



Inspecting policing
in the public interest

Surrey Police's response to the funding challenge

July 2013

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Surrey Police: Executive summary

Surrey's funding challenge is lower than most other forces. However, as a low cost force that spends less on policing compared to others, closing the funding gap is not without its challenges.

Surrey Police has made very good progress in meeting its financial challenge. It has developed a detailed change programme which will allow it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime.

The force has worked very hard to limit the impact of the cuts on its frontline workforce in a way very few other forces have been able to achieve. It has protected its crime-fighting capability by driving cost reductions and savings in other areas. It is one of only four forces in England and Wales where the number of police officers in frontline roles is planned to increase, and the only force in which the total number of police officers will increase over the spending review period.

Crime in the county has fallen more than in most other force areas and satisfaction among victims of crime is above average for England and Wales.

HMIC is confident that the force will be able to deliver its planned savings within this spending review period, and continue to fight crime.

Financial challenge

Surrey Police has identified that it needs to save £28.4m over the four years of the spending review (i.e. between March 2011 and March 2015).

The savings requirement is 13% of its overall budget, which is a much smaller proportionate reduction compared to that faced by most other forces.

However, as Surrey Police was broadly a low cost force at the beginning of this spending review, it faces a challenge to drive further efficiencies. It has had to work hard to find additional savings because it spends less on policing than most other forces, and has a lower number of police officers, so has a comparatively lower pay bill. The amount it spends on each officer is below that of most other forces, although the amount it spends on police community support officers (PCSOs) and staff members is higher than other forces and may provide opportunities for further savings.

Progress in making savings

Surrey Police has planned to save £27.8m, and so still has £0.6m¹ to find. This is a small outstanding gap which is not a cause for concern.

¹ The amount to save may not add up to the total due to rounding.

Changes to the workforce

All forces spend most of their money on staff costs (such as wages and overtime), and so have focused on reducing this expenditure in order to cut costs.² Surrey Police is no exception.

Surrey Police has found most of its savings by reorganising the workforce, reducing the number of managerial posts, streamlining support services, and collaborating with other forces.

As a result, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 45 more police officers in the force. This means the number of police officers is planned to increase by 2% between March 2010³ and March 2015. At a time when most other forces have reduced officer numbers, this is an exception. It is commendable that Surrey Police has been able to achieve this.

Surrey Police is protecting frontline posts as it makes these cuts. Once again, this is commendable. Between March 2010 and March 2015, the proportion of police officers in frontline crime-fighting roles is planned to increase from 88% to 94%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.

The force has also made some police staff redundant and not replaced others as they have left. Consequently, by the end of the spending review period, it is planned that there will be 109 fewer police staff in Surrey Police. This means that the number of police staff is planned to reduce by 5% between March 2010 and March 2015. This is fewer than in most other forces.

Surrey Police plans to do as much as it can to protect the number of police community support officers (PCSOs), and reports that it is maintaining its PCSO levels. It is currently reviewing the neighbourhood policing model and is committed to maintaining a mix of PCSOs and officers within neighbourhoods.

Impact on the public

HMIC expects forces to make savings without damaging the service provided to the public. It monitors whether they are achieving this by examining crime rates and the results of the user satisfaction surveys which all forces conduct.

Over the first two years of the spending review, recorded crime⁴ (excluding fraud) fell by 19%. This is a good outcome as it is considerably greater than the 13% reduction recorded across England and Wales. Victim satisfaction remains high at 85.8%,⁵ which is higher than in other forces.

² See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

³ We use 2010 as our baseline as many forces started to make staff reductions in anticipation of the spending review.

⁴ Crime excluding fraud, as per the new crime classifications released in July 2013 by the Office for National Statistics.

⁵ ± 0.9%.

Future challenges

Surrey Police has made very good progress in meeting its financial challenge. It has developed a detailed change programme, which will allow it to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime. An area for improvement is in the way in which crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to say who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected. Surrey Police's sanction detection rate (for crimes excluding fraud) is lower than in other forces. The force is aware of this and is working to improve how crimes are investigated and resolved.

The challenge

Over the four years of the spending review, Surrey Police has identified that it needs to find savings of £28.4m. This is 13% of its total expenditure⁶ (which in 2012/13 was £223.1m). The average amount to be saved by forces across England and Wales is 17%.

Progress in making savings: Years 1–2

The force successfully made 72% (£20.5m) of the total savings required by March 2015 in the first two years of the spending review period. Unlike most forces, it has increased the overall number of police officers while still making its savings. It has achieved this by:

- reorganising the workforce;
- reducing the number of managerial posts;
- streamlining support services; and
- collaborating with other forces.

Plans for Year 3–4

The force has plans in place to achieve further savings of £5.1m in 2013/14, and another £2.2m in 2014/15; however, it still has to find £0.6m in order to plug its funding gap. This is a relatively small outstanding gap and HMIC is confident that Surrey will bridge it by the end of this spending review period.

Looking beyond the current spending review

The force has started to consider what savings it might need to make beyond the spending review period (after March 2015). The election of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) in November 2012 has brought fresh impetus to forces' efforts to achieve greater efficiency through working in collaboration.⁷ It is encouraging that Surrey's PCC is strongly supportive of this approach. The force is developing its plans to achieve further savings and continues to progress collaborations with its neighbouring force, Sussex Police.

⁶ Based on a gross expenditure baseline in 2010/11.

⁷ HMIC defines collaboration as “*all activity where two or more parties work together to achieve a common goal, which includes inter force activity and collaboration with the public and private sectors, including outsourcing and business partnering*”.

The scale of the challenge in Surrey

Although the savings requirement for Surrey is smaller than other forces, it still faces difficulties achieving further savings, because:

- it spends less per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales;
- it has a lower number of police officers per head of population than most other forces in England and Wales; and
- the cost of police officers is lower than in most other forces in England and Wales.

The cost of police staff and PCSOs per head of population is higher than most other forces in England and Wales due to the workforce mix the force has in place, with more police staff doing operational roles. This may offer opportunities for further efficiencies.

Demand

Forces face different levels of demand for the service they provide to the public. This section looks at three of the key indicators of demand to provide an overall impression of the challenges each force faces:

- the number of calls the force receives from the public;
- the number of crimes the force deals with; and
- the number of prosecutions (suspects charged with offences) the force brings.

12 months to March 2013	Surrey Police	England and Wales
Emergency and priority calls per 1,000 population	101	134
Victim-based crime per 1,000 population	38.6	54.5
Prosecutions (charges) per 1,000 population	6.5	10.2

In 2012/13, Surrey Police received substantially fewer emergency and priority calls from the public than other forces. In addition, it deals with fewer crimes per head of population, and supports fewer prosecutions.

How difficult is the challenge?

Surrey has a smaller savings requirement than other forces; but, as a small force with a low cost base it is harder to find savings, and it is harder to benefit from economies of scale in the way larger forces can.

Response to the challenge

Over 80% of a police budget (on average) is spent on staff costs.⁸ It is therefore not surprising that forces across England and Wales plan to achieve much of their savings by reducing the number of police officers, PCSOs and police staff employed.

Surrey Police is no exception. It made an early start on this in 2010, when it required all officers of inspector to chief superintendent rank to retire when they had reached their full pensionable service age. As well as implementing regulation A19,⁹ the force reduced senior police staff numbers by 40%. This allowed the force to reduce considerably the number of management posts within the force.

The force plans to make 40% of its savings from its pay budget. This is considerably lower than most other forces and is a very good indicator that the force is striving to protect its crime-fighting capacity, bearing down instead on goods and services expenditure. This approach is welcomed; it has enabled the force to reduce the number of staff it must lose and has helped the force to increase the number of police officers it employs.

Changes to workforce numbers

The following table shows the force's planned changes to workforce numbers over the spending review period, and compares these to the change for England and Wales.¹⁰

	31 March 2010 (baseline)	31 March 2015	Change	Surrey change %	Change for England and Wales %
Police Officers	1,890	1,935	+45	+2%	-11%
Police Staff	2,092	1,983	-109	-5%	-16%
PCSOs	224	220	-4	-2%	-17%
Total	4,205	4,138	-67	-2%	-13%
Specials	327	300	-27	-8%	+60%

Note: the number of PCSOs is being maintained in the force. The small difference is due to the actual number compared to the budgeted figure. See note below.

Overall, the table shows that Surrey Police plans to lose less police staff than in other forces and plans to increase the number of police officers, while most other forces are planning reductions.

⁸ See *Adapting to Austerity*, HMIC, London, July 2011, p.13. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

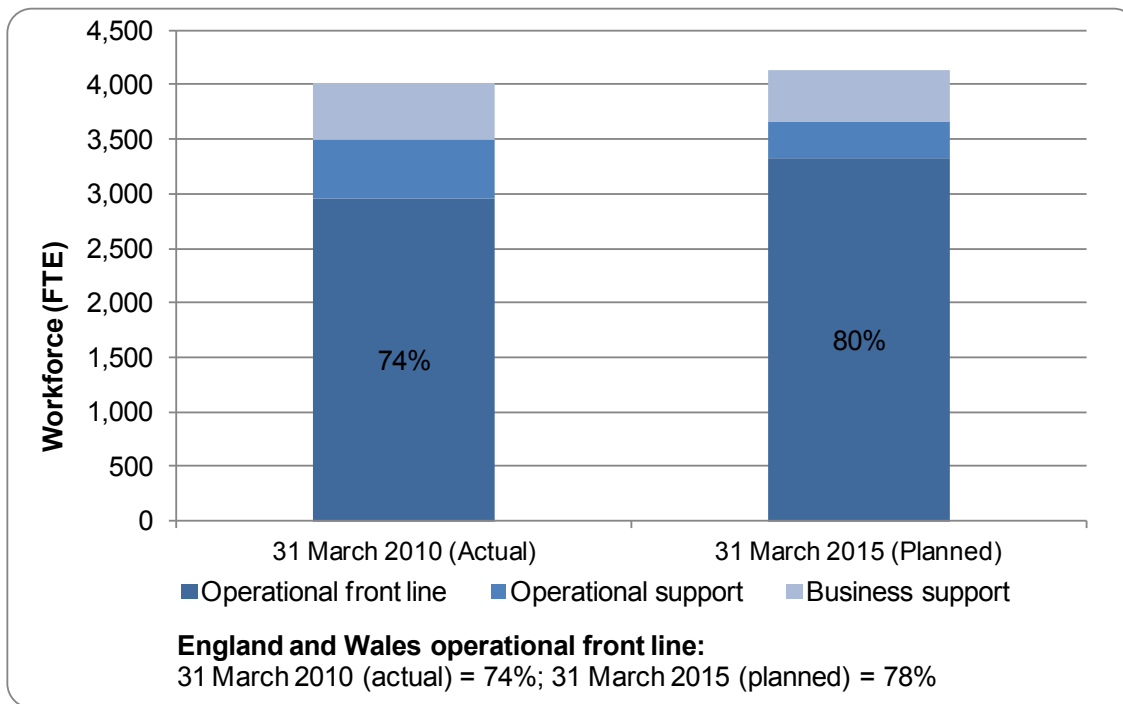
⁹ Allows a police force to require the retirement of an officer with 30 years service on the grounds of the efficiency of the force.

¹⁰ Workforce figures for March 2010 show the actual number of people working for the force in permanent posts on the 31 March in that year. People on long-term absences (such as maternity leave) are included in these 'actual' figures, but vacant posts are not. Workforce projections for March 2015 are for budgeted posts, so the actual number of people who will be working for the force at that point in reality may be different, because some posts will be vacant or filled by temporary staff. Forces' projections may also exclude people who will be on long-term absences. The difference between actual workforce numbers and projected numbers should therefore be taken as an approximate expected change.

Changes to the proportion of workforce on the front line

HMIC defines the people who work on the police front line as: “those who are in everyday contact with the public and who directly intervene to keep people safe and enforce the law”. It is important that as forces reconfigure their structures and reduce workforce **numbers**, they focus on maintaining (or if possible increasing) the **proportion** of people in these crime-fighting roles.

The following chart shows the change in the workforce frontline profile in Surrey Police.¹¹

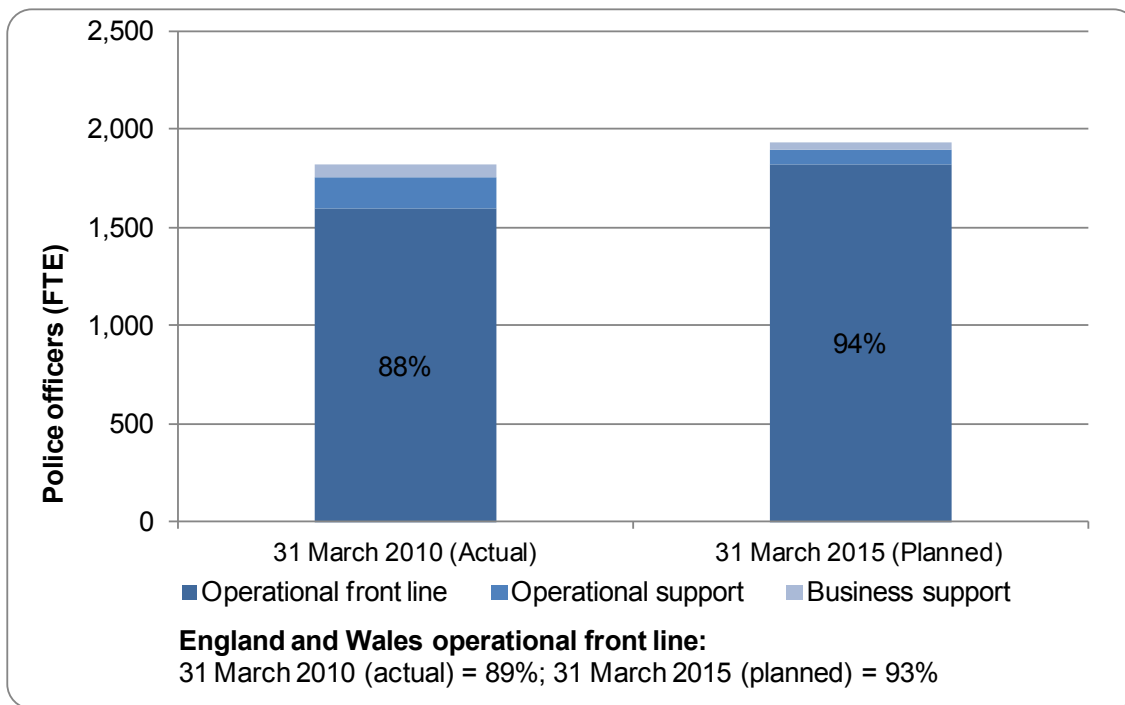


The **number** of officers, PCSOs and staff (i.e. of the force’s total workforce) working on the front line is planned to increase by 12% between March 2010 and March 2015 (from 2,964 to 3,326).

Over the same period, the **proportion** of Surrey Police’s total workforce allocated to frontline roles is planned to increase from 74% to 80%. This compares with an overall increase across England and Wales from 74% to 78%.

¹¹ From 2010, Gwent, the Metropolitan Police Service, Wiltshire and North Wales police forces chose to code those officers and staff who are on long-term absence from duty due to maternity/paternity leave, career break, full-time education or suspension, and those on long-term leave, to their normal working role. This has the effect of inflating their workforce and frontline figures by up to 1%, compared to other forces.

Police officer **numbers** are planned to increase by 14%, from 1,591 in March 2010 to 1,820 in March 2015, as the following chart shows. The **proportion** of Surrey’s police officers remaining on the front line is planned to increase from 88% to 94%. This compares to an overall increase across England and Wales from 89% to 93%.



Collaboration

HMIC monitors a force’s progress on collaboration because it offers the opportunity to deliver efficient, effective policing and to achieve savings.

Until the end of 2012, the force had plans in place to deliver savings from a business partnering for police initiative involving West Midlands Police and the private sector. After a decision was made to withdraw from this at the end of 2012, the force quickly identified other areas to make savings in order to bridge the remaining funding gap.

The focus has now shifted to increased collaboration with Sussex Police, Surrey’s preferred partner. Currently, the two forces collaborate in a number of operational activities, for example, major crime investigation, forensics and firearms. The two forces also collaborate on procurement. Plans are in place to extend collaboration to include surveillance, police dogs and hi-tech crime.

The two forces are developing a joint contact management strategy (which will set out the service provided to members of the public who initiate contact with the police for assistance) to align their policies and procedures. They are considering a single command structure which uses the same computer system, but still operates from two bases (one in each force). A consultant is currently employed by the two forces to review human resources, finance and ICT with a view to potential collaboration in these areas. The chief officers in Surrey have agreed in principle that they would be willing to consider collaborating on all services apart from neighbourhood policing.

The force collaborates regionally on some specialist crime activities, for example, covert policing, intelligence and technical support. The force also works closely with local partners; for example, each of the eleven neighbourhood policing teams are located in local authority buildings, with many of them also sharing front counters.

In 2014/15 the force expects to spend 6% of its total expenditure on collaboration, which is lower than the 11% figure for England and Wales. Overall, collaboration is expected to contribute 20% of the force's savings requirement, which is above the 7% figure for England.

Managing change

Reductions in police budgets have inevitably led to a shrinking workforce. HMIC expects forces also to have an eye within their change programmes on the longer term transformation which can help them to maintain or improve the service they offer to the public and prepare for future funding reductions.

Surrey Police has good governance arrangements to help ensure that all major change is led and managed in an effective way. A strategic change board, chaired by the deputy chief constable, brings together human resources and finance with the change leads to ensure that risks and interdependencies between different change programmes are appropriately managed.

The force started planning its change programme prior to the spending review announcement and was able to move rapidly from a geographical to a functional policing model in April 2010. This means that neighbourhood, response and investigation teams remain located at cluster sites or 'hubs', while senior leaders and all business support functions are centralised. The force reduced management posts and, at the same time, recruited an additional 200 officers, effectively flattening the organisational structure.

Since its implementation, the force has made some adjustments to the policing model based on resource demand analysis and improving productivity. One of the most significant changes the force has made involves the roll-out of mobile data terminals to a range of frontline teams. This means that staff should be receiving up-to-date information when they attend incidents. The force has also adopted a 'borderless' policing model for response policing, so that available officers can be sent wherever in the force area they are needed. This model is also used in other specialist teams, such as the roads policing unit. The force plans to reduce the number of custody suites it operates to three, which will deliver savings by reducing the number of staff and officers required to run them. The PCC has suspended elements of the estates programme, through which police stations are to be sold. He has done this to ensure that the maximum benefit is realised from these sales.

How is the force engaging police officers, PCSOs and staff in the change programme?

Surrey Police has explained the need for change to its staff well. There is a commitment by the members of the chief officer team to be open about the planned changes that are taking place, and they understand of the impact these are having on their staff.

The force carries out staff surveys three times a year with officers and staff, and has responded positively to issues raised (for example, concerns about the lack of promotion opportunities in the force).

Focus groups of officers and staff spoken to during the inspection felt they had lost some of the links that were previously in place between investigation and response teams. There was also a view that they were all busier, with less opportunity to be proactive. Police staff felt that some of the change processes were taking too long, which had led to prolonged uncertainty for many. The force has sought to address some of these concerns through the chief constable's 'blog', leadership seminars and staff briefings.

There are reasonably good relationships with staff association and Unison (the main police staff trade union) representatives, who felt they had been involved in and kept updated about planned change.

How effective has the response been?

Surrey Police has made good progress in meeting the financial challenge.

The force has reduced its management costs and increased the number of frontline officers. Over the past two years there has been a marked reduction in the force's senior ranks. Inspector and sergeant numbers are low when compared both with similar sized forces and nationally, with the constable-to-sergeant ratio being the highest in Surrey's group of similar forces,¹² and above the national average. This is also in part due to the modernisation that the force underwent prior to the spending review, where posts which had traditionally been officer posts were 'modernised' and became police staff posts.

The force understands the challenge it faces in making savings and changing the way in which it operates while delivering a good service to the public of Surrey.

¹² Forces are grouped with other forces that are considered to be most similar, because they share similar demographic characteristics. This assists in making better comparisons with other forces.

Impact of the changes on the public

The challenge for forces is not just to save money and reduce workforce numbers, but to ensure the choices they make in deciding how to achieve this do not have a negative impact on the service they provide to communities. HMIC therefore looked for evidence that the force had kept a consideration of the effect on the public at the heart of its choices.

Visibility

The work done by police officers and staff in visible roles (such as officers who respond to 999 calls, deal with serious road traffic collisions or patrol in neighbourhoods) represents only a part of the policing picture. Chief constables need to allocate resources to many other functions in order to protect the public, such as counter terrorism, serious and organised crime, and child protection (to name just three).

That being said, research shows that the public values seeing visible police officers on patrol in the streets, and that those who see police in uniform at least once a week are more likely to have confidence in their local force.¹³ HMIC therefore examined how far the changes being implemented by the force had affected the visibility of the police on the streets of Surrey.

In March 2013, Surrey Police allocated 56% of its police officers to visible roles. This is eight percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010, and is higher than most other forces (which was 54% across England and Wales).

Police visibility is further enhanced by PCSOs who principally support community policing. Looking at the proportion of police officers and PCSOs, Surrey Police allocated 60% to visible roles. This is seven percentage points higher than it allocated in 2010, again broadly in line with the 59% figure for England and Wales.

HMIC conducted a survey¹⁴ of the public across England and Wales to assess whether they had noticed any difference in the way their area is being policed. Of those people surveyed in Surrey, 13%¹⁵ said that they have seen a police officer more often than they had 12 months ago. This is in line with the 13% average across all survey respondents in England and Wales.

Of those people surveyed, 74%¹⁶ said they felt either as safe or safer in the areas they live, compared with two years ago. This is broadly in line with the figure for most other forces which is 75%.

¹³ See *Demanding Times*, HMIC, London, 2011. Available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

¹⁴ A YouGov survey was carried out during a four-week period during March 2013. Satisfaction and confidence surveys are also carried out at a national level by the Crime Survey of England and Wales. These use larger sample sizes and are carried out quarterly over a rolling-year period. Some forces also carry out their own surveys of the general public. More information can be found at www.crimesurvey.co.uk, www.hmic.gov.uk or from force websites.

¹⁵ ± 5%.

¹⁶ ± 5%.

Calls for service

HMIC examined whether police forces were taking longer to respond to calls for help, as a result of its workforce reductions and other changes designed to save money. His analysis relies on force-collected data. Forces are not required to set response times or targets and are free to determine their own arrangements for monitoring attendance to calls so information between forces is not comparable.

For the three years from 2010,¹⁷ Surrey Police maintained the same target attendance criteria, which were to reach 82% calls classed as 'emergency' within 15 minutes, and 75% of calls classed as 'priority' within 60 minutes.

The force met its target response time for 'emergency' calls 78% of the time in 2010/11, and 83% of the time in both 2011/12 and 2012/13.

In respect of 'priority' calls, the force met its target 85% of the time in 2010/11, and 88% of the time in both 2011/12 and in 2012/13.

Surrey Police has undertaken a detailed analysis of its demand to ensure that staff are available when and where they are most needed. This work has enabled Surrey Police to improve their response to the public, when some other forces have seen a decline. This approach is welcomed; it ensures an effective use of police resources while providing a timely response to the public when they most need the police.

Crime

In 2010 the Home Secretary, Theresa May, set a clear priority for the police service to reduce crime.

Between 2010/11 and 2012/13 (the first two years of the spending review), Surrey Police reduced recorded crime (excluding fraud) by 19%. This compares favourably with the 13% reduction seen across England and Wales. Over the same period, victim-based crime (that is, crimes where there is a direct victim – an individual, a group, or an organisation) reduced by 19%, compared with 12% in England and Wales.

By looking at how many crimes occur per head of population, we can see how safe it is for the public in that police area. The table below shows crime and anti-social behaviour rates in Surrey (per head of population) compared with the rest of England and Wales.

12 months to March 2013	Rate per 1,000 population in Surrey	England and Wales rate per 1,000 population
All Crime (excluding fraud)	44.5	61.4
Victim based crime	38.6	54.5
Burglary	6.5	8.2
Violence against the person	7.5	10.6
Anti-social behaviour incidents	36.2	40.7

¹⁷ We use 2010/11 as a baseline to show response times prior to the spending review period.

It is important that crimes are effectively investigated and the perpetrator identified and brought to justice. When sufficient evidence is available to say who has committed a crime, it can be described as detected.

Surrey Police's sanction detection¹⁸ rate (for crimes excluding fraud) for the 12 months to March 2013 was 25.2%. This is lower than the England and Wales sanction detection rate of 27.0%. For a force with relatively low crime rates, HMIC would expect Surrey's detection rates to improve further.

We have chosen these types of crime to give an indication of offending levels in Surrey. For information on the frequency of other kinds of crimes in your area, go to www.hmic.gov.uk/crime-and-policing-comparator.

Victim satisfaction surveys

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 March 2013, 85.8%¹⁹ of victims were satisfied with the overall service provided by Surrey Police. This is higher than the England and Wales figure of 84.6%.²⁰

Changes to how the public can access services

Forces are exploring different ways in which the public can access policing services. Surrey Police is planning to close 20 front counters²¹ and six police stations between 2010 and 2015. However, it is also planning to open five shared access points²² in the same period.

The force is making greater use of the internet and social media to communicate with the public. As more and more people become accustomed to engaging with large commercial and public organisations in different ways, the force is planning to offer the public different ways to contact them. For example, Surrey Police has planned:

- online crime reporting; and
- an interactive smartphone app, 'Surrey Police Beat', which allows members of the public to connect to their neighbourhood team and (among other features) to see where officers actually are. It will signpost where the officer is at the time they update the information and will improve visibility to the public.

18 A sanction detection is a 'solved crime' where a suspect has been identified and notified as being responsible for committing that crime and what the full implications of this are, and has received an official sanction. Official sanctions include charges, cautions, penalty notices, offences taken into consideration (TICs) and cannabis warnings.

19 \pm 0.9%.

20 \pm 0.2%.

21 A police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services.

22 A non-police building open to the general public to obtain face-to-face access to police services. For example, shared facilities with council services (e.g. libraries or offices), the fire service or other partners.

Conclusion

Surrey Police understands the challenge it faces in making savings. It has changed the way it operates and is maintaining the good service it provides to the people of Surrey. The force has made very good progress in meeting its financial challenge. It is well led and detailed change programme aims to enable the force to reduce costs while continuing to fight crime successfully.

Crime in the county has fallen more than in most forces, and satisfaction among victims of crime is above the England and Wales average.

HMIC welcomes the commitment of the Surrey PCC and force to widen its collaboration activity with Sussex Police. This will enable both forces to provide a more effective and efficient service across the two counties.

The force has well-developed plans to continue to deliver an excellent service to the public of Surrey. This has put it in the best possible position to face further budget reductions after March 2015.

In October 2010, the Government announced that central funding to the Police Service in England and Wales would reduce by 20% in the four years between March 2011 and March 2015.

HMIC's Valuing the Police Programme has tracked how forces are planning to make savings to meet this budget demand each year since summer 2011. This report identifies what we found in this third year.

Our inspection focused on three questions:

1. How is the force responding to the budget reduction?
2. What is the impact for the workforce and the public?
3. How is the force managing current and future risks?

To answer these questions, we collected data and plans from forces, surveyed the public to see if they had noticed any changes in the service they receive from the police as a result of the cuts, and conducted in-force inspections. We also interviewed the Chief Constable, Police and Crime Commissioner and the chief officer leads for finance, change, human resources and performance in each force, and held focus groups with staff and other officers.

National findings and patterns across all 43 forces are given in our thematic report, *Policing in Austerity: Rising to the Challenge*, which is available from www.hmic.gov.uk.

This report provides the findings for Surrey Police.