PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015

An inspection of Kent Police

Contents

Overview – How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?

Overall judgment[1]

● ● ● ○ **Good**

Kent Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The force has an effective approach to crime and anti-social behaviour prevention and it works well with others to keep people safe and protect victims, although improvements are needed in the important areas of protecting vulnerable people.[2] The quality of crime investigation is good and the force works well to stop re-offending. The force is good at disrupting the activity of organised crime groups and it is improving its capability to do this even more. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their overall effectiveness so comparison of their year-on-year effectiveness is not possible.

Summary

Overall, HMIC found that Kent Police is good at keeping people safe and reducing crime. The force is committed to and is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. This approach is well understood by officers and staff across the force.

When a crime occurs, the force acts quickly and carries out high quality investigations. The force works well to identify, investigate and bring to justice repeat and dangerous offenders and to stop them re-offending. The forensic investigation service is effective but there are backlogs in forensic submissions.

Increasingly the force has invested more resources in tackling domestic abuse, missing persons and child sexual exploitation, and is working to improve its services. In particular, the force needs to improve its service to children at risk from sexual exploitation as knowledge of how to identify the risk factors associated with child sexual exploitation among frontline officers and police staff is limited.

The force has a good understanding of the threat posed by high-level serious and organised crime, and it is good at disrupting this threat. Local policing areas are conducting a range of operations with partners to disrupt organised crime groups but more could be done to increase understanding of serious and organised crime by officers at the frontline.

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[1] Outstanding, Good, Requires improvement or Inadequate – see Annex A of report for definitions.

[2] A vulnerable person is someone who is in need of special care, support, or protection because of age, disability, or risk of abuse or neglect.

The force leadership has strong oversight of its response to national threats, such as terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. Its own arrangements for ensuring it can meet its national obligations in this regard (such as planning, testing and exercising) are good.

How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?

Good

Kent Police is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 also found the force to be good at reducing crime and preventing offending.

The force priorities reflect clear commitments to supporting victims, working with partners, keeping people safe from crime and anti-social behaviour and ensuring that visible, community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent. The importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe is generally well understood throughout the whole force. Well-trained staff work within the community support teams and provide an effective service to the public.

The force works closely with partner agencies and communities and uses a wide range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and has won awards for its work. Senior community safety partners speak positively about working together with the force and of the information sharing arrangements at strategic and operational levels.

While there are some areas for

How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?

Good

Kent Police's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. This is consistent with HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, when the force was also judged as good at investigating crime.

The force responds well to reports of crime and attending officers understand their role as the initial investigator and the need to undertake primary crime prevention work. Crime allocation is effective with some few exceptions. The quality of investigations is good, investigation plans are thorough and well documented, following approved practice for investigations, and there is clear evidence of effective support and review by experienced supervisors.

Victims are generally kept well informed as investigations progress, assisted by the force's priority of 'putting victims and witnesses at the heart of everything they do', which includes compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

The forensic science service is effective for both volume and major crime, but there are some backlogs in forensic submissions.

improvement, including how the force captures, evaluates, understands, and shares good practice, the public can feel confident that the force is working well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe.

The force identifies vulnerable offenders and makes efforts to divert them from further offending. While there are a few areas for improvement, the force's processes for working with partner organisations to identify, monitor and work with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending work well.

How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?

Requires improvement

Kent Police is committed to protecting from harm those people who are vulnerable. It has established processes to identify repeat and vulnerable victims. The protecting vulnerable people board is an essential element in the force's plans to improve services, drawing together all the main strands of work into one meeting.

HMIC found that the force's initial response to support vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, as well as missing children,

is good. However, frontline constables and police staff's knowledge of child sexual exploitation is limited. This needs to improve.

Kent Police has the lowest charge rate in

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

Good

Kent Police is good at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness at tackling serious and organised crime, including a force's arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The force has a well-developed understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, and is developing an effective multi-agency

response to it, including work to prevent people from becoming involved.

Kent Police and Essex Police tackle high-level serious and organised crime in collaboration, through the joint serious crime directorate (SCD). The SCD is

England and Wales for domestic abuse offences. The force needs to continue to monitor and assess this area to ensure that it fully understands the reasons and to ensure the outcomes of these cases are appropriate.

The central referral unit provides multi-agency support to vulnerable people and ensures that immediate steps are taken to ensure that victims are safe.

Kent Police has invested in tackling domestic abuse, missing persons and child sexual exploitation and continues to try to provide improvements to its services, including working with academic institutions. Frontline officers are given tasks to target high-risk offenders. This demonstrates that protecting vulnerable people has become the focus of everyday policing activity.

good at assessing the threat posed by serious and organised crime and provides well-managed investigations and disruptions of high level organised crime groups (OCGs) using a range of tactics.

At a local policing level the force is conducting a range of operations with partners to disrupt OCGs, but more could be done to ensure the understanding of serious and organised crime among frontline officers.

The force communicates well with the public about serious and organised crime. Information is published on the website, social media sites, and within the local press.

The force has robust arrangements and chief officer oversight to provide its national policing responsibilities, and good arrangements to test its response are in place.

Force in numbers

Calls for assistance

Calls for assistance per 1,000 population 12 months to 31 March 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
464	350

Crime

Crimes recorded (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
61.1	63.0

Crimes recorded (excluding fraud) per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2014

Kent Police	England and Wales
62.8	60.3

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2014 against 12 months to 30 June 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
-2.6%	+4.5%

Changes in recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2010 against 12 months to 30 June 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
+3.8%	-12.6%

Charge rate

Charge rate as a percentage of all crimes recorded (excluding fraud) 12 months to 30 June 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
13.9%	16.0%

Anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
27.6	32.9

Anti-social behaviour incidents per 1,000 population 12 months to 30 June 2014

Kent Police	England and Wales
28.6	36.2

Domestic abuse

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
11.3%	10.0%

Domestic abuse as a percentage of all recorded crime (excluding fraud) 12 months to 31 March 2014

Kent Police	England and Wales
10.4%	8.5%

Organised crime groups

Organised crime groups per million population as at 30 June 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
40.9	74.7

Victim satisfaction rate

Victim satisfaction rate 12 months to 31 March 2015

Kent Police	England and Wales
84.8%	83.8%

Introduction

The public expects their local police force to:

- Prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and, when crime occurs, to investigate it properly and provide support to victims.

- Use appropriately trained officers and staff and approved practice when investigating crime, gathering evidence and building cases to ensure offenders are brought to justice.

- Support victims of crime by responding to calls for service, identifying and putting in place the right help at the first point of contact, keeping them informed and consulting them about the possible outcomes of their case.

- Ensure that vulnerable people who might not have been a victim of crime are identified and given appropriate support, for example people at risk of domestic abuse, children at risk of sexual exploitation and missing or absent children.

- Understand and be prepared to respond to threats beyond their own force boundaries, including national threats such as terrorism, serious and organised crime and cyber-crime.

- Work effectively with local partner organisations and other bodies to prevent all types of crime and re-offending and to protect the public.

HMIC's annual inspections into police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) consider whether forces keep people safe and reduce crime (how effective a force is), whether these activities are being carried out at the most appropriate cost (how efficient a force is), and how forces are ensuring they have the confidence of their communities (the public legitimacy of a force).

All forces are subject to significant cost reductions; this is reflected in our efficiency reports published in October 2015. The judgments we are making in this effectiveness report are made understanding the financial challenges forces are facing. Reports on the efficiency and legitimacy of Kent Police are available from the HMIC website (www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/).

HMIC's effectiveness inspections make an assessment of how well forces are preventing and investigating crime and anti-social behaviour; tackling serious and organised crime; and protecting victims and those who are vulnerable. These are the most important responsibilities for a police force, and are the principal measures by which the public will judge the performance of their force and policing as a whole.

Our effectiveness inspection focused on the overall question: "How effective is the force at keeping people safe and reducing crime?"

To answer this question we looked at four in-depth questions, three of which are discussed in more detail within this report:[3]

1. How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?

2. How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?

3. How effective is the force at protecting those who are vulnerable from harm and supporting victims?

4. How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

During our inspection, we collected data from forces, reviewed case files and surveyed the public to seek their views on the effectiveness of the force. We also surveyed and interviewed representatives from partner organisations to gather evidence about the effectiveness of their working relationships with the force. We interviewed chief constables and chief officers and held focus groups of officers and staff at all grades and ranks. We also made numerous unannounced visits to police stations to talk to frontline officers and staff about their work. This report sets out the findings from this wide-ranging inspection of Kent Police.

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[3] HMIC inspected forces on questions 1, 2 and 4 between September and November 2015. Question 3 was inspected between June and August 2015, and a separate report was published in December 2015 (available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-kent/). In 2014, in preparation for the PEEL programme, forces were inspected to assess how effective they are at cutting crime (available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/crime-inspection-force-reports/).

How effective is the force at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, and keeping people safe?

The police's ability to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe is a principal measure of its effectiveness. Crime prevention can be cheaper and more effective than investigating crime, and it makes society a safer place. The police cannot prevent crime on their own; other statutory and non-statutory bodies have a vital role to play. Police effectiveness in this matter is therefore dependent on their ability to work closely with other partner organisations to understand local problems and have access to a wide range of evidence-based interventions to resolve them.

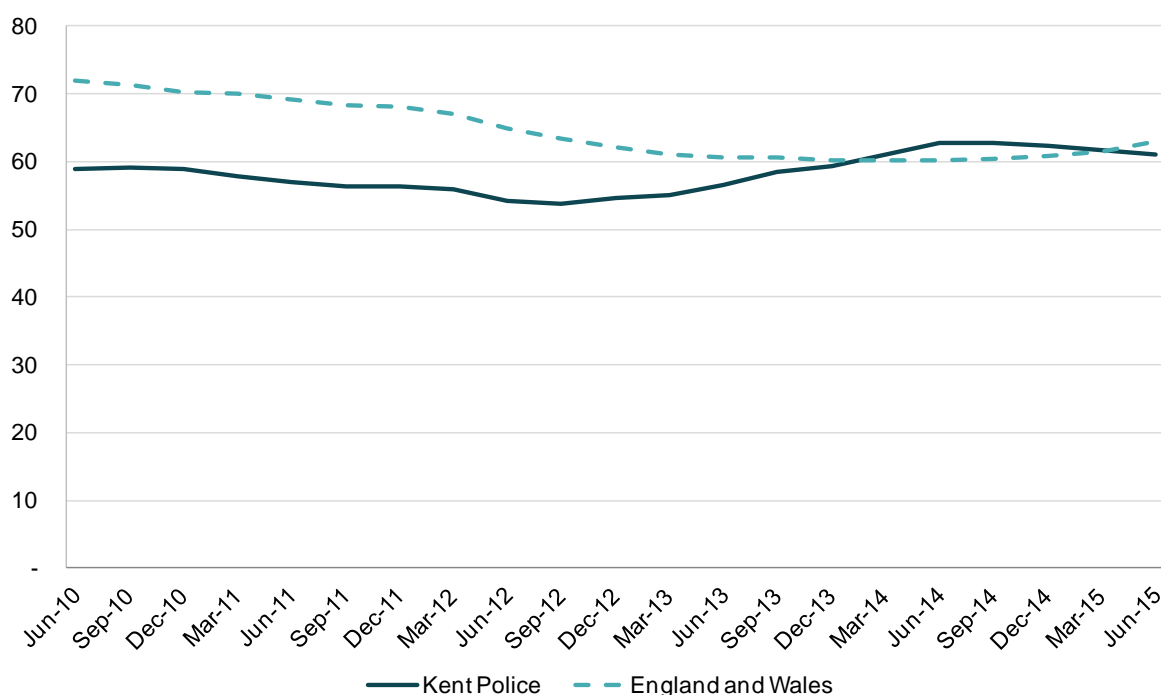## How much crime and anti-social behaviour is there in Kent?

Although police recorded crime is by no means a complete measure of the totality of demand for calls on its service that a force faces, it does provide a comparable indication of performance across all forces. Crime rates are reported as a number of crimes per 1,000 population in each force area to enable comparison between areas. Total recorded crime is made up of victim-based crime (e.g. theft) and non victim-based crime (e.g. possession of drugs). More than two-thirds of forces showed an annual increase in total police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in the 12 months to 30 June 2015. This increase in police recorded crime may have been affected by the renewed focus on the quality and compliance of crime recording since HMIC's national inspection of crime data in 2014.

In 2010 the Home Secretary set a clear priority for the police service to cut crime. When compared with the 12 months to 30 June 2010, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) for the 12 months to 30 June 2015 increased by 4 percent in Kent compared with a reduction of 13 percent across all forces in England and Wales.

Over this same period, victim-based crime (i.e. crimes where there is a direct victim such as an individual, a group, or an organisation) increased by 6 percent in Kent, compared with a reduction of 12 percent across England and Wales.

When compared with the previous year, police recorded crime (excluding fraud) in Kent decreased by 3 percent for the 12 months to 30 June 2015. This is compared with an increase of 4 percent across England and Wales over the same period.

Figure 1: Police recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the five year period to 30 June 2015

Source: Home Office data

The volume of police recorded crimes and incidents of anti-social behaviour per head of population indicates how safe it is for the public in that police area. Figure 2 shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Kent (per 1,000 population) compared with England and Wales.

Figure 2: Police recorded crime rates (per 1,000 population) for the 12 months to 30 June 2015

| Rates per 1,000 population	Kent Police	England and Wales
Recorded crime (excluding fraud)	61.1	63.0
Victim-based crime	57.0	56.0
Sexual offences	1.5	1.6
Assault with injury	6.6	6.3
Burglary in a dwelling*	7.0	8.4
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	27.6	32.9

Source: Home Office data, HMIC data return
 *Anti-social behaviour data is from the force's data return and the rate for burglary in a dwelling is the rate per 1,000 households, not population.

HMIC has chosen these types of crime to indicate offending levels in the force area. We are not judging the effectiveness of the force on police recorded crime rates only.

In the 12 months to 30 June 2015, Kent Police recorded 49,177 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is 4 percent fewer incidents than the force recorded during the previous 12 months. When considering all forces across England and Wales, there were 9 percent fewer incidents in the 12 months to 30 June 2015, than recorded during the previous 12 months.

Figure 3: Percentage change in the volume of anti-social behaviour incidents, by force, comparing the 12 months to 30 June 2015 with the 12 months to 30 June 2014
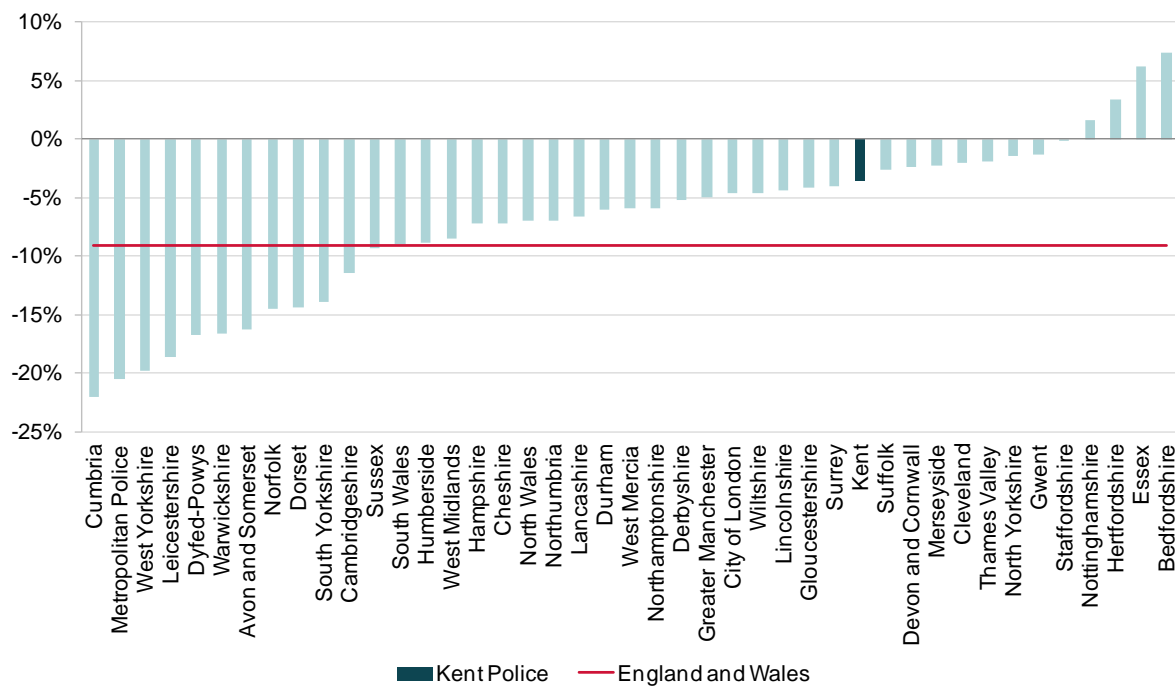
Source: HMIC data collection

How well does the force work to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe?

How well is the force prioritising the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour?

Kent Police is committed to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. This is demonstrated through its continued resourcing for community policing through its community safety units (CSUs). Using a range of research and analysis, including information from public consultation, the force has a good understanding of current, changing, and future levels of demand for its services that has informed the force plans and priorities. The priorities reflect a clear commitment to supporting victims, working with partners, keeping people safe from crime and anti-social behaviour and ensuring that visible, community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent.

The importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe is generally well understood throughout the whole force. HMIC found that officers and staff in CSUs understand the importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe, and the key role they play in it. However, across the rest of the force, the picture of how well prevention is understood and how far it is recognised as being everyone's responsibility, rather than just that of the CSU or specialist crime prevention roles, is less consistent. Most local policing team officers and investigators identified prevention as part of their role, but said there was limited time available to engage in this kind of activity, and limited information flow between them and CSUs over and above submitting intelligence.

Each day the force researches intelligence submissions and other sources of information to provide a comprehensive district daily report. The document covers areas such as crime 'hotspot' wards, crime charts, custody, crimes from the day before, wanted suspects, compliance with the *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*,[4] current crime trends and repeat victims. This is disseminated to all staff to support and prioritise activity of preventing and investigating crime and targeting offenders.

How well are resources allocated to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

The force has an extensive understanding of demand. It is using this understanding to ensure that it matches resources to demand. Within Kent there has been some notable work done to review how the police respond to demand and ensure that resources can be consistently targeted at areas of greatest risk to communities. CSUs provide a flexible policing resource to support police community support officers (PCSOs) and work closely with partners to co-ordinate crime prevention initiatives. Partners and PCSOs we spoke to stated that this model was working very well.

The force recognises the value the public places on neighbourhood policing and has continued to invest in these services while cutting spending elsewhere. The CSUs act as the link between a range of local organisations the force works with, and they co-ordinate activity to address long-term problems. For example, police supervisors are directing the day-to-day activities of the county council wardens. These units are becoming increasingly proactive in managing local issues and reducing and managing demand.

HMIC saw evidence of local policing teams receiving daily briefings that provided intelligence across a range of themes including high-risk targets and anti-social behaviour hotspots. The force has used a predictive crime analysis tool for some years. This allows the force to map, more accurately, known crime hotspots where officers should patrol in order to prevent and reduce crime. Officers are encouraged

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[4] *Code of Practice for Victims of Crime*, Ministry of Justice, 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/254459/code-of-practice-victims-of-crime.pdf

to patrol these identified hotspot areas when they are not responding to calls or investigating crimes; although some local policing officers said there was very little time for this kind of activity. HMIC did, however, find evidence that in Medway, local policing officers had been redirected from responding to non-urgent incidents to providing an additional visible presence in those areas that had seen an increase in anti-social behaviour.

Police community support officers provide the visible and knowledgeable, uniformed presence in neighbourhoods. They work with communities and partner organisations to tackle issues of concern, particularly anti-social behaviour. They are trained in crime prevention techniques and provide reassurance through visible patrol and home visits following crimes, provision of crime prevention advice, and working with partners to tackle short and long-term problems.

In HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we recommended that the force should review the role that PCSOs perform in relation to the investigation of crime as some were found to be conducting low-level investigations without any training. A clear direction has been given by the force, and PCSOs do not conduct criminal investigations. They do undertake crime prevention work and have received training for this.

How well is the force using a broad range of effective tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

The force uses a broad range of policing tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe. HMIC found examples of the force working closely with partners to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and of the use of a range of anti-social behaviour powers including criminal behaviour orders, dispersal orders and exclusion notices. The force also uses a range of preventative tactics to prevent crime including cocooning[5] and the use of crime prevention design advisers who have won awards for their work. The force's work to reduce dwelling burglary has been a success story with the third highest reduction nationally. Of note is the force's innovative use of phone apps to deliver crime prevention advice to communities and victims.

The force uses a predictive calendar to identify peak demand for policing at certain times of the year, so it can plan for proactive prevention activity. There are excellent examples of centrally co-ordinated partnership problem solving, for example, plans to tackle predicted crime spikes around Halloween. The force also provided crime prevention advice and equipment to local Asian communities in advance of Diwali celebrations, after the force identified a rise in gold theft during this period last year. This work included producing a crime prevention video translated into Hindi, Urdu and Nepali.

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[5] 'Cocooning' is a tactic used to protect victims and entails visiting houses surrounding the victim's address to gather further intelligence, identify witnesses and offer crime reduction advice and reassurance.

We found good examples of partnership meetings providing an opportunity for good practice to be shared, but we could not find any routine scanning for evidence of 'what works' in crime and anti-social behaviour prevention. The force uses an information-sharing database which the police and other public sector agencies such as local authority community wardens can access. It allows for better sharing of information to enable more effective problem-solving. The force intended that this shared database would provide a single location on which to store problem-solving plans and good practice, but there is little evidence of it being used in this way. The systematic gathering together of problem-solving plans and what works, especially if they provide a comprehensive problem analysis, with clear criteria for success capable of being monitored and evaluated, helps to evaluate the success of various tactics and approaches and provides an evidence base for future activities.

In HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we recommended that the force ensures that there are methods in place to systematically review and evaluate the benefits from both current tactics and new crime fighting and anti-social behaviour initiatives; systematically capture learning and good practice in crime prevention and local problem solving; and share learning and good practice across the force and with partners.

The force is using a wide range of prevention tactics and reviews them to assess their success. Operation Castle is a burglary prevention operation that has been assessed and refined, and the force intranet has links to the anti-social behaviour toolkit and contains relevant legislation updates. However, it is evident that the force still has work to do to improve the capture and sharing of good practice.

How well does the force work with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe?

How committed is the force to working with partner organisations?

The force's control strategy[6] priorities are built upon effective consultation with community safety partners. Senior officers invest time and effort in consulting and working closely with a wide variety of partner organisations. The Kent Community Safety Partnership, supported by a co-located community safety team which includes senior 'blue light' staff,[7] has agreed the county priorities set out in the Kent Community Safety Agreement 2014-2017. The agreed priorities are domestic abuse, anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, violent crime, acquisitive crime and road safety. The alignment of the CSUs towards these priorities reflects the force's commitment to taking a partnership approach to preventing crime and anti-social behaviour.

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[6] The control strategy sets out and communicates the operational priorities for the force or command area and sets the longer term priorities for crime prevention, intelligence and enforcement.

[7] Fire, police, and ambulance services.

HMIC spoke to a mixture of senior leaders and operational managers from partner organisations including local authorities, the fire and rescue service, probation, and the force's own independent advisory group. All felt that the force showed a strong commitment to working together and sharing information with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to keeping people safe, at both a strategic and operational level. Examples include increasing co-location of partners at various locations across the force, most notably at Margate; the use of the shared database by an increasing number of partners; and the integrated offender management (IOM) scheme.[8]

Strong relationships with community safety partnerships and the local co-location of police and local authority staff have allowed daily and weekly partnership meetings to take place. These are enabling effective local problem solving and the development of a variety of initiatives to keep people safe across the county. Good examples include, but are not limited to: the 'blue bus' scheme, which is staffed by a number of partner agencies including the Red Cross, the ambulance service, and street pastors, and supports people who are vulnerable – often due to excess alcohol – and provides any required medical attention before making arrangements for taxis to take them home; local business crime reduction partnerships; the central referral unit that provides multi-agency support to vulnerable people and ensures that immediate steps are taken to help make victims safe; the Kent resilience forum, and the co-located victim support services at Compass House.[9]

The force is able to reflect the views of local community in its prevention work through the Kent crime and victimisation survey, and this complements the good understanding of service demands made on the other organisations it works with and what is happening nationally.

How well does the force share and use information with partners to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour?

The Kent and Medway information-sharing agreement enables local public services in Kent to share information by setting out agreed principles for protecting personal information. This agreement provides an effective basis for information sharing with partners across the county. Senior community safety partners spoke positively about information sharing arrangements at strategic and operational levels. Partnership data is increasingly being used to inform local problem-solving activity, although this is not yet consistent across the force. The integrated community safety team (police and fire and rescue service) and the Kent resilience team (police, fire and rescue

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[8] IOM brings a cross-agency response to the crime and re-offending threats faced by local communities. The most persistent and problematic offenders are identified and managed jointly by partner agencies working together.

[9] A multi-agency integrated support service for victims at Compass House, in Ashford.

service and local authority) are examples of good practice in co-location and data sharing.

There are locally based daily and weekly meetings with partners, where information is shared and joint activities to tackle local crime and anti-social behaviour problems are agreed and reviewed. Predicted hotspots from analysis are also shared with partners such as the fire and rescue service and neighbourhood wardens, who can support activity in these areas, although this is not consistently overlaid with wider partnership data force-wide, as it is in Margate.

How well is the force working with partner organisations to keep people safe and tackle anti-social behaviour in local neighbourhoods?

The force works well with partner organisations to promote resolutions that protect communities and victims, and was able to provide good examples of operational working with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour.

HMIC saw many examples of effective problem-solving with partner organisations to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and keep people safe, including:

- an anti-social behaviour MARAC-style[10] monthly partnership meeting to tackle anti-social behaviour cases in Tunbridge Wells*;*

- joint work with the fire and rescue service to provide sessions in schools on the consequences of anti-social behaviour and strategies for staying safe*;*

- successful interventions to tackle shoplifting and rough sleeping through a local business crime reduction partnership, with support from immigration*;*

- the strong and vibrant rural crime prevention work in partnership with the rural communities;

- police-led briefings with partners from the licensing industry and door staff where intelligence is shared and emerging trends and problems are discussed to keep people safe in the night-time economy; and

- the use of crime prevention design advisers (CPDAs) who work with the 13 district councils and the county council to 'design out crime' in new buildings and public spaces.

Engagement between partner organisations is good at both a strategic and operational level. Partner agencies value the strong commitment from the force to working together, and the effective sharing of information to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour and to keep people safe.

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[10] MARACs (multi-agency risk assessment conferences) are regular local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies. By bringing all agencies together at a MARAC, and ensuring that whenever possible the voice of the victim is heard, a risk focused, co-ordinated safety plan can be drawn up to support the victim. Kent Police have expanded this concept out to include wider issues than just domestic abuse.

Summary of findings

Good

Kent Police is good at preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe. HMIC's crime inspection in 2014 also found the force to be good at reducing crime and preventing offending.

The force priorities reflect clear commitments to supporting victims, working with partners, keeping people safe from crime and anti-social behaviour and ensuring that visible, community policing is at the heart of policing in Kent. The importance of preventing crime and anti-social behaviour and keeping people safe is generally well understood throughout the whole force. Well-trained staff work within the community support teams and provide an effective service to the public.

The force works closely with partner agencies and communities and uses a wide range of tactics to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and has won awards for its work. Senior community safety partners speak positively about working together with the force and of the information sharing arrangements at strategic and operational levels.

While there are some areas for improvement, including how the force captures, evaluates, understands, and shares good practice, the public can feel confident that the force is working well to prevent crime and anti-social behaviour, and keep people safe.

Areas for improvement

- The force should use evidence of 'what works' drawn from other forces, academics and partners to continually improve its approach to the prevention of crime and anti-social behaviour. There should be routine evaluation of tactics and sharing of effective practice.

How effective is the force at investigating crime and managing offenders?

When a crime occurs, the public must have confidence that the police will investigate it effectively, take their concerns as victims seriously, and bring offenders to justice. To be effective, investigations should be well planned and supervised, based on approved practice, and carried out by appropriately trained staff. The risk posed by those who are identified as being the most prolific or dangerous offenders must also be properly managed (in partnership with other organisations), to minimise the chances of continued harm to individuals and communities.

HMIC referred to national standards and best practice in examining how well the force allocates and investigates both complex and non-complex (e.g. burglary, robbery and assault) crime, including the full range of ways police officers and staff can gather evidence to support investigations (these include the more traditional forensics, such as taking fingerprints, as well as digital sweeps to find evidence of online abuse, for instance).

We also looked at how well the force works with partners to identify vulnerable offenders and prevent them from re-offending, and how well it identifies and manages repeat, and dangerous and sexual offenders.

How well does the force bring offenders to justice?

Since April 2014, police forces in England and Wales have been required to record how investigations are concluded in a new way, known as 'outcomes'. Replacing what was known as 'sanction detections', the new outcomes framework gives a fuller picture of the work the police do to investigate and resolve crime. The new broader framework (now containing twenty different types of outcomes) is designed to support police officers in using their professional judgment to ensure a just and timely resolution. The resolution should reflect the harm caused to the victim, the seriousness of the offending behaviour, the impact on the community and deter future offending.

Given the work involved in amending police force crime-recording systems to accommodate fully the new outcomes framework, two forces have not yet been able to provide a full year of data for all new outcomes types. Kent Police, however, has been providing the Home Office with full data since April 2014. The complete range of new outcome types will be used in future HMIC inspections, once all forces have provided a full year of data. Figure 4 shows only those outcome types for which full data is available for all forces in England and Wales.

Figure 4: Outcomes recorded in the 12 months to 30 June 2015 for all police recorded crime (excluding fraud)[11] [12] [13]

Outcome type/group	Kent Police Number of outcomes	Rate	England and Wales Number of outcomes	Rate
Charged/Summonsed	**15,116**	**13.9**	**577,678**	**16.0**
Taken into consideration	**346**	**0.3**	**21,318**	**0.6**
Out-of-court (formal)	**4,158**	**3.8**	**165,384**	**4.6**
Caution - youths	725	0.7	19,703	0.5
Caution - adults	2,540	2.3	115,000	3.2
Penalty Notices for Disorder	893	0.8	30,681	0.8
Out-of-court (informal)	**2,823**	**2.6**	**159,915**	**4.4**
Cannabis/Khat warning	701	0.6	41,964	1.2
Community resolution	2,122	1.9	117,951	3.3

Source: Home Office crime outcomes data

Outcomes are likely to differ from force to force for a number of reasons. Certain offences are more likely to be concluded without offenders being prosecuted, typically including types of crime such as cannabis misuse. If this type of crime is particularly prevalent in a force then it is likely that the level of 'cannabis/khat[14] warning' outcomes would be greater.

The frequency of outcomes may also reflect the force's policing priorities. For example, some forces work hard with partners to ensure that first time and low-level offenders are channelled away from the criminal justice system. In these areas, locally based community resolutions are likely to be more prevalent than elsewhere. When considering all crimes recorded (excluding fraud), outcome rates for Kent Police are broadly in line with most other forces in England and Wales.

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[11] Rate based on number of outcomes recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2015 divided by number of offences recorded in 12 months to 30 June 2015.

[12] For a full commentary and explanation of outcome types please see *Crime Outcomes in England and Wales 2014/15*, Home Office, London, July 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445753/hosb0115.pdf

[13] Community resolutions are an out-of-court disposal the police can use to deal with anti-social behaviour and low-level crime. 'Taken into consideration' is when an offender admits the commission of other offences in the course of sentencing proceedings and requests those other offences to be taken into consideration.

[14] A plant native to Africa and the Arabian Peninsula, the leaves of which are frequently chewed as a stimulant; the possession and supply of khat became a criminal offence in England and Wales in 2014.

How well does the force investigate crime and keep victims safe and informed?

How well does the force initially investigate and allocate cases?

It is important that when the police are called to an incident they respond in a timely manner, with officers or staff who are trained and competent to keep people safe, and who can take steps to apprehend offenders and investigate the circumstances if a crime has occurred. An effective initial response by the police increases the likelihood of a successful outcome for both the victim and the criminal justice system. Subsequent investigation by detectives and other specialist police staff also needs to be well managed and resourced.

Kent Police responds well to reports of crime. Attending officers understand their role as the initial investigator and the need to undertake primary crime prevention work. The response to incidents and calls for service in Kent is 'borderless'. This means that the nearest and most appropriate police resource is sent to attend an incident regardless of internal force organisational structures.

The force has a clear crime allocation policy, which does have a degree of flexibility. It has moved from its previous position of attending all reported crime to one where half of reported crimes are now diverted to a telephone investigation unit and resolved without the need for an officer to attend; this does not include domestic abuse cases which are always attended by an officer. Those cases that are dealt with in this manner are assessed to ensure that a telephone investigation is appropriate; if it is deemed not to be, then an officer is deployed. As a consequence crimes were found to be generally properly allocated to appropriately trained and accredited staff. On occasions where there may be delays in an investigation, due to officers being on leave or rest days, negotiation between teams ensure any delays and effective service to victims is managed. A very small number of crimes were subject to disagreements between departments as to who the crime should be allocated to, which, in a few occasions, led to inappropriate delays. This means that evidence, especially potential forensic evidence, may be lost and that victims may receive an inconsistent level of service.

The force is using continuous professional development (CPD)[15] to enhance the capability of its officers. This should mean that investigations are more likely to be of a better quality and that victims receive a better level of service.

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[15] The CPD model from the College of Policing ensures that all police practitioners not only meet the requirements for entry into the profession, but maintain or enhance standards of professional practice throughout their careers.

How well does the force investigate different types of crime?

The quality of crime cases that we reviewed was consistently found to be of a good standard. They had appropriate investigation plans which set out the actions the investigator will take to ensure all investigative opportunities are considered and completed. Officers use an acronym, VOWS: victim, offender, witness and scene to systematically structure their investigations. This is to ensure they report the details of the initial investigation, and should mean that the workloads of officers are manageable. Investigation plans are documented on the force's crime recording system, and there was good evidence of supervised decision-making. Supervisors monitor cases closely to ensure that enquiries are made promptly, victims are kept up to date as previously agreed with them, and results are recorded.

Kent Police has an appropriate number of trained and accredited staff at PIP level[16] and from other specialisms, such as forensics, to deal with complex crime. The force is confident it has assessed the number and status of detectives to meet its current and future demand. Officers within the combined safeguarding team, which deals with sexual offences against children where there is either a familial relationship or a position of trust, are trained in achieving best evidence (ABE) and all officers within the sexual offences investigation team are Tier 2 trained.[17]

In those more complex crimes such as child abuse and serious sexual offences, and cases that are allocated to specialist units, most cases reviewed by HMIC were found to have been effectively investigated with clear investigation plans and strong and consistent evidence of effective supervision, including supervisory involvement in decision-making. The work of the paedophile online investigation team (POLIT) is notable, carrying out effective investigations. This means that offenders will find Kent a more difficult place in which to operate and this in turn helps to reduce the risk to vulnerable children.

All serious crimes such as murder or kidnap are investigated by the serious crime directorate (SCD) which is operated jointly with Essex Police. The force supports and is part of the South East Region Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU), a collaboration between police forces in Sussex, Surrey, Hampshire, Thames Valley and Kent, which supplies a range of specialist skills and capabilities to forces within the region.

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[16] Professionalising Investigation Programme (PIP) identifies key learning and development for investigators in new or specialised roles, and standards of competences in investigation and interviewing. It ensures that staff are trained, skilled and accredited to conduct the highest quality investigations; it has three levels.

[17] PIP2 SCIDP Specialist Child Abuse Investigator Development Programme led by the College of Policing. This is a developmental route that supports achievement of competence. ABE – the visually recorded statement of young victims and witnesses with the police is usually described as the ABE DVD. It is usually played as their evidence-in-chief at trial. Tier 2 is a level of interview expertise that means that an officer is competent to conduct interviews in serious and complex cases (PIP level 2).

Kent Police, however, do not use all the specialisms offered as it retains joint operational working with Essex Police through the SCD to deliver investigative capacity, a confidential unit, covert operations and technical surveillance.

Kent Police has signalled its intention to withdraw from SEROCU by 2017 and become aligned to the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) with Essex Police. As part of this move the force is assessing with Essex Police how to make the most effective use of both the SCD and ERSOU.

The force has a collaborative management arrangement with Essex Police for its forensic service. Using a formal assessment process, the force monitors whether or not it is necessary to submit every piece of forensic evidence. Outcomes are effectively scrutinised and evaluated at senior level.

The Kent forensic science service supports the effectiveness of investigations and is effective for both volume crime and major crime. The force closely monitors the performance and is satisfied that it compares well with other forces. There are, however, 325 outstanding forensic submissions waiting to be dealt with. The force has agreed a short-term injection of £35,000 to outsource examinations to an external provider to reduce the backlog of submissions. It has also made contact with all officers by email asking them to review their investigations with outstanding forensic examinations to assess the risks in each case caused by the delay and to ensure those presenting the greatest risk are prioritised accordingly. However these delays mean the force is likely to be less effective than it could be in detecting and preventing crime in these particular cases.

Some frontline officers have been trained in forensic recovery and are taking their own swabs at crime scenes. The training provided to officers is part of the IPLDP[18] programme to emphasise the importance of integrity and continuity in taking non-intimate samples. It has been provided to assist in detecting offenders and putting victims first. Based on threat, risk and harm, there may be occasions when circumstances dictate samples should be taken. The force should continue with its review and assessment of this initiative to reassure itself that this activity does not undermine either the current forensic accreditation or prosecution cases.

Effective investigation requires that suspects, once identified, should be managed though the investigation and criminal justice processes. In relation to people wanted for criminal offences, HMIC found the force has recently introduced a new process to ensure that arrests are made in a timely manner, based on the level of threat, harm and risk. Details of people who need to be arrested are sent, on a daily basis, to a team at headquarters who conduct a prioritisation process that is used to inform officer briefing. The daily management meetings, which are chaired by senior officers, ensure progress is made with the arrests of the highest risk offenders, and in that way seeking to prevent offenders from re-offending. Local policing teams

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[18] Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP) is the training programme for all new police officers.

receive full details of outstanding offenders who need arresting; the list is prioritised with a heavy emphasis on violence and domestic violence offenders. In addition every two weeks local policing teams also get a list of offenders who have failed to answer their bail.

How well does the force gather digital evidence?

Increasingly, crime in England and Wales is committed online and through the use of digital devices such as tablets, computers or mobile phones. All forces have to retrieve data from these devices and examine them for evidence; staff, in what may be known as high tech crime units (HTCU), carry out these examinations. In Kent the HTCU is operated jointly with Essex Police.

We found a significant backlog in examining computers and other digital media in order to support those investigations that do not require an immediate examination. This causes delays in bringing prosecutions and potentially risks not bringing offenders to justice and not properly protecting victims. The force has reviewed its service in this area and agreed a new model to improve the service. However, other IT projects within the force will take precedence and it will not implement the new model for at least two years. The force is in the process of implementing an interim arrangement and has outsourced examinations to an external company on a short-term basis; however, this issue is likely to remain an area of concern until the new model is implemented fully.

To help reduce the pressure on the team examining digital evidence, the force has ensured that investigating officers have access to digital recovery facilities for mobile phones at their work locations. It is also investing in a number of 'kiosks' and in a 'cloud' storage upgrade. By using the kiosks officers can look for evidence on commonly encountered digital devices such as smartphones and tablets themselves, rather than having to refer these devices to specially trained officers.

Good oversight and monitoring is in place for digital submissions by the POLIT and the digital and forensic unit (DFU). This gives the force a better understanding of the types of submissions that are coming in. The force is also using the latest triage tools that enable appropriately trained officers to assess data on mobile phones at the scene and decide whether they need to be seized at all.

How satisfied are victims of crime with the service provided by the force?

Of those who have been the victim of a crime in Kent in the 12 months to 31 March 2015, 84.8 percent were satisfied with their whole experience with the police. This is similar to the national victim satisfaction rate of 83.8 percent over the same time period. The victim satisfaction rate in Kent for the 12 months to 31 March 2015 is significantly lower than both the previous year's rate and the rate for the 12 months to 31 March 2011.

Figure 5: Percentage of victims satisfied with the overall service provided by the police, for the four year period to 31 March 2015
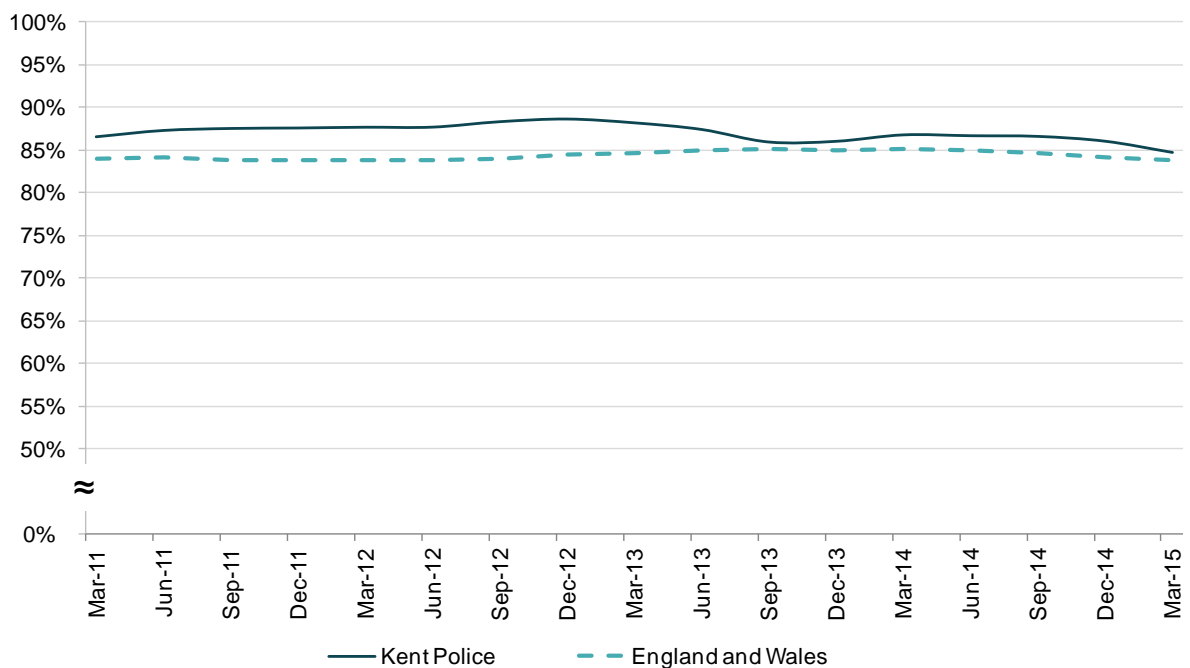
Source: Home Office data provided by forces

Kent Police promotes a victim-centred approach to policing; for some years now it has directed staff to embrace the priority of 'putting victims and witnesses at the heart of everything they do'. This includes compliance with the code of practice for victims of crime and the district daily report contains details on the compliance rate for the code to reinforce its importance. Despite this, victim satisfaction with the services of Kent Police has been gradually deteriorating since 2012 and fell sharply in the year to March 2015. The force should do more to understand the reasons behind this and satisfy itself that the needs and wishes of victims are actually being put at the heart of all that it does.

How well does the force identify and manage offenders to prevent re-offending?

How well does the force divert offenders away from crime?

Kent Police works well to divert offenders away from crime. The force is able to identify repeat and vulnerable offenders though 'flagging' on the incident command

and control and intelligence systems. This information is shared with various partners such as probation and at the MARAC.[19]

HMIC found that the force is involved in some good work to divert offenders from the criminal justice system. This includes using a force initiative called the 'Proportionate Justice Programme'.[20] This captures what the victim wants and decides if the disposal or resolution of their case should be rehabilitation or punishment. The force is in the process of stopping the use of cannabis warnings and summonses, and will only be using community resolution, conditional caution and charge as a method of disposal in the future. An active drug intervention programme is in place and community practice nurses attend the custody area at a number of stations to provide support and referrals for those people with mental health issues.

The force makes use of the restorative justice process for juveniles who come into custody.[21] Those juveniles who are suitable for restorative justice are released from custody without charge in order to attend a restorative justice clinic where their suitability for either restorative justice or conditional caution is assessed. The force was able to give some good examples across a number of cases with sanctions that range from a verbal apology, to reparation for damage such as a broken window. The force has not conducted any analysis of the results or of the cost/benefit balance which could provide evidence of the extent of the effectiveness of the scheme.

How well does the force deal with repeat offenders?

The force has effective processes in place to identify repeat offenders and prevent them re-offending. Like most forces, Kent Police has several groups of offenders ranging from serious sexual and violent offenders to prolific burglars.

The force has a well-established integrated offender management (IOM) scheme, with a clear strategic framework and overarching governance. The Kent Criminal Justice Board, with oversight by Kent and Medway Reducing Offending Board, and

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[19] MARAC: multi-agency risk assessment conference. MARACs are regular local meetings where information about high-risk domestic abuse victims (those at risk of murder or serious harm) is shared between local agencies.

[20] This force initiative replicates features of the national decision model (NDM) and has six considerations. They are:
1. Begin with the end in mind and only gather evidence to achieve the outcome needed.
2. Seriousness of offence – any work completed should be linked to the assessment of threat harm and risk.
3. The views of the victim should be established early in an investigation.
4. Offender rehabilitation – choose a disposal that rehabilitates as well as punishes and increase community resolutions and conditional cautions.
5. Likely outcome at court – is it in the public interest to prosecute?
6. Balanced investigation – make a proportionate decision.
7. Right outcome and demand reduction.

[21] Restorative justice brings together people harmed by crime or conflict with those responsible for the harm, to find a positive way forward.

the IOM performance and delivery group ensure the scheme is well managed and effective.

The scheme has dedicated, committed, and enthusiastic staff. Offenders are placed on the scheme following multi-agency discussions and there is evidence of continued multi-agency review and involvement in the ongoing management. The force operates four IOM hubs across the county, and while partner agencies are not yet co-located at the hubs there is a well-developed plan for this co-location which is aimed at supporting the effective delivery of IOM across the county. Despite partners not being currently co-located, IOM officers do have access to the probation computer system. This has made possible better sharing of intelligence supported by information sharing agreements.

The selection criteria used to identify those who should go into the IOM scheme, reflects the force priorities, in particular its focus on threat, risk and harm. However offenders currently on the scheme are exclusively drawn from those involved in serious acquisitive crime,[22] mainly dwelling burglary. The focus on these crime types limits the force's ability to deal with other types of offenders who also pose a risk to the community and may cause greater harm. The force has started to assess how domestic abuse offenders can be included in the scheme with a view to reducing the number of repeat victims of domestic abuse.

The details of IOM subjects are shared with frontline officers who, as a result, have a good awareness of IOM and understand how to refer people for inclusion in the scheme. An effective process is in place to monitor those people who are placed on the IOM scheme. Integrated offender management officers undertake home visits and drug testing as a means of reducing re-offending.

While the success of an IOM scheme is difficult to assess, the force is now using ID-IOM. This is a Ministry of Justice system developed to assist IOM schemes to measure performance including tracking an individual's pre and post-cohort selection.

How well does the force deal with sexual and other dangerous offenders?

The force has effective processes for identifying and monitoring sexual offenders. Skilled and accredited staff use appropriate plans to reduce the risk from registered sex offenders, with clear supervision and governance arrangements.

The force has adopted a structured risk assessment process to assess dynamic risk factors associated with sexual reoffending and protective factors associated with reduced offending. These assessments are reviewed, involving partners, and there is formal training for staff and partners. This process helps the force gain a clearer picture of the risk posed by offenders.

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[22] Serious acquisitive crime is defined as domestic burglary, car crime (theft of a vehicle and theft from a vehicle) and robbery.

The multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA)[23] are well managed. The arrangements are used by the force and partner organisations, including prisons and probation, to monitor those offenders assessed as presenting a high risk to the public, and to stop them re-offending. Offenders assessed as presenting the highest level of risk require co-ordinated action with partner organisations to reduce these risks.

The force uses the national MAPPA definition of a 'dangerous or violent offender', but it is unclear how well this has been communicated to staff. Frontline officers we spoke to have no knowledge of the definition, which means that staff may not recognise when persons should be referred into the MAPPA process.

For sexual and other dangerous offenders, the force briefing process is effective in content. Those sex offenders whose conditions require enforcement are featured in briefings to officers with instructions to officers to conduct compliance checks on the offenders. Sexual Offences Prevention Orders (SOPOs) are designed to protect the public from serious sexual harm from an offender. As of March 2015, SOPOs were re-named Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs). In the 12 months to 30 June 2015 Kent issued 117 SOPOs and has issued 55 SHPOs since 1 March 2015. The force reported that 43 orders have been breached.

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[23] MAPPA is an arrangement for the "responsible authorities" tasked with the management of registered sex offenders, violent and other types of sexual offenders, and offenders who pose a serious risk of harm to the public. The "responsible authorities" of the MAPPA include the National Probation Service, HM Prison Service and England and Wales police forces.

Summary of findings

●●●○ **Good**

Kent Police's approach to investigating crime and managing offenders is good. This is consistent with HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, when the force was also judged as good at investigating crime.

The force responds well to reports of crime and attending officers understand their role as the initial investigator and the need to undertake primary crime prevention work. Crime allocation is effective with some few exceptions. The quality of investigations is good, investigation plans are thorough and well documented, following approved practice for investigations, and there is clear evidence of effective support and review by experienced supervisors.

Victims are generally kept well informed as investigations progress, assisted by the force's priority of 'putting victims and witnesses at the heart of everything they do' which includes compliance with the Code of Practice for Victims of Crime.

The forensic science service is effective for both volume and major crime, but there are some backlogs in forensic submissions.

The force identifies vulnerable offenders and makes efforts to divert them from further offending. While there are a few areas for improvement, the force's processes for working with partner organisations to identify, monitor and work with repeat and dangerous offenders to stop them re-offending work well.

How effective is the force at protecting from harm those who are vulnerable, and supporting victims?

This question was inspected between June and August 2015, and the full report was published in December 2015.[24] The following is a summary of the findings.

Summary of findings

Requires improvement

Kent Police is committed to protecting vulnerable people from harm. It has well-established processes in place to identify repeat and vulnerable victims, and generally provides a good service in doing so and responding appropriately, so the public can be confident that many victims are well supported. Commendably the force has invested in tackling domestic abuse, missing persons and child sexual exploitation cases, and is working to improve its services, including working with academic institutions that provide external quality assessment. However, there are some important areas where more improvement is needed to ensure the service is consistent and so that vulnerable people, particularly children, are kept safe. Given the scale of the challenge in this area and risk that is posed to some of the most vulnerable people, the force requires improvement.

HMIC found that the force's initial response to support vulnerable victims of domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour, and to find missing children, is good. Call-takers demonstrated professionalism, empathy and reassurance, and investigations were generally carried out effectively.

HMIC's crime inspection report in November 2014 recommended that investigating officers for medium and standard risk domestic abuse cases should have the professional skills and knowledge to fulfil their duties. The domestic abuse investigations that we reviewed relating to all levels of risk were supervised, had clear rationales for the approach taken, showed evidence of routine consideration of how to protect (or safeguard) victims, and were generally considered to be effective. The force has the lowest charge rate in England and Wales for domestic abuse at 16 percent. Whilst the force's high compliance rate with the National Crime Recording Standards accounts partially for this low charge rate, the force needs to fully understand all the factors to ensure outcomes for victims are appropriate.

The force has developed a comprehensive plan in an effort to improve its response to child protection. However, we found that frontline constables and police staff's

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[24] *PEEL: Police effectiveness 2015 (Vulnerability) – Kent Police*, HMIC, December 2015. Available from: www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/publications/police-effectiveness-vulnerability-2015-kent/).

knowledge of how to identify the risk factors associated with child sexual exploitation was limited.

The force needs to ensure that its plans achieve greater understanding and management of child sexual exploitation by officers and staff. This inspection considered how well prepared the force is to tackle child sexual exploitation.

The protecting vulnerable people board plays an important and effective part in the force's plans to improve services, drawing together all the major strands of the force's work to improve responses to vulnerable people. Frontline officers are responsible for targeting high risk offenders who present a risk to vulnerable people, demonstrating that protecting vulnerable people has become the focus of everyday policing activity.

The force is strongly committed to partnership working and HMIC found some excellent examples of this. Two notable examples are the multi-agency task force in Margate where 14 agencies work closely together to provide efficient support and guidance for victims, and the multi-agency integrated support service for victims in Ashford, where Victim Support and other voluntary agencies work alongside Kent Police staff providing advice and guidance to vulnerable victims. The county's central referral unit provides multi-agency support to vulnerable people and ensures that immediate steps are taken to help make victims safe.

How effective is the force at tackling serious and organised crime, including its arrangements for fulfilling its national policing responsibilities?

Serious and organised crime poses a threat to the public across the whole of the UK and beyond. Individuals, communities and businesses feel its damaging effects. Police forces play a critical role in tackling serious and organised crime alongside regional organised crime units (ROCUs), the National Crime Agency (NCA) and other partner organisations.

Police forces that are effective tackle serious and organised crime not just by prosecuting offenders, but by disrupting and preventing organised criminality at a local level. They also use specialist capabilities (for example surveillance and undercover policing) where appropriate in order to protect the public from highly sophisticated and rapidly changing organised criminal threats. A number of forces within a regional area often share specialist capabilities as this provides better value for money and is a more efficient way of working.

As at 30 June 2015, Kent Police was actively disrupting, investigating or monitoring 73 organised crime groups (OCGs). This represents 41 OCGs per one million of the population.

Figure 6: Organised crime groups per one million population, by force, as at 30 June 2015[25] [26]
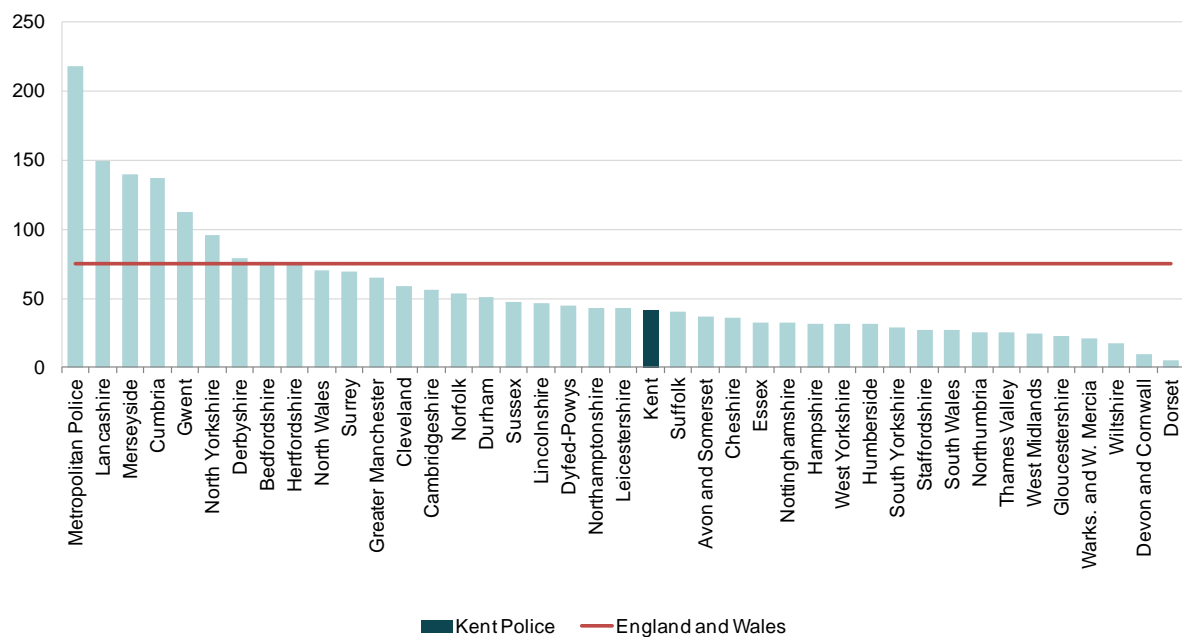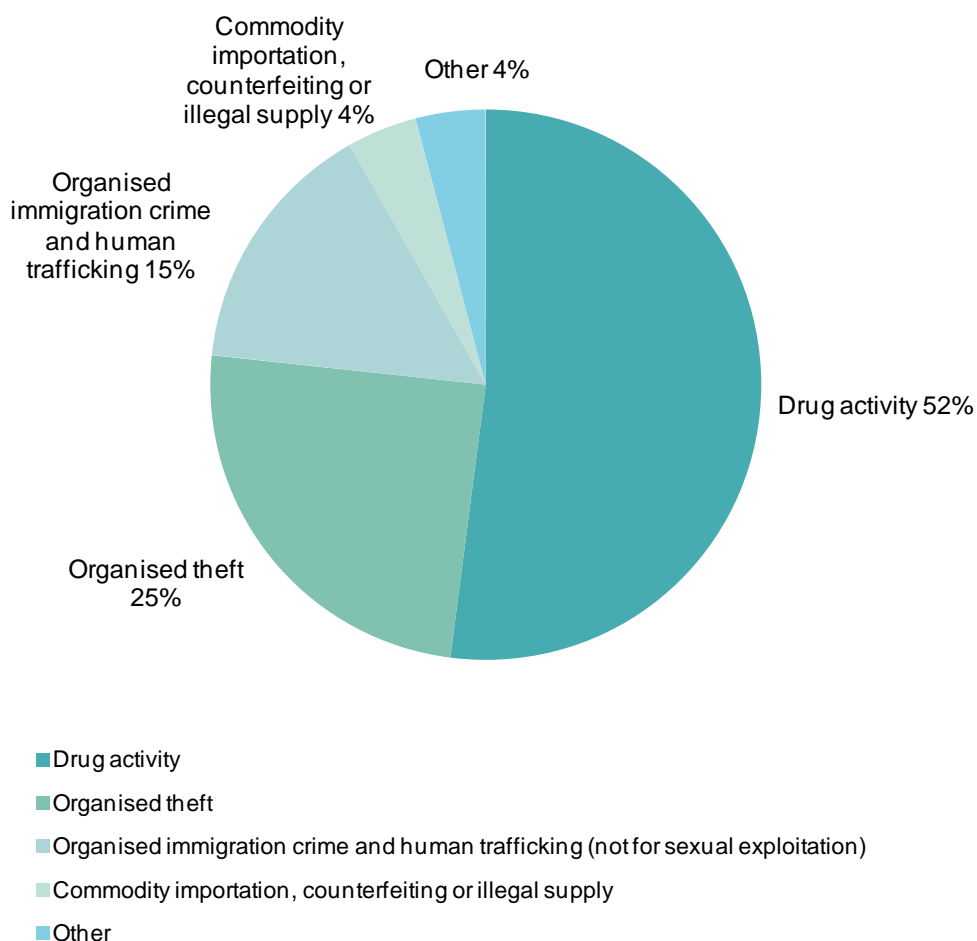

Source: HMIC data collection

Forces categorise OCGs by the predominant form of criminal activity in which the group is involved. Although OCGs are likely to be involved in multiple forms of criminality, this indicates their most common characteristic. 'Drug activity' was the predominant crime type (52 percent) of the OCGs managed by Kent Police as at 30 June 2015. 'Drug activity' was also the most common predominant crime type recorded by all forces in England and Wales[27], with 64 percent of all OCGs classified in this way.

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[25] City of London Police data has been removed from the chart as its OCG data is not comparable with other forces due to size and its wider national remit.

[26] The number of OCGs in the Warwickshire Police and West Mercia Police force areas is a combined total of OCGs for the two force areas. The OCGs per one million population rate is based upon their areas' combined population figures.

[27] The Metropolitan Police Service is not included in the England and Wales figure because it does not categorise in the same way as other forces; by the predominant form of criminal activity.

Figure 7: Force organised crime groups by the predominant crime type, as at 30 June 2015[28]

Legend:
- Drug activity
- Organised theft
- Organised immigration crime and human trafficking (not for sexual exploitation)
- Commodity importation, counterfeiting or illegal supply
- Other

Source: HMIC data collection

Serious and organised crime is one of six national threats specified within *The Strategic Policing Requirement (SPR).*[29] These include terrorism, serious cyber-crime incidents and child sexual abuse. These are complex threats which means that forces must work together to respond to them effectively. It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to these national threats. Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise.

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[28] Figures may not sum to 100 percent, due to rounding.

[29] *The Strategic Policing Requirement*, Home Office, March 2015. Available from: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/417116/The_Strategic_Policing_Requirement.pdf

How well does the force understand the threat and risk posed by serious and organised crime?

Kent Police and Essex Police tackle serious and organised crime in collaboration, through their joint serious crime directorate (SCD) whose focus is on those OCGs that pose the most harm. The force is good at assessing the threat posed to its communities by serious and organised crime. An effective threat assessment process is in place which draws on information from partner organisations.[30] Essex and Kent have also created a 'local profile' for serious and organised crime, in line with national guidance. This provides the forces and their partners with a better understanding of serious and organised crime in Essex and Kent.

When a police force identifies a group of individuals whom it suspects may be involved in organised crime, it goes through a nationally standardised 'mapping' procedure. This involves entering details of the group's known and suspected activity, associates and capability into a computer system, which assigns a numerical score to each OCG. It also places each OCG into one of several 'bands' which reflect the range and severity of crime in which a group is involved as well as its level of capability and sophistication. Police forces, ROCUs, the NCA and a number of non-police organisations such as Border Force, use OCG mapping.

Despite the use of standard software and methods, forces carry out OCG mapping inconsistently and there is significant variation in the number of mapped OCGs per head of population across England and Wales. This inconsistency is partly due to the unavoidably subjective nature of some aspects of the mapping procedure, which relies on human judgment as well as computer algorithms. Sometimes, groups exhibiting similar characteristics are scored in different ways, and forces do not always use the full range of information available to generate OCG scores, which can compromise their accuracy and usefulness. For these reasons, HMIC has recommended that ROCUs assume responsibility for OCG mapping on behalf of their constituent forces.[31]

In Kent, the SCD has responsibility for managing the organised crime group mapping and this is well managed, with regular reviews of the threat posed by the individual groups. There are staff dedicated to gathering intelligence about OCGs. Each of these members of staff has additional responsibilities for certain areas of OCG criminality such as criminal use of firearms, immigration and human trafficking. These staff are supported by a pool of analysts who are commissioned to conduct specific analysis around organised criminality. These processes work well.

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[30] Police forces work with a variety of partner organisations in order to tackle serious and organised crime, including HM Revenue and Customs, HM Prison Service, the Department for Work and Pensions and Immigration Enforcement.

[31] *Regional Organised Crime Units: A Review of Capability and Effectiveness*, HMIC, December 2015, www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/wp-content/uploads/regional-organised-crime-units.pdf

The intelligence functions of the SCD are complemented by a regional intelligence team, which is part of the South East Region Organised Crime Unit (SEROCU). This regional team can add further intelligence to that held by the force, perhaps from other forces and partner organisations. This helps it to produce a more accurate and detailed picture of serious and organised criminality. The force does not at this time use all the functions available within SEROCU due to its collaboration with Essex Police and the SCD. The planned move from SEROCU to become part of the Eastern Region Special Operations Unit (ERSOU) by 2017 is expected to secure the future of the collaborated SCD since this is a better fit with the alliance with Essex Police; a decision to remain in the SEROCU would likely lead to a requirement for a service redesign of the SCD model with associated costs and risks.

How effectively does the force respond to serious and organised crime?

The OCG management function is carried out by the SCD as part of the Kent and Essex Police collaboration arrangements. There is a monthly review of the Kent OCGs which is supported by analytical reports and the OCGs are scored against national criteria. The weekly force tasking meeting allocates resources and prioritises activity to target OCGs. In local policing areas, OCGs are managed by lead responsible officers (LROs) who oversee and direct local activity. The force has clear and strong strategic links with the SCD and there is evidence of disruptive activity aimed at this top level of threat. HMIC found evidence that the SCD works effectively but that there are capacity issues that limit its ability to take on investigations. Currently many referrals to the SCD cannot be adopted and remain with the force for management. These declined referrals are subject to continued local activity, led by the LROs, and numerous examples of good ongoing plans and activities against a range of OCGs were found.

The thrust of the force's serious and organised crime policy is to prevent the growth and intensification of OCGs, and to encourage lower level disruption as a means of preventing crime at an early stage. The force has a gang and organised crime service delivery plan. This spells out very clearly the activity that is ongoing to ensure that serious organised crime management is an everyday activity, including enhancing partnership engagement and understanding, and increasing frontline officer knowledge.

At a local policing level, the force has invested in an analyst, dedicated to providing an intelligence function focused on serious and organised crime. Each of the three policing districts has a dedicated officer whose role it is to manage and oversee activities to disrupt OCGs. These LROs are committed and enthusiastic, but have not received training for their role. However, they do have a background in an intelligence function, which includes knowledge of OCG management.

There are operations to disrupt OCGs within the local policing areas, with some good examples of effective joint work with partner agencies. Operation Harvest in

Tunbridge Wells is one example of where the force has made efforts to make an impact upon an OCG in line with the local OCG profile. The operation involves partnership working at all levels. It includes disruption and steps to divert offenders to rehabilitation, to reduce demand and the possible rise of the OCG to a higher tier.

There is some evidence of disconnected activity taking place to disrupt OCGs. An example of this involves an OCG committing organised acquisitive crimes where community-based officers and various partners including the local authority, RSPCA and environmental health had undertaken disruption activity. However, this work had not been directly linked to the OCG management process, which means that opportunities may be lost from not benefiting from a more joined-up approach in this case.

Officers do have knowledge of the force's control strategy that highlights the approach to tackling OCGs. Despite this, and the existence of local operations, many frontline officers we spoke to have little knowledge and understanding of local OCGs, and most could not recall being given specific tasks connected with disruption, intelligence collection, or identification of OCG activity.

Following HMIC's crime inspection in 2014, we recommended that Kent Police should ensure that there is clarity of roles and responsibilities in relation to tackling OCGs 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. The SCD has led a significant amount of work to comply with this recommendation and ensure that Kent Police is delivering the capability required.

The force will need to consider how it uses these improvements to develop a common understanding among local partners of the threats, vulnerabilities and risks relating to serious and organised crime, and how they will translate the efforts to tackle serious and organised crime activity into day-to-day policing, local government and partnership work.

How effectively is the force working with partners to prevent serious and organised crime?

HMIC found evidence of a partnership approach to dealing with serious and organised crime. Examples include the force's work with the Family Support Panel, which, together with the Early Intervention Foundation, is providing support for vulnerable and problematic children who are identified as being at risk of being drawn into offending and gangs. The adolescent risk management process, which is also being implemented across the county, aims to standardise referrals and assessments of juveniles identified as being at risk of offending and being drawn into gangs. This is expected to ensure early identification and prevention activity.

Another initiative includes the force, social services and education working with young immigrant males aged between 16 and 24, who have entered the country illegally and are housed within a reception centre in Kent. Prevention activity is being undertaken in an effort to ensure they do not become either vulnerable victims or offenders within gangs or OCGs.

For offenders in prison the force has processes to monitor them prior to release based on prison intelligence and police intelligence gathered prior to sentence. A volunteer undergraduate student assists in this process by looking at prison and police intelligence to assess prisoners before release from prison. The IOM unit works with prisoners prior to release to ensure they are in full management from the day they are released.

The force communicates well with the public about serious and organised crime. Information is published on the website and within the local press. Social networking sites are also used effectively, promoting successful prosecutions and encouraging the public to report those they believe are involved in serious and organised crime. There have been specific campaigns on the impact of gang activity in Thanet, including proactive communications on successes and prosecutions. A dedicated press officer works in the SCD and identifies suitable serious and organised crime stories and liaises with the media. The force regularly invites the press to come along for major criminal operations, and where possible they put out joint press releases with partners to publicise successes and information to the public.

How effective are the arrangements in place to ensure that the force can fulfil its national policing responsibilities?

It is beyond the scope of this inspection to assess in detail whether forces are capable of responding to the six national threats. Instead, HMIC has checked whether forces have the necessary arrangements in place to test their own preparedness for dealing with these threats, should they materialise.

Kent Police has the necessary arrangements in place to ensure that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities. Chief officers take responsibility for threats

specified within the Strategic Policing Requirement at both force and regional level. HMIC found evidence of the force undertaking regular exercises and deployments to ensure that it is ready to meet the requirements demanded of it. The extent of local testing was notable and included routine checking of the ability of the force to provide officers at short notice.

Public order equipment is purchased through a collaborative procurement unit for both Kent Police and Essex Police and can be shared with the other forces in the South East region. The force also provides support to Kent Fire and Rescue Service with arrangements to share a control room and some IT systems.

Summary of findings

Good

Kent Police is good at identifying and tackling serious and organised crime. This is the first year HMIC has graded forces on their effectiveness at tackling serious and organised crime, including a force's arrangements for ensuring that it can fulfil its national policing responsibilities, so no year-on-year comparison is possible.

The force has a well-developed understanding of the threat posed by serious and organised crime, and is developing an effective multi-agency response to it, including work to prevent people from becoming involved.

Kent Police and Essex Police tackle high level serious and organised crime in collaboration, through the joint serious crime directorate (SCD). The SCD is good at assessing the threat posed by serious and organised crime and provides well-managed investigations and disruptions of high-level organised crime groups (OCGs) using a range of tactics.

At a local policing level the force is conducting a range of operations with partners to disrupt OCGs, but more could be done to ensure the understanding of serious and organised crime among frontline officers.

The force communicates well with the public about serious and organised crime. Information is published on the website, social media sites, and within the local press.

The force has robust arrangements and chief officer oversight to provide its national policing responsibilities, and good arrangements to test its response are in place.

Areas for improvement

- The force should improve the awareness of organised crime groups among neighbourhood teams to ensure that they can reliably identify these groups, collect intelligence and disrupt their activity.

Annex A – HMIC judgments

Our judgments

The judgment categories are:

- outstanding;

- good;

- requires improvement; and

- inadequate.

Judgment is made against how effective the force is at keeping people safe and reducing crime; it is not an assessment of the overall effectiveness of policing. In applying the categories HMIC considers whether:

- the effectiveness the force is achieving is good, or exceeds this standard sufficiently to be judged as outstanding;

- the effectiveness of the force requires improvement, and/or there are some weaknesses; or

- the effectiveness of the force is inadequate because it is considerably lower than is expected.