



Inspecting policing  
in the public interest

# Crime inspection 2014

Surrey Police

November 2014

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ISBN: 978-1-78246-649-9

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# How effective is the force at cutting crime?

## Overall summary

Surrey Police has seen bigger reductions in crime between June 2010 and June 2014 than across England and Wales. There is a strong prevention focus to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Neighbourhood policing remains at the heart of the force's approach and anti-social behaviour is a key priority.

There is a good victim focus within the force, and a commitment to identifying and supporting vulnerable victims. However, HMIC was concerned that there are weaknesses in the quality of investigations; we found inconsistency in supervision and a lack of capacity and capability within investigation teams. Additional focus and resourcing in this area is needed to ensure a more positive outcome for the victim.

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 has concerns about Surrey Police's approach to crime recording, which is not as accurate as it should be. Individual force reports are available at <http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/>.

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

**Good**

Surrey is already a comparatively low crime area and the county has seen some of the biggest reductions in crime in England and Wales over the last four years with a 24 percent decrease in overall crime since 2010.

The force has a focus on crime prevention. It works constructively with partners to target crime hotspots and local priorities such as domestic abuse, burglary and anti-social behaviour.

The force has a strong ethos of victim care, led by the chief constable, and this ethos is evident at all levels throughout the force.

**How effective is the force at investigating offending?**

**Requires improvement**

There is a victim focus across the organisation and a commitment to identifying and supporting vulnerable victims. This is not matched, however, by the quality of investigations.

There are key weaknesses in the quality and consistency of investigations. There is a lack of both resourcing and capabilities for investigations, including a lack of effective supervision for investigations. This means that the force may be losing opportunities to bring offenders to justice and secure successful outcomes for victims.

The force works with partners to tackle serious offenders and safeguard victims. There is a strong culture across the force of identifying and sharing learning and good practice.

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

**Good**

Anti-social behaviour is a priority for Surrey Police.

Surrey Police makes effective use of youth restorative justice. Its approach involves all principal partners.

Surrey Police uses a wide range of tactics to tackle anti-social behaviour, which are accepted and understood by everyone through training and communication. Examples of this are updating the community on action taken, use of the mediation service and reassurance through proactive patrols.

# 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.

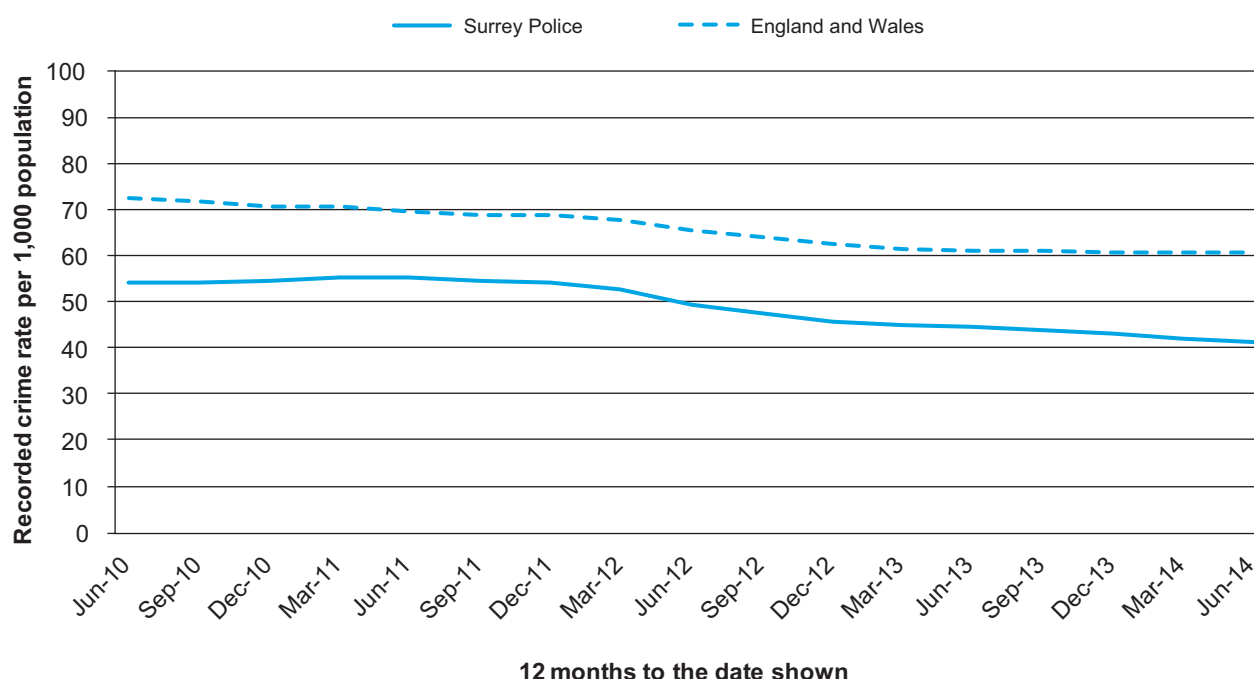
## Crime

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 reduced by 24 percent in Surrey 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) decreased by 25 percent in Surrey, 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 Surrey reduced by 8 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 Surrey (per 1,000 population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to June 2014	Surrey Police rate (per 1,000 population)	England and Wales total rate (per 1,000 population)
Crime excluding fraud	41.3	60.7
Victim-based crime	35.5	53.9
Sexual offences	0.7	1.2
Violence with injury	3.4	5.9
Burglary in a dwelling*	6.7	8.9
Anti-social behaviour incidents*	32.2	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](http://www.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmic/crime-and-policing-comparator).

Surrey's detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to the end of March 2014 was 24 percent, which was lower than 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

Surrey Police has clear priorities for crime reduction and tackling anti-social behaviour; these are reflected in both the police and crime plan and through the daily briefing process through which work is allocated within the force. Reducing burglaries and tackling domestic abuse are specific priorities within the plan and police resources are effectively targeted to deal with these issues.

The force has a good understanding of the areas that present the greatest threat and risk to local communities and has established processes which enable it to move force assets and resources around the county in line with threat, harm, risk and organisational need with relative ease.

Engagement with the community is well established. The force uses new forums for engagement such as Twitter and online engagement forums to enable better communication with the public, as well as more traditional community meetings. Surrey Police host public sessions and held 1,727 between 1 August 2013 and 31 July 2014.

Survey and customer feedback data are regularly reviewed. 'Local policing boards' are held every other month in each local authority area in Surrey. These are led by the local police borough commander with representatives from other agencies, including local councils. The events involve a variety of formats, and are an opportunity for the public to have a say on policing in Surrey.

## Quality of victim contact

There is a strong ethos of victim care within Surrey Police. This is evident in the actions of frontline officers and staff. The force has a Victim Care Board that provides the focus for driving improvement within the force. This issue is also championed through the assistant police and crime commissioner for victims. Improvement work has included in-depth reviews and reports on a variety of victim focus areas including the court experience for the victim, repeat victims of domestic abuse and juvenile victims of domestic abuse.

There is proactive review and scrutiny within the force of victim care and service quality. Officers understand their responsibilities under the national Code of Practice for Victims of Crime and have been trained on it through a film known as 'Back to Basics'.

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, Surrey Police had a victim satisfaction rate of 85.9 percent ( $\pm 1.0$  percent) which is broadly in line with the satisfaction rate in England and Wales of 85.0 percent ( $\pm 0.2$  percent). Its current rate is lower than the 87.6 percent ( $\pm 0.9$  percent) recorded for Surrey in the previous year.

## Use of police tactics

Surrey Police uses a broad range of tactics to prevent crime and reduce reoffending. HMIC found evidence that the force is using the full range of its powers to disrupt crime and divert offenders, for example the new police power to issue domestic violence protection notices and orders has been widely used to prevent domestic abuse offenders from having contact with their victims for a period of time. There is an emphasis on identifying if a victim is particularly vulnerable and providing an appropriate response. The force has run a number of campaigns on domestic violence and abuse and also provides support for offenders of domestic abuse to prevent them from reoffending.

The force has a strong and effective focus on youth intervention and has close links with partners to engage young offenders and divert them from offending behaviours. There are a number of youth initiatives including work around substance misuse, mental health, and a victim led scheme engaging the offender through work in the community.

Surrey Police has established processes for identifying and managing organised crime groups. The most serious crime groups – those who pose the greatest threat to the community, are effectively dealt with in collaboration with Sussex Police and other police partners such as the regional organised crime unit. Regular meetings take place to monitor activity and ensure investigations are progressed. However HMIC found there was little evidence of organised crime group ownership at a neighbourhood level and some officers had limited awareness or experience of tackling groups operating in their area.

## Partnership working and information sharing

There is good and constructive partnership working to identify and tackle repeat offending at a strategic level. In terms of the management of serious and serial offenders there are a range of established mechanisms for information sharing and the management of these high-risk individuals.

The force is also working with partners in addressing the risks of so-called 'hidden crimes'. Work has been part funded through the police and crime commissioner's office to run a multi-agency programme to address the issues of child sexual exploitation, specifically internet safety for children.

Integrated offender management is well established. The team is co-located with the probation service and neighbourhood policing teams within a shared building. The integrated offender management arrangements are strong with robust monitoring of prolific and priority offenders.

There is a range of activity at both a strategic and operational level, with examples of Surrey Police working with different local authorities in tackling problem locations and problem individuals. The joint enforcement team pilot is one example of this; these are joint co-located police and local authority enforcement teams. Although this is still a new project, benefits are already being realised through increased visibility of officers and joint direction of resources. There are more benefits to be realised through improvements in information sharing, particularly in relation to better joint management of risk and vulnerability.

## 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 submitted by Surrey Police. We found the force has supplied an action plan detailing activity with regard to the HMIC force recommendations; it develops this further by outlining the joint work between Surrey and Sussex to improve the service to victims of domestic abuse. This work covers many of the areas identified as national priorities outlined above.

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.

HMIC found evidence that Surrey Police had made good progress to improve its response to domestic abuse. An intelligence team is working on the force's top five domestic abuse offenders, and there is also a team which disrupts repeat perpetrators. The force's victim-centred approach is evident in its approach to tackling domestic abuse, and there is close supervision of these cases. A domestic abuse training course has recently been introduced.

## Summary

Good

- Surrey is already a comparatively low crime area and the county has seen some of the biggest reductions in crime in England and Wales over recent years with a 24 percent decrease in overall crime since 2010.
- The force has a focus on crime prevention. It works constructively with partners to target crime hotspots and local priorities such as domestic abuse, burglary and anti-social behaviour.
- The force has a strong ethos of victim care, led by the chief constable, and this ethos is evident at all levels throughout the force.

# 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

Surrey Police works to identify vulnerability and risk in relation to victims of crime. Those at most risk are assessed appropriately through the completion of risk assessment forms in relation to the incident. Safeguarding – measures taken to protect someone or prevent something undesirable happening to victims – is a key priority for Surrey Police. Vulnerability and repeat victims are reviewed daily as part of the area daily management meeting, so that local officers can ensure that they receive appropriate service.

Officers expressed frustration with the crime system used within the force. They thought it was difficult to record contact the police had with the victim and this is an issue relating to use of the system and appropriate training for officers using the system.

Surrey Police refers all victims (of both crime and anti-social behaviour) to a victim support service; specialist support is also provided for victims of domestic abuse and sexual abuse. The sexual abuse referral centre is an excellent example of the victim-centred approach in Surrey. The centre is well established and has effective multi-agency partnership working to support victims. The centre provides services for both adults and children. Partners spoke highly of the level of service provided to victims with extra support being provided to vulnerable and intimidated witnesses and victims.

## Investigation

HMIC found some weaknesses, primarily the poor quality of some investigations and the associated supervision of them. Although there is some good work going on to identify and support vulnerable victims, if the quality of investigations undertaken continues to be weak, the police are not serving victims well since offenders will not be brought to justice. Historically, Surrey Police has had both capacity and capability issues in crime investigation.

HMIC is concerned to find that previously identified weaknesses are still evident. There is a lack of effective supervision of investigations, and poor quality and inconsistent investigation plans. This means that the force may be losing opportunities to gather the best evidence to secure successful prosecutions. The file reviews carried out as part of this inspection showed that there are still inconsistencies in the quality of investigations. Investigation plans are not always recorded, and where they do exist they are often generic in nature

and officers explained they often cut and paste a significant number of investigation plans for volume crimes. The force is aware that there are weaknesses and has plans in place to improve this situation; for example, it has recently restructured its local Criminal Investigation Department (CID).

The force has invested in a more structured training and development path for detectives. Most local policing areas have a detective within each team to provide advice and support to investigations. New probationary officers are completing attachments within CID and joining teams with some current investigation skills. HMIC acknowledges the force is moving in the right direction to build investigation skills and capacity but this will take time to come to fruition.

## Tackling repeat and prolific offenders

Surrey Police has a multi-agency approach known as integrated offender management (IOM) to deal with repeat offenders in the community who are causing harm or nuisance to local people because of their re-offending. The IOM programme deals with prolific and priority offenders and neighbourhood priority offenders. It brings together police with partner agencies such as probation, housing, and the department of work and pensions. The programme is aimed at concentrating activity on a minority of individuals responsible for a disproportionate amount of crime or anti-social behaviour in the local area.

The most prolific offenders are identified and the IOM programme enables partners to share information and collectively agree on the best course of action. Each offender becomes the focus of a proactive action plan, the aim being to reduce re-offending and community impact by tackling the underlying causes of the offender's behaviour. As of 31 July 2014, the Surrey Police had 128 prolific offenders under the IOM programme.

## Learning from experience

There is a strong culture of sharing good practice across Surrey Police. Thematic leads are appointed who have responsibility for disseminating and collecting good practice around their area of expertise. The force has a communication system on its intranet to which all members of the organisation have access. This is a good example of how key messages are communicated across the organisation.



## Recommendations

- Within 3 months, Surrey Police should develop and commence implementation of an action plan to improve the quality of investigations which will ensure that:
  - (a) investigating officers [and police staff] are aware of the standard required and have the professional skills and expertise to fulfil their duties;
  - (b) supervisors know what is expected of them in driving up standards; and
  - (c) there is appropriate monitoring and oversight of investigative quality.

## Summary



Requires improvement

- There is a victim focus across the organisation and a commitment to identifying and supporting vulnerable victims. This is not matched, however, by the quality of investigations.
- There are key weaknesses in the quality and consistency of investigations. There is a lack of both resourcing and capabilities for investigations, including a lack of effective supervision for investigations. This means that the force may be losing opportunities to bring offenders to justice and secure successful outcomes for victims.
- The force works with partners to tackle serious offenders and safeguard victims. There is a strong culture across the force of identifying and sharing learning and good practice.



# 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

Surrey Police has a strong commitment to neighbourhood policing. Anti-social behaviour is a key priority for the whole force including frontline staff. The safer neighbourhood teams are now co-located with local authorities and other partner agencies. Officers are widely known in their areas and are easily accessible to local communities. Surrey Police has reviewed engagement and communication activity and has moved away from traditional neighbourhood newsletters to more targeted use of social media and interaction through the Surrey Police website. A number of areas are trialling the use of Facebook panels as a way of engaging with a wider section of the community. Through this engagement, the safer neighbourhood teams have a good knowledge base of local issues, priorities and concerns.

Vulnerability and repeat victims of crime are reviewed daily in each area. Police community support officers (PCSOs) have a comprehensive understanding of local anti-social behaviour activity, regularly visiting victims and providing reassurance, advice and support in dealing with concerns. PCSOs work with response officers and deal with less serious anti-social behaviour incidents. Surrey Police has seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour over the last year and the force reports it has also seen an improved satisfaction rate among victims of anti-social behaviour.

The force makes good use of restorative justice for young people in partnership with other agencies. This has contributed to reducing reoffending and securing high levels of victim satisfaction. For less serious offences, this technique enables the victim's voice to be heard, and the offender to understand and address the impact of their actions without having to go through a court process.

## Partnership working

There is evidence of strong partnership working covering both strategic and operational delivery within Surrey Police. The Mental Health Concordat delivery group is an example of multi-agency working to manage and reduce both crime and anti-social behaviour alongside safeguarding issues. At a neighbourhood level, the local authorities and the police have joint neighbourhood meetings with the community to set priorities and update them on action taken. There are also examples of local multi-agency problem-solving groups which tackle specific issues and allocate resources in response.

## Improving services to the public

In the 12 months to March 2014, Surrey Police recorded 37,089 incidents of anti-social behaviour. This is a reduction of 10 percent against the previous 12 months.

In the 12 months to July 2014, Surrey Police received reports from 26,182 victims of anti-social behaviour. One anti-social behaviour dispersal order was issued. A total of 127 anti-social behaviour warning notices were issued. Ten anti-social behaviour orders were issued.

The force uses a range of methods to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour, many of which are done in partnership with local authorities. The force has an established youth intervention team that has close links with partners and a remit to engage young offenders in diversionary activities and pathways out of crime, including work to tackle substance misuse and mental ill health.

There is positive use of mediation in a variety of forums including use within schools and to resolve issues such as neighbour disputes. Officers provided useful examples of asking those affected by anti-social behaviour to keep a diary of what was happening to inform potential future activity.

### Summary

Good

- Anti-social behaviour is a priority for Surrey Police.
- Surrey Police makes effective use of youth restorative justice. Its approach involves all principal partners.
- Surrey Police uses a wide range of tactics to tackle anti-social behaviour, which are accepted and understood by everyone through training and communication. Examples of this are updating the community on action taken, use of the mediation service and reassurance through proactive patrols.

# 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.