable way to victims of other crimes.

Community contact and victim care

Kent Police remains committed to the value of safer neighbourhood teams and, despite stringent financial constraints over recent years, has protected neighbourhood teams as far as possible from cuts. Each team has a good understanding of their local community concerns and priorities. They engage well with local people through local forums where issues are discussed and actions agreed and followed up.

HMIC found that there is a strong focus by safer neighbourhood teams on anti-social behaviour. Cutting anti-social behaviour, alongside reducing crime, is one of the strategic priorities set by the police and crime plan. The force has an active neighbourhood watch network and regularly provides information to 10,000 neighbourhood watch members by email.

Partnership working

HMIC found that community safety partnerships are strong, with officers working alongside staff from local authorities and partner agencies to tackle anti-social behaviour. This means that, within the community safety units, information is shared and local problem solving can be jointly undertaken with partners. The force has invested in THEMIS, a case management system to improve the way anti-social behaviour is tackled in partnership. At the time of the inspection partners had limited access to THEMIS, and this is a position that the force intends to improve on. Kent Police holds weekly meetings with partners to identify and solve problems caused by anti-social behaviour incidents that are assessed as high risk. Staff from community safety units work closely with the safer schools partnerships in order to engage with children and young persons. HMIC also found Kent Police is making a useful contribution to work with partners to deal with troubled families.

Improving services to the public

In the 12 months to March 2014, Kent Police recorded 51,214 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is a reduction of 11 percent against the previous 12 months.

Anti-social behaviour is a priority for the force; the rate of anti-social behaviour incidents is lower than the figure for England and Wales.

There is a wide range of tactics used by the force, many in conjunction with partners, to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour. The assistant chief constable chairs a reducing reoffending board where opportunities, including diversionary schemes with a focus on young offenders, are developed. There is a good understanding among neighbourhood officers of the scale of local concerns and the importance of their role in tackling anti-social behaviour. The force is currently in the process of rolling out face-to-face training for all neighbourhood staff in the new anti-social behaviour powers.

HMIC found that police community support officers (PCSOs) play a key role in providing neighbourhood policing and tackling anti-social behaviour. However, we also found PCSOs are undertaking some roles, including investigations, in which they have not received training. The force needs to clarify what roles they want PCSOs to undertake, and ensure that they are given the appropriate training.

The force is not picking up all opportunities to learn from good practice. While centrally there is some meaningful measurement or evaluation of the effectiveness of the various tactics and activities in preventing and tackling anti-social behaviour, it is not widespread or co-ordinated. The force uses the THEMIS database for the sharing of good practice; however, this is only done on a local level. During the inspection we heard about good initiatives that are delivered locally, but are not being shared across the force.

The force has some good initiatives in place to engage with so-called emerging and hard-to-reach communities. These include the appointment of a community liaison officer who is working to develop relationships with traveller communities. Nonetheless, given the geographical position with the ports of Dover and Ramsgate in Kent, the force could be doing more to engage with newly settled communities.

Recommendations

- Within three months, Kent Police should review the role that police community support officers perform in relation to the investigation of crime and by March 2015 provide guidance for their continued use and, if required, introduce appropriate training.

Summary



Good

- Kent Police has developed its response to community policing by working with partners including local councils and voluntary agencies. Across Kent there has been an investment in community safety partnerships, which allows the force to work together with partners to deal with community issues and identify creative solutions.
- The safer neighbourhood teams have a good understanding of local concerns and priorities. Neighbourhood officers are visible in their community and responsive to local concerns. They are committed to tackling anti-social behaviour and ensuring that the most vulnerable are protected.
- Across the county there have been reductions in the levels of reported anti-social behaviour. HMIC found that the force, with partners, has invested in a case management system that allows them to identify best practice in tackling anti-social behaviour locally.
- When good practice is identified, the force could do more to ensure that it is shared more widely so that all can learn from good practice.
- HMIC found good local practice of engagement with 'emerging' and 'hard-to-reach' communities. However, we feel there is more scope for effective co-ordination at strategic level.

What each judgment means

HMIC uses four categories for making judgments, two are positive and two are negative. The categories are:

- outstanding;
- good;
- requires improvement; and
- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how well the force cuts crime. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the way the force is cutting crime and reducing offending is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;
- the force requires improvement in the way it cuts crime, and/or there are some weaknesses; or
- the force's effectiveness at cutting crime is inadequate because it is significantly lower than is expected.