

# PEEL 2025–27

## Police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy

An inspection of Kent Police

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# Overall summary

## Our judgments

Our inspection assessed how good Kent Police is in eight areas of policing. We make graded judgments as follows:

Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
Developing a diverse and inclusive workforce	Leadership and force management	Police powers and public treatment		
	Preventing and deterring crime	Responding to the public		
		Investigating crime		
		Safeguarding children and adults		
		Managing fraud		

We set out our detailed findings about things the force is doing well and where the force should improve in the rest of this report.

We also assess the force's performance in a range of other areas, and we report on these separately. We make graded judgments for some of these areas.

## PEEL 2025–2027

In 2014, we introduced our police effectiveness, efficiency and legitimacy (PEEL) inspections, which assess the performance of all 43 police forces in England and Wales. Since then, we have been continuously adapting our approach.

We have moved to a more [intelligence](#)-led, continual assessment approach, rather than the annual [PEEL inspections](#) we used in previous years. We assess forces against the [characteristics of good](#) performance, set out in the [PEEL assessment framework 2025–2027](#), and we more clearly link our judgments to [causes of concern](#) and [areas for improvement](#).

It isn't possible to make direct comparisons between the grades awarded in this PEEL inspection and those from the previous cycle of PEEL inspections. This is because we have increased our focus on making sure forces are achieving appropriate outcomes for the public. We have also changed the aspects of policing we inspect and added new areas.

## Terminology in this report

Our reports contain references to, among other things, 'national' definitions, priorities, policies, systems, responsibilities and processes.

In some instances, 'national' means applying to England or Wales, or England and Wales. In others, it means applying to England, Wales and Scotland, or the whole of the United Kingdom.

## About the data

For more information on data and analysis in this report, please [see the 'About the data' section of our website](#).

## HM Inspector's summary

I am pleased with several aspects of the performance of Kent Police in keeping people safe, reducing crime and giving [victims](#) an effective service. Since [our last inspection](#), the force has improved how it attracts, develops and retains its workforce. It has also strengthened how it responds to the public and investigates crime. However, I have identified areas the force should continue to focus on, including how it records and reviews its use of police powers and how it protects people who are at risk of harm.

The force has strong governance and a stable [chief officer](#) team. Leaders consult the workforce to shape strategic plans and hold themselves accountable through a clear and detailed performance framework. The force receives funding within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. Since our last inspection, it has improved financial planning and achieved required savings.

The force supports and develops its workforce to an outstanding level. It has an effective approach to well-being and inclusivity in its culture. The force provides high-quality training to [staff](#), [officers](#) and volunteers, and it continually improves this training through feedback. Special constables are fully integrated, receive proper training and have clear opportunities to develop and progress. This approach has increased recruitment, retention and morale.

Officers use [body-worn video](#) effectively, and the force is testing live-streaming technology. Training and feedback help officers improve how they use [stop and search](#) and use of force powers. However, the force should make sure that officers record clear reasons when they use force. It must also expand independent scrutiny of both stop and search and use of force.

[Neighbourhood policing teams](#) identify community problems and use problem-solving plans to tackle ongoing crime and reduce [antisocial behaviour](#). The force is effectively tackling knife crime and has worked closely with schools to introduce a knife replacement scheme. It also uses learning programmes to steer children away from crime and prevent reoffending. Recently, the force has increased the number of officers in neighbourhood policing.

The force has improved its [control room](#) performance. It now answers emergency calls more quickly and has reduced the number of non-emergency callers who abandon calls due to delays. The force successfully manages repeat demand and receives fewer non-emergency calls than most forces in England and Wales. However, it regularly misses attendance time targets and should improve how quickly officers attend calls for service.

The force has increased [positive outcomes](#) for victims of crime and has a strong focus on victim care. It uses victims' needs assessments effectively. However, the force should improve how it supervises investigations, especially when closing cases. It should also record the correct outcome when finalising investigations. This is an enduring issue and an area for improvement found in our last inspection.

The force has increased its use of preventative orders in [domestic abuse](#) cases and collaborates well with partners, such as social services, health providers and education, to protect people at risk of harm. However, it should improve how it identifies and prioritises [vulnerable people](#) for referral to other agencies. The force also needs to respond more consistently when locating and [safeguarding missing people](#).

The force works with partners through multi-agency fraud panels to protect the public. Its prevent and protect team gives advice to fraud victims. However, the force should strengthen its governance so it can fully understand and resource fraud offences.

I am optimistic that Kent Police will continue to make improvements. I have given the force specific recommendations that set out the areas it needs to focus on, and I will continue to monitor performance.



**Roy Wilsher OBE QFSM**

His Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary

# Leadership and force management

Good

Kent Police's leadership and force management are good.

## Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at leadership and force management.

### **The force can show effective use of data to inform workforce planning**

During our inspection, we found that the force was effectively using data to help allocate resources efficiently and effectively. It combines data insights from incident trends, response times and geographic crime patterns to make sure it deploys [officers](#) and [staff](#) where they are most needed. This approach helps to align HR data on officer and staff skills with specific operational needs. Whether in [neighbourhood policing](#), investigation or emergency response, it makes sure officers and staff with the right skills are in the right places.

A data hub provides performance information to all staff and officers, with clear governance around how the information is used. It provides accurate and timely data to inform performance meetings and make sure that performance reporting is realistic. At the time of our inspection, the force was carrying out a data transformation programme to migrate performance information to a cloud-based environment. This includes fully integrating Microsoft Power BI, an interactive data visualisation tool, into its system. It expects these changes to further enhance its understanding of demand.

## **The force has effective systems to gather intelligence to make sure it can anticipate and respond to current and future demand**

During our inspection, we found that the force had an effective [intelligence](#)-gathering function that makes sure it can assign the appropriate resources. This means that the force can meet its strategic priorities and both current and future demand. It is using real-time data, predictive analytics and collaborative information-sharing networks. These help it to proactively identify emerging threats, allocate resources efficiently and prioritise operations based on risk and impact. This intelligence-led approach makes sure that the force's decision-making is based on evidence and is responsive. This helps it to anticipate criminal trends and community needs.

At the time of our inspection, the force had recently reviewed its new operating model. It found it had achieved many of its aims, including improving operational resilience and investigative outcomes. However, it also found that there were persistent resourcing challenges as well as workload and morale issues. The recommendations and lessons learned from the review have provided a clear plan for further improvement and should inform future organisational change.

## **The force has digital transformation plans that show how it uses technology to improve operational efficiency**

We found that the force's digital transformation plans were centred on using advanced technologies to enhance operational efficiency and service provision. By integrating tools such as artificial intelligence, cloud storage systems and data analytics, the force is making workflows more efficient, improving decision-making and increasing productivity. This will enhance public safety and trust through more transparent and responsive policing.

The force has actively introduced digital tools to support operational work. It told us that it had invested £1.9 million in artificial intelligence and recognised that tools such as Microsoft Copilot can make operational and administrative work more efficient and save money. Digital forecasting allows the force to proactively plan using data rather than reacting to events. This improves overall efficiency.

## **The force can show how it aligns finances to its priorities and how it decides if its expenditure offers value for money**

The force could show that its finances and priorities were aligned. It clearly links its budget allocations to strategic objectives and operational needs. This involves transparent financial planning that shows how it uses resources in important areas such as investigations, neighbourhood policing and technological innovation. The force uses regular performance reviews and audits to help assess whether its spending leads to measurable outcomes and make sure it is using public funds efficiently. It uses [benchmarking](#) and cost-benefit analyses, and adopts best practices in procurement and resource management to further support value for money.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force received £518.6 million in total funding. As with other forces in England and Wales, this is a combination of core government grants, other government grants, [police precept](#) and other non-government funding. In the year ending 31 March 2025, Kent Police had funding of around £172 million from precept income. This is equivalent to £89,296 per 1,000 population. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

At the time of our inspection, the force's goal was to have a balanced budget for the 2025/26 financial year. But it told us that it needed to save £38.6 million between 2026 and 2029. To meet this target, it can either use reserves or find more efficiency savings. The force expects its total reserves to be £26.5 million at the end of 2029/30. At the time of our inspection, its general reserve was £13.1 million or three percent of the net budget. This is in line with the force's reserves strategy policy of holding 3 percent of the net budget in general reserves. If the force needs to use some reserves to meet the financial gap, it has sufficient resources to do so. It has a strong record of making savings, and its plans are realistic. In the year ending 31 March 2026, the force expected to save £10m, which was required to meet the budget gap.

External audits show that, since [our last inspection](#), the force has improved its financial planning. This is largely due to better checking of assumptions and stronger governance. Financial planning now aligns closely with operational decision-making. Overspends and underspends are reviewed regularly, and the finance team models workforce changes to support planning and maintain financial control.

The force uses value-for-money profiles. These profiles show that financial planning and operational decision-making are aligned and supported by established governance processes. Planning assumptions are regularly discussed with senior leaders, and the finance department has sufficient detail to model workforce shifts, including leaver rates. This makes sure that the force considers financial controls when potential changes are discussed.

### **The force has robust governance arrangements that hold its leaders to account**

The force uses several governance structures to oversee important strategic objectives. The force performance management committee meets monthly and focuses on the force's strategic priorities. The force reviews progress against priorities, tracks risks and holds senior leaders to account for actions and plans. This makes sure that key performance measures and risks are monitored closely.

### **The force regularly consults with the workforce to inform its strategic plans**

The force communicates with the workforce when planning changes. For example, the 'empowering leaders to reduce bureaucracy' programme collects ideas from the workforce to improve efficiency, such as new flexible working processes and an overtime app.

Officers and staff told us that senior leaders consulted them through multiple channels, including [chief officer](#) ‘all out’ days, where leaders work with local teams to gather real-time feedback. These approaches show that leaders listen to the workforce, are open to innovative ideas and willing to act on the feedback received.

### **The force is improving the culture and standards of the organisation**

The force has taken steps to increase transparency and accountability. It publishes [misconduct hearing](#) outcomes, and those officers and staff experiencing inappropriate behaviour receive support. It encourages officers and staff to raise concerns, and whistleblower support is improving. To reinforce professional standards, the force has organised upstander training (an upstander is someone who actively intervenes to prevent injustice, bullying or discrimination) and bystander training.

The force’s quarterly ethics and fairness committee discusses ethical dilemmas with senior leaders and shares outcomes with the workforce. These measures have encouraged more reporting to the [professional standards department](#) and signal that the force expects high standards of behaviour.

### **The force is taking steps to further improve leadership training to sergeants**

The force offers comprehensive training for leaders. The ‘be the change’ programme provides newly promoted leaders and those promoted within the previous five years with a two-week course to build the skills needed for their roles.

Previously, acting sergeants didn’t get this training, but the force has created a course for them with ongoing workplace support. At the time of our inspection, this course was due to start in March 2026. A monthly learning and development board tracks leadership training, monitors skills gaps and makes sure that all [first-line leaders](#) have the skills needed for their roles.

### **The force needs to use predictive analysis more effectively to inform its force management statement and improve operational planning and resource allocation**

During our inspection, we found that the [force management statement](#) was consistently used, featured in strategic boards and was aligned with the force’s risk register.

The force uses data to inform its force management statement about current demand and plans to address it. But we found that the force wasn’t using predictive analysis as effectively as it could to inform its forecasting of future demand. The force should be using historical crime data, call logs, demographic trends and environmental factors to create predictive models to forecast future demand with greater accuracy. Without this modelling, the force will be unable to identify patterns such as peak times for incidents, high-risk locations and seasonal fluctuations in crime rates.

We found that there were some gaps in the force's use of predictive analysis for long-term forecasting in the force management statement. But we did find evidence that the force used predictive analytics to highlight emerging crime trends and support its strategic planning. This has allowed it to develop targeted interventions and community policing initiatives. When integrated with real-time data systems, these analytics could also inform the force's dynamic deployment strategies. The force should use these insights to make sure that police presence aligns with actual demand.

**The force should make sure that it tracks the benefits of existing and future collaborations to determine whether they represent value for money**

The force has a long-standing collaboration with Essex Police, and they share resources and governance for several functions. However, because this collaboration has been in place for so long, the force doesn't consistently track its benefits or potential costs.

The force does, however, use value-for-money profiles to monitor its [digital forensic](#) services. The chief finance officer also reviews the benefits of some collaborations and considers the consequences if they were to end. The force should make sure that it tracks the benefits of all existing collaborations and puts similar processes in place for any new collaborations.

# Attracting, developing and retaining the workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace

## Outstanding

Kent Police is outstanding at attracting, developing and retaining its workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force's training, support and opportunities provided to volunteers and special constables aid retention, recruitment and morale**

The force will find a suitable role for anyone who wants to volunteer. It makes the best use of the existing skills and prior experience of volunteers, while also taking account of their preferences and ambitions to learn.

All special constables train to the same standard as regular [officers](#) and can work in almost all areas of the force, except as firearms officers. If they later apply to join as paid officers, their accredited training counts, and once vetted, they don't have to repeat training.

Investing in training and offering development opportunities has helped the force maintain a large team of special constables with strong retention and high satisfaction.

The use of volunteers and the special constabulary has helped the force operate efficiently, save money and work with [hard-to-reach communities](#) and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

## **The force actively evaluates its learning and training to promote continuous improvement**

Following training, the force issues a survey to all participants. It uses this to assess how well the training could be applied, identify further support needs and evaluate its impact on improving outcomes across the organisation. The force also uses public and personal safety training scenario debriefs to provide learning and feedback from scrutiny of [stop and search](#) and use of force.

During our inspection, we were told that supervisors regularly held debriefs with their teams following mandatory training. An example included supervisors discussing and clarifying how learning from [Police Race Action Plan](#) training could be applied in day-to-day practice.

The force carried out a post-event evaluation after the first cohort had completed its 'achieve' programme, which aims to help those from under-represented groups progress to inspector rank or equivalent. It found that the content was relevant and mentoring was a strength. Based on the feedback received, the force made changes to the programme before its relaunch, which included producing a resource pack for attendees and adding more development tools.

This approach makes sure that the workforce feels engaged and that training stays relevant, high quality and responsive to feedback.

## **Main findings**

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at attracting, developing and retaining its workforce and creating a diverse and inclusive workplace.

### **The force provides officers and staff with the right training to carry out specialist work**

The force has a comprehensive investigator resilience action plan, which shows understanding of its current and future investigative demand. Investigators told us that they felt well trained to carry out their roles. As at 30 September 2025, the force had 799 full-time equivalent [professionalising investigations programme](#) level 2 investigators in post, compared to 808 who should be in post. This means 98.9 percent of level 2 investigator posts were filled. The force has plans to prevent any future shortfalls and as at 30 September 2025, had 162 full-time equivalent level 2 trainees.

The force has introduced the [College of Policing's neighbourhood policing programme](#). The [College of Policing](#) dashboard shows that as at 24 November 2025, 507 individuals had completed the first part of the programme. The force had 552 neighbourhood officers and police community support officers eligible and required to complete the training.

### **The force has a clear understanding of the well-being challenges of its workforce**

The force has a comprehensive well-being plan, which is clearly aligned with the five main areas of the '[National Police Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2024–2026](#)'. It communicates with its workforce and acts on information and feedback to improve well-being. The chief constable holds an open question forum every quarter, and all [chief officers](#) have dedicated days to communicate with the workforce.

During our inspection, we carried out a workforce survey open to all officers and staff between 18 August 2025 and 12 September 2025. We received 1,632 responses, which we estimate to be 23.4 percent of the workforce at the time of the survey.

In our workforce survey, 63.4 percent of respondents (1,034 of 1,632) said that the force took their well-being into account when setting their working pattern, and 73.1 percent of respondents (1,193 of 1,632) said that their line manager actively checked that their workload was manageable. Police officers and [staff](#) we spoke to during our inspection also said that they had manageable workloads and a good work-life balance.

Members of staff networks told us that they had helped to shape the force's well-being plan and felt confident that senior officers would act on concerns.

The force supports individuals who are suspended or under investigation by providing a well-being pack, assigning a trained welfare officer and, if appropriate, reviewing welfare through a monthly support forum.

During our inspection, we found that staff and officers received strong support through difficult situations and health issues. The force regularly reviews absence data, discusses long-term absences with individuals and uses its monthly support forum to manage vulnerable officers and staff. Well-being provision is effective and part of the culture, and [personnel](#) feel fully supported.

## **The force has processes in place to encourage officers and staff to stay in its workforce**

The force checks on the satisfaction of its workforce through surveys and collects workforce data. It uses [stay interviews](#) to identify concerns early and discuss how it can encourage people to stay in its workforce. The force has introduced a network of voluntary retention ambassadors. These volunteers work with any staff or officers who are considering leaving. They talk through their concerns and offer support and advice to aid retention. The force told us that this was an effective tactic if those considering leaving could be identified at an early stage.

It has an effective and transparent exit interview process, with the option to be independent of the line management chain. In our workforce survey, 76.6 percent of respondents (1,080 of 1,411) said that they wanted to stay with the force for the next 12 months or longer.

The force identifies the challenges raised by those from under-represented groups. It offers supportive measures and incentives to overcome these issues. The force's 'achieve' programme helps officers and staff from under-represented groups progress to inspector rank or equivalent. Leadership development courses and support for women encourage progression and improve representation in promotions.

The force is effectively gathering reasons for people leaving the workforce as part of the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#) national leavers framework, which is designed to improve the data collection on reasons for officers leaving police forces in England and Wales.

## **The workforce understands, uses and values the professional development review process**

The workforce understands, uses and values the professional development review (PDR) process.

The force places specific emphasis on the PDR process being about documenting career and training goals. It treats it separately to monthly welfare and workload reviews.

It has clear expectations that monthly reviews will be completed with all staff, officers and volunteers. It acknowledges these aren't formally documented on the PDR system, but they are routinely recorded on other systems. Members of the workforce told us that they received regular personal reviews with their [first-line managers](#) and that these were beneficial.

During our inspection, we found that staff and managers generally understood and valued the PDR process. In the year ending 31 March 2025, 97.9 percent of officers, staff and police community support officers had completed a PDR. Leaders use the PDR process to identify and manage talent effectively.

## **The force needs to prioritise the development of its workforce through continuing professional development**

The force holds regular training days for many teams, with attendance recorded and monitored centrally. These sessions give staff, officers and volunteers the chance to complete mandatory and role-specific training.

Some teams told us that their [continuing professional development](#) wasn't always relevant to their role and could feel repetitive.

Continuing professional development is essential to improving service, keeping skills up to date and maintaining operational competence. To make sure that officers and staff feel that training is tailored to their needs, the force should consider asking them what specific learning opportunities they would like to see.

# Using powers fairly, appropriately and with justification

## Adequate

Kent Police is adequate at using its powers fairly, appropriately and with justification.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force is trialling live-streaming technology for body-worn video, with access for operational supervisors**

Supervisors can access live feeds from the [body-worn video](#) of [officers](#) at scenes and when dealing with incidents. This allows them to make quicker, better decisions and provide real-time support.

The technology can improve decision-making in dynamic incidents, support isolated officers and enhance officer safety. It can also reduce unnecessary deployments, therefore saving time and money by reducing unnecessary journeys.

For example, during an incident where a [domestic abuse](#) suspect had barricaded himself into a room armed with a knife, the [on-call](#) negotiator could observe and advise officers while travelling to the scene. This helped the force achieve a safe resolution as quickly as possible.

At the time of our inspection, the trial was still under assessment and awaiting a full evaluation.

## Areas for improvement

### **The force needs to record officers' rationales when using force and increase supervisory oversight**

During our inspection, we found that [officers](#) didn't always record their justification for why they had used force against an individual.

We reviewed 20 pieces of [body-worn video](#) footage of use of force encounters, including any associated documentation provided. In 14 of the 20 cases reviewed, the documents provided didn't contain sufficient detail or rationale to justify why the officers had used force, the level of force or the specific tactic used. The audit findings matched what we observed during our inspection.

The force acknowledged the issue and planned to introduce an automated reminder in early 2026 to prompt officers to record their rationale when completing use of force forms.

### **The force should expand its independent scrutiny of stop and search and use of force**

The force has an independent panel of public volunteers who review [body-worn video](#) footage of [officer](#) interactions and provide feedback to the force. In the 12 months leading up to our inspection, the panel only met 3 times instead of the planned 4, due to a lack of participants in the summer.

The panel has an important role in helping the force learn and building public trust. However, over a 12-month period, it reviewed only 11 [stop and search](#) cases and 4 use of force cases.

Given the time between meetings and the low numbers of cases being reviewed, this is an insufficient level of independent scrutiny and limits the opportunity for the force to receive valuable feedback.

The force should expand this review to get more consistent, meaningful feedback.

## Main findings

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at using its powers fairly, appropriately and with justification.

### **Officers understand how to use stop and search powers appropriately and with justified grounds**

During our inspection, we reviewed a sample of 93 stop and search records from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025. Based on this sample, we estimate that 94.6 percent (+/- 3.8 percentage points) of stop and searches the force carried out during this period had reasonable grounds recorded.

This suggests some improvement compared to the findings from our previous review of records from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2022. In that review, we found that 88.5 percent (+/- 4.8 percentage points) of stop and searches had reasonable grounds recorded. However, as the estimated results are based on a review of a sample of records and the ranges of possible true values overlap, we can't be sure that there has been a real change.

The percentage that had reasonable grounds recorded suggests that officers are suitably trained and they use stop and search powers in a justified and appropriate way. Officers told us that they felt confident to use their stop and search powers and had enough training.

### **The force needs to make sure it collects accurate data to allow it to understand how fairly stop and search is being used**

Good quality data on self-defined ethnicity (how individuals define their ethnicity) allows the force to understand the rate at which it uses stop and search on people from ethnic minority backgrounds in the local resident population.

As part of our review of stop and search records, we asked the force to provide 12 months of stop and search data from 1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025. We found that self-defined ethnicity information was unknown (not recorded, not stated or refused) for 24.9 percent of these records. In the year ending 31 March 2025, on average, self-defined ethnicity was unknown for 18.0 percent of stop and searches that forces in England and Wales recorded.

Our review of 20 stop and search encounters filmed on body-worn video found that in 16 of these encounters, officers didn't ask for self-defined ethnicity. Officers should make sure they ask for this data to allow the force to more accurately identify any [disproportionate](#) use of the power.

## **The force should improve the quality of its supervisory oversight of stop and search**

Although the force routinely completes supervisory checks of stop and search encounters, we found that these reviews often lacked detail in some important areas. Supervisory checks didn't normally include a review or feedback relating to the officer asking the individual for their self-defined ethnicity.

Accurate recording of self-defined ethnicity is vital to understanding and addressing disproportionality.

## **The force uses stop and search sufficiently**

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force carried out 14,587 stop and searches of people. This equals 7.6 stop and searches per 1,000 population. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

The total number of stop and searches the force carried out on people and vehicles increased by 13.3 percent compared to the year ending 31 March 2024. This isn't in line with the overall picture for forces in England and Wales in which, on average, the total number of stop and searches decreased by 1.3 percent. The force told us that this was because of improved [intelligence](#) and a focus on stop and search as a tactic.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force had an overall [find rate](#) of 37.6 percent from stop and search encounters. This was made up of 33.1 percent [linked finds](#) and 4.5 percent not linked finds.

Linked finds are when one or more items, which the officer suspected a person had in their possession, are found and were the reason for the search. Not linked finds are when items are found that a person may have been in unlawful possession of but weren't the reason for the search.

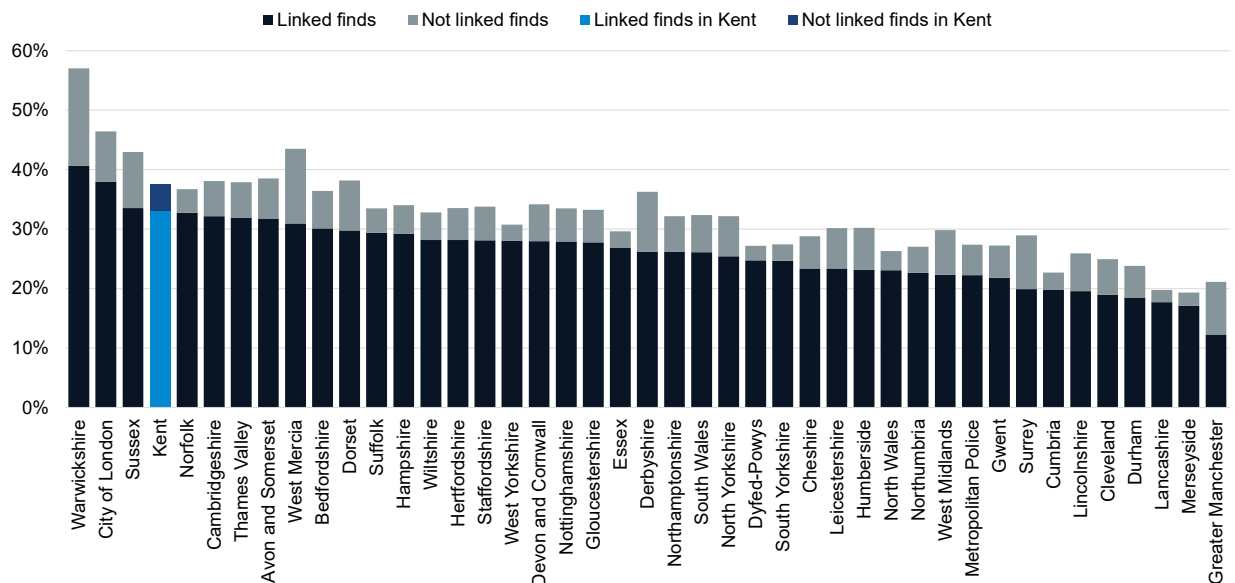
In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force's linked find rate was higher than the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The linked find rate for the force increased by 2.0 percentage points compared to the year ending 31 March 2024.

We examined:

- the number of searches the force carried out;
- the number of searches that had reasonable grounds; and
- the percentage of linked finds.

The results of this review show that the force is using its stop and search powers well. We found evidence of stop and search being used as a tactic in problem-solving plans and intelligence-led operations.

**Figure 1: Percentage of stop and search encounters resulting in linked and not linked finds for forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2025**



Source: [Stop and search open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Chart description: A stacked column chart showing the percentage of [stop and search](#) encounters where the item found was and wasn't linked to the reason for the search for all forces in England and Wales in the year ending 31 March 2025. In Kent Police, 33.1 percent of stop and search encounters resulted in a [linked find](#) and 4.5 percent in a not linked find.

[The accessible data table for figure 1 is available on our website.](#)

Note: In the calculation, we have excluded records where it isn't known whether the item found was linked to the reason for the search. We have also excluded records where it isn't known whether the [officer](#) found any items. If the percentage of linked or not linked finds isn't included in the chart for some forces, it is because they haven't supplied it.

### The force understands how it is using stop and search and use of force powers and is trying to do more to reduce disproportionality

The force holds a quarterly police powers board meeting to review data and to analyse themes, trends and disproportionality for both stop and search and use of force. It publishes detailed performance information on its use of force, including how often it uses force and the tactics used. It breaks down its use of force by age, gender and ethnicity. At the time of our inspection, data was available from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2025.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, people from a Black ethnic minority background were 2.6 times more likely than White people to be the subject of a stop and search by the force. In our review of stop and search records of people from an ethnic minority background, we found that 22 of 23 had reasonable grounds. The force carries out analysis of its disproportionate use of stop and search powers to help it understand

why this exists. It needs to better understand its disproportionate use of stop and search powers and take action to reduce it.

In the year ending 31 March 2025, people from a Black ethnic minority background were 2.9 times more likely than White people to be subject to use of force. This suggests that force is used disproportionately on people from Black ethnic minority backgrounds. The force carries out analysis into its disproportionate use of force to help it understand why it exists. It needs to better understand and explain its disproportionate use of force and take action to reduce it.

### **The force isn't recording enough use of force incidents**

In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force recorded 19,444 use of force incidents. This is an increase of 24.8 percent compared to the previous year. This increase is likely due to improved recording processes, including cross-checking use of force recording with custody records.

Officers are expected to record every use of force to make sure it is transparent and accountable. This includes recording low-level use of force such as handcuffing a compliant person and higher levels of force such as the use of a baton or [conducted energy device](#) (Taser). Where more than one officer uses force on an individual, each officer must submit their own use of force report.

To determine if the force was recording use of force appropriately, we reviewed two different measures. We firstly examined the number of arrests and compared this to the number of recorded use of force reports. We expect the number of use of force reports to be at least as high as the number of arrests. Most arrests involve the use of handcuffs and multiple officers may have used force during the arrest.

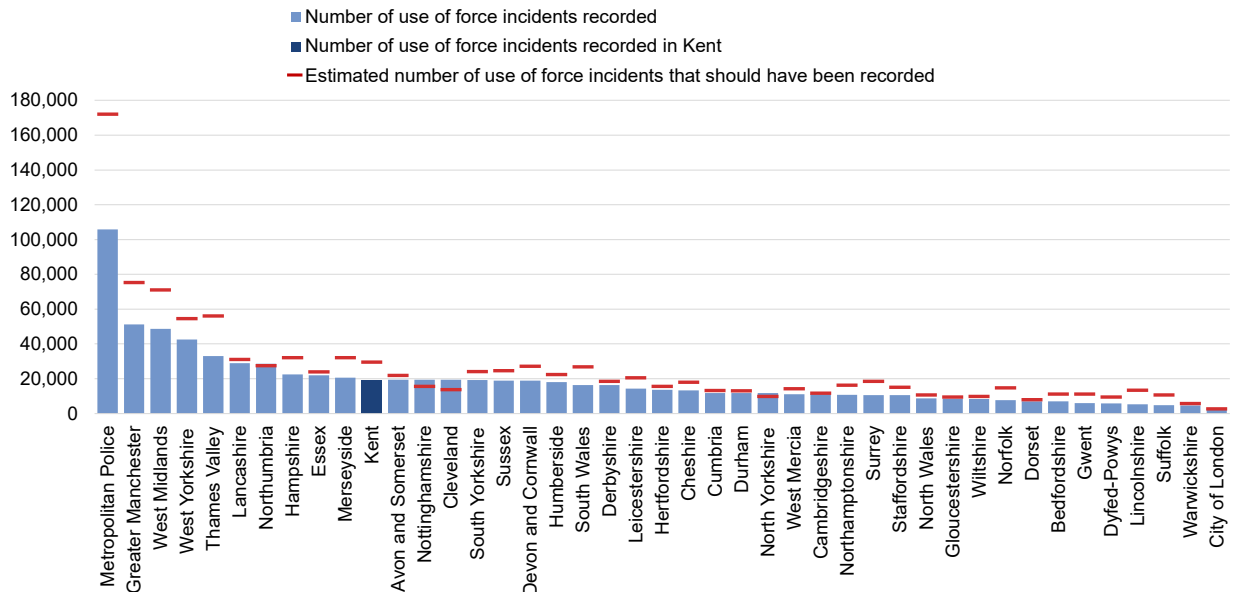
In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force made 21,959 arrests and recorded 19,444 use of force reports. This means it under-recorded its use of force by at least 2,515 incidents.

We then reviewed the overall expected number of use of force records compared to the actual recorded number. The expected number is estimated based on the average number of uses of force associated with each recorded arrest.

We estimate that, in the year ending 31 March 2025, the force should have recorded 29,565 use of force incidents. It actually recorded 19,444 incidents. This means it likely under-recorded its use of force by 10,121 incidents. This is an improvement in recording use of force compared to the previous year when, based on this estimation, it didn't record 13,832 use of force incidents.

However, the force needs to make sure all officers are accurately recording their use of force and that it has adequate checks in place to help identify missing records.

**Figure 2: Number of use of force incidents that forces in England and Wales recorded and the estimated number that should have been recorded in the year ending 31 March 2025**



**Source:** [Police use of force open data tables](#) and [arrests open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Chart description: A combination chart showing the number of use of force incidents that all forces in England and Wales recorded (represented by columns) and the estimated number of use of force incidents that should have been recorded (represented by red target lines) in the year ending 31 March 2025. Kent Police recorded 19,444 use of force incidents. This was lower than the estimated 29,565 use of force incidents it should have recorded.

[The accessible data table for figure 2 is available on our website.](#)

Note: To understand how well forces record their use of force, we compare the number of incidents they recorded with the estimated number they should have recorded. To estimate the number of use of force incidents forces should have recorded, we use the number of recorded arrests and the number of recorded use of force incidents linked to an arrest.

### **The force should make sure that officers consistently complete safeguarding referrals for children following the use of police powers**

Officers are aware of [safeguarding](#) practices for [children](#) in use of force or stop and search encounters and receive training to improve their awareness. In our body-worn video audits, we found that, in most cases, officers were safeguarding children.

However, the force’s internal quality assurance process, which reviews about 90 cases per quarter, has no specific focus on children. First-line supervisory oversight of these cases is also insufficient.

By improving review quality, the force can better identify safeguarding gaps and support early intervention and multi-agency collaboration.

# Preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability

Good

Kent Police is good at preventing and deterring crime and [antisocial behaviour](#), and reducing [vulnerability](#).

## Innovative practice

### **The force has started an early intervention project to reduce knife crime among young people**

The Kent and Medway safer knife replacement scheme identifies homes or locations where young people may take possession of knives. The scheme offers support to young people thought to be at risk to educate and discourage them from knife carrying. The scheme offers an opportunity to exchange pointed knives for knives with rounded tips. The idea is to prevent harm and encourage safer choices.

At the time of our inspection, the force told us that 107 young people had been involved in the scheme and that 573 knives had been exchanged for a safer alternative. In May 2025, the scheme was shared nationally as good practice and published on the [College of Policing](#) practice bank.

### **The force uses a learning intervention for children who commit low-level criminal offences**

When a [child](#) commits a low-level criminal offence, the force has a diversionary process where the child takes part in an educational programme with [officers](#). The programme is designed to prevent further offending rather than progressing the offence through the criminal justice system.

Bespoke packages are designed that allow the child to understand the relevant law and the potential impact on [victims](#). These packages include victim testimonials from Kent residents who have been subject to similar crimes. This helps children understand the wider impact of offending.

At the time of inspection, the force had packages for 16 offence types. It told us that an evaluation of 417 children showed that 92 percent had no further formal police [outcomes](#) after completing the programme.

By supporting children and young people to make more positive choices, the force is helping to improve their future opportunities, reduce crime and make communities safer.

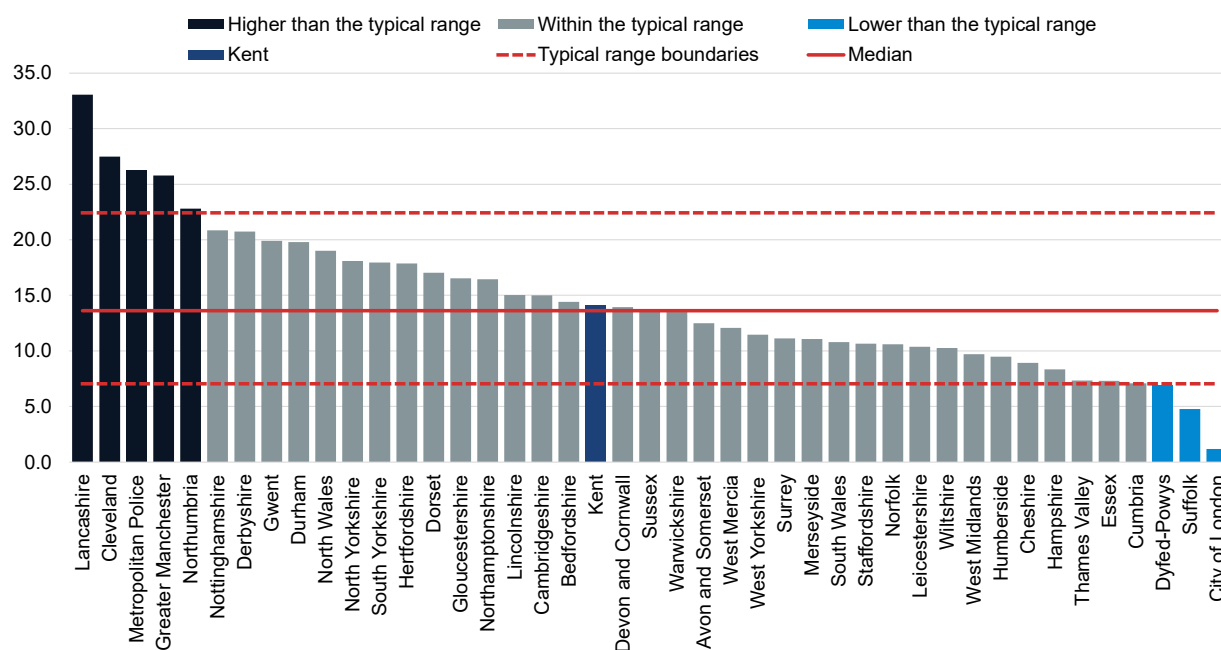
## **Main findings**

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at preventing and deterring crime and antisocial behaviour, and reducing vulnerability.

### **The force understands the causes of antisocial behaviour and vulnerability in its communities**

During our inspection, we found that the force had a clear understanding of antisocial behaviour and related vulnerability in its communities. The force has taken steps to understand trends in its antisocial behaviour reporting and the underlying causes. For example, analysts provide local leaders with weekly summaries of recorded antisocial behaviour including repeat victims and locations. We found that antisocial behaviour was scrutinised in senior governance processes. In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force recorded 14.1 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

**Figure 3: Number of antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population that forces in England and Wales recorded in the year ending 31 March 2025**



Source: [Police-recorded antisocial behaviour incidents data](#) and [population estimates for England and Wales](#) from the Office for National Statistics

Chart description: Column chart showing the number of [antisocial behaviour](#) incidents per 1,000 population that all forces in England and Wales recorded in the year ending 31 March 2025. Kent Police recorded 14.1 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population, which was within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The typical range, represented by dashed red lines on the chart, is between 7 and 22.4 antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population. The median value of 13.6 per 1,000 population is presented as a solid red line.

[The accessible data table for figure 3 is available on our website.](#)

The force understands the reasons for differences between the number of antisocial behaviour incidents per 1,000 population it records and those recorded in other forces. This will help it develop strategies to tackle the causes of the antisocial behaviour, allocate resources where they are most needed and keep its communities safe.

The force doesn't always record all crimes that have occurred when victims report [antisocial behaviour personal](#). In our [quality service review](#), we found that in the cases we examined, the force had recorded three of five antisocial behaviour personal crimes correctly. Since our review, the force has changed its processes for recording antisocial behaviour and should continue to evaluate the impact of this.

## **The force is using preventative and protective orders effectively to help it tackle antisocial behaviour**

During our inspection, we found that [neighbourhood policing teams](#) worked closely with local authority antisocial behaviour officers, housing providers and other partners to address the root causes of antisocial behaviour in its communities. We found examples of neighbourhood teams using multi-agency panels to discuss known individuals who exhibit antisocial behaviour. Officers told us that this early information sharing allowed them to make more informed decisions on cases where preventative orders would be appropriate.

We found that [officers](#) were using antisocial behaviour legislation effectively to prevent community problems from escalating. In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force issued 566 preventative and protective orders, which equals 0.3 orders per 1,000 population. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

In our quality service review, we examined 20 antisocial behaviour incidents and any crimes recorded from them. We found that in just five out of ten of these records, the force used antisocial behaviour legislation to help it tackle the root causes of the behaviour. The force must make sure it is considering and using antisocial behaviour legislation in all appropriate cases.

During our inspection, the officers we spoke to told us that they were confident in applying for and using tools such as [Criminal Behaviour Orders](#) and civil injunctions, particularly in more complex or persistent antisocial behaviour cases. This indicates that officers understand antisocial behaviour legislation and the range of powers available to them. This could help them to tackle the root causes of antisocial behaviour more effectively.

## **The force encourages a problem-solving culture**

The force has created an accessible practice bank of successful problem-solving plans. This allows officers and [staff](#) involved in problem-solving to access a database of previously successful interventions to inform and guide their work.

The force has invested in equipping neighbourhood team supervisors with the knowledge and confidence to manage problem-solving. They receive training from the University of Cambridge in problem-oriented policing. In our quality service review, we found that in ten of the ten plans we reviewed, there was evidence of regular supervision with meaningful updates recorded.

Investment in problem-solving has increased understanding and use across different departments, not just neighbourhood policing. All policing teams can now look for previous interventions when tackling any issues they encounter.

## **The force communicates well with its diverse communities to better understand their needs and help set its local priorities**

During our inspection, we found that neighbourhood policing teams were regularly communicating with local people to understand their concerns and help them feel safe. At the time of our inspection, the force had developed a plan to guide local teams in how to build relationships and set local priorities based on community feedback. Priorities are set in each ward based on community survey data. The force works with local communities both in-person and online. It should also use the findings from this work to inform the priorities it sets.

The force uses local meetings and digital platforms to communicate, but practices vary. Some officers are less confident working with diverse communities, while others are building strong trust with seldom-heard groups. At the time of our inspection, the force had recently removed the role of community liaison officer who had responsibility for working with [hard-to-reach and diverse communities](#). Instead, neighbourhood officers must now complete this function alongside their other duties. The force should make sure this work continues and that it is effective.

## **The force has invested in the capacity and capability of its neighbourhood policing teams**

In the year ending 31 March 2025, 5.9 percent of the force's police officers were in dedicated neighbourhood policing roles. This is within the typical range for forces in England and Wales.

The force's neighbourhood policing teams have the capacity and capability to provide a regular and visible presence that is accessible to their local communities. During our inspection, we found that neighbourhood policing teams had enough officers and staff with the right skills and training to work effectively in their communities and with partners to reduce crime and antisocial behaviour. This makes sure there is time available for preventative work and problem-solving activity. And it means that local priorities are being met.

The force has invested resources in its neighbourhood policing teams. It has taken steps to improve the capability of its neighbourhood officers and staff through training and development of essential skills and knowledge. This includes building confidence in community liaison, working with partners, problem-solving and tackling antisocial behaviour. It has a consistent and structured approach to training and developing its neighbourhood teams.

## **The force doesn't have effective processes in place to monitor how often its neighbourhood teams are abstracted from their communities**

Neighbourhood police officers are responsible for building relationships with communities, solving problems and working with partners to prevent crime and antisocial behaviour. This requires local officers to be visible and have meaningful communication with those communities. Sometimes neighbourhood officers are diverted away from their usual work to carry out other duties in the force to meet demand. This is referred to as [abstraction](#). If this happens regularly and isn't monitored by the force, it can affect the ability of neighbourhood officers to carry out their main roles in their communities.

During our inspection, officers told us they were regularly abstracted from their main duties to support other areas of policing, such as response teams. In our workforce survey, 57.1 percent of respondents involved in neighbourhood policing (152 of 266) said that they were abstracted from their main neighbourhood policing duties on a monthly or more frequent basis.

Senior leaders have recognised this issue and introduced a new abstraction policy to help define and address both planned and spontaneous abstractions. But the force needs better data and processes to monitor and manage abstractions. This will make sure neighbourhood officers have enough time to problem-solve and stay visible to their communities.

# Responding to the public

## Adequate

Kent Police is adequate at responding to the public.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force has an effective process for identifying and addressing sources of repeat demand**

The force has a team that identifies and addresses sources of repeat demand under a process known as Operation Engage. The force tracks individuals or organisations that generate the most demand within its [contact centre](#). It does this by monitoring repeat demand to different contact channels and by [staff](#) and [officers](#) tagging repeat issues on internal systems. The force then tackles the root cause by either working with partners to address [vulnerability](#) or by securing preventative orders to prohibit illegitimate contact.

The force told us that it was saving around 580 hours per month in contact handler time by preventing sources of unnecessary demand. This allows the force to dedicate its resources to answering all forms of contact more efficiently.

### Area for improvement

#### **The force needs to attend calls for service in line with its internal targets**

The force doesn't publish attendance targets, but it has an internal target of 20 minutes to respond to emergency calls.

During our inspection, we found that it wasn't always attending calls for service quickly enough. In our [quality service review](#), we found that in 28 of the 39 cases we examined, the time to respond to the incident was within the required attendance time. This means that in 11 cases, the force may have missed opportunities to keep communities safe.

The force is taking measures to improve attendance times and has policies in place to guide the appropriate and prompt allocation of resources. However, this delayed response can lead to the force missing opportunities to [safeguard victims](#) or collect evidence. It needs to continue to improve the way it prioritises its response to incidents and how quickly it responds.

## **Main findings**

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at responding to the public.

### **The force has effective management structures in contact management**

During our inspection, we found that the force has good governance processes in place for call handling and incident management. Contact performance is monitored and scrutinised by department leaders and in wider force performance governance. Leaders have access to appropriate data, which allows them to understand performance and make good use of available resources in both the short and longer term.

The force uses quality assurance processes to identify areas of learning for contact management staff and officers and provide effective training. Staff and officers told us that they felt well supported to carry out their roles. The force has focused on its contact management leadership, which has led to a positive culture and good retention of staff and officers.

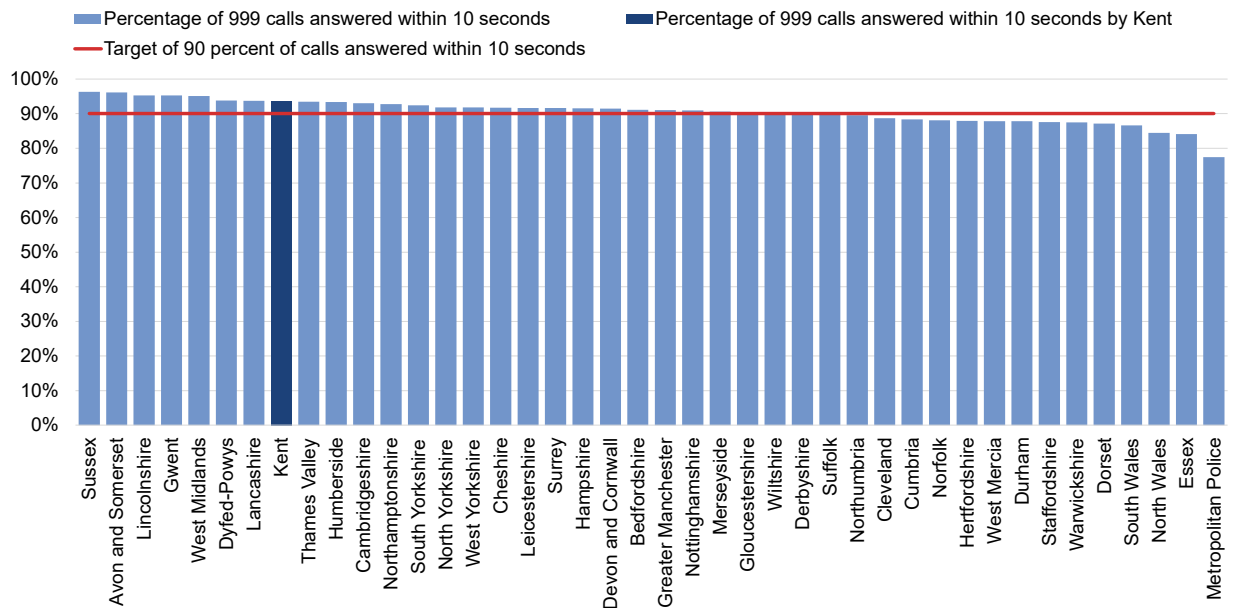
The importance of prompt, effective responses to the public is understood across the organisation.

### **The force answers emergency calls quickly enough**

In the year ending 30 November 2025, the force received 168 emergency 999 calls per 1,000 population. This was within the typical range for forces in England and Wales. It answered 93.6 percent of the 999 calls it received within 10 seconds. This was higher than the standard expected of forces in England and Wales of answering 90.0 percent of 999 calls within 10 seconds and is a noteworthy improvement from [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#).

This suggests that the force puts the victim at the centre of its decision-making, which provides the foundations for an effective response.

**Figure 4: Percentage of 999 calls that forces in England and Wales answered within 10 seconds in the year ending 30 November 2025**



Source: [999 call answering times from BT](#)

Chart description: Column chart showing the percentage of 999 calls that all forces in England and Wales answered within 10 seconds in the year ending 30 November 2025. Kent Police answered 93.6 percent of the 999 calls it received within 10 seconds. This is above the expected standard of 90.0 percent for forces in England and Wales, which is marked with a solid red line on the chart. Sixteen forces were below the expected standard.

[The accessible data table for figure 4 is available on our website.](#)

Note: Call answering time is the time taken for a call to be transferred from BT to a force and then answered by that force.

### The force answers non-emergency calls quickly enough

In the year ending 30 September 2025, the force received 131 non-emergency [101](#) calls per 1,000 population. This was lower than the typical range for forces in England and Wales. The force told us that in the same period, 2.9 percent of calls to its non-emergency 101 facility were abandoned. While there is no formal national standard for how non-emergency performance is measured, the force’s performance is effective and abandoned calls are at an acceptable level. This is another substantial improvement since our 2023–25 PEEL inspection.

### Call handlers effectively assess risk and identify vulnerable victims

The force provides [vulnerability training](#) to control room officers and staff. It also has performance and quality assurance processes in place to monitor how effectively call handlers identify vulnerability issues.

In our quality service review, we found that in 51 of the 51 cases we examined, the call handler used a structured triage approach to assess risk. In 49 of the 51 cases, that triage was accurate and meaningful.

We also found that the force made effective checks to identify repeat victims in 34 of 35 cases and vulnerable victims in 39 of 39 cases.

### **The force provides appropriate advice on safeguarding, evidence preservation and crime prevention**

In our 2023–25 PEEL inspection, the force received an [area for improvement](#) relating to the advice it provided the community on the preservation of evidence and crime prevention.

The force has improved in this area and, therefore, we have closed the area for improvement. The force completes internal audits on contact staff to monitor the quality of advice they provide to the public. During our inspection, we found evidence that staff and officers had received additional training about themes identified in this process.

In our quality service review, we found that call handlers gave advice on preservation of evidence in 26 of the 26 cases we reviewed, crime prevention advice in 21 of 21 cases and safeguarding advice in 22 of 23 cases.

### **The force needs to consistently triage all forms of digital contact**

The force offers digital contact to the public 24 hours a day, 7 days a week through live chat and social media as an alternative to telephoning. This is managed by the command and control team. We found that this team was effectively staffed and supervised.

However, members of the public who reported crime through the force's [Single Online Home](#) service received a less consistent response compared to those who reported by telephone. During our inspection, we found that crimes processed in this manner had inconsistent supervisory oversight and management.

Following feedback, the force has taken steps to improve this process and introduced a new system where all crime reports are [risk assessed](#) before being sent to other departments for processing. It should make sure that this system effectively identifies risk and triages demand consistently.

# Investigating crime

## Adequate

Kent Police is adequate at investigating crime.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force is trialling the use of forensic healthcare practitioners to help obtain medical evidence from domestic abuse victims**

In June 2025, the force started trialling Operation Nightingale, using forensic healthcare practitioners to support [victims](#) of [domestic abuse](#) who are reluctant to support an investigation or accept other medical assistance. They assess victims at a police station, home address or other location and provide support, collect medical evidence and document injuries to victims.

At the time of our inspection, the force told us that it had successfully used Operation Nightingale over 30 times.

In one case, a victim was assaulted while holding their baby. Forensic health practitioners visited to offer immediate support and obtain evidence. Their actions gave the victim the confidence to support a prosecution. They were instrumental in securing a charge for an offence of assault and an early guilty plea from the suspect.

In another case, the attending [officer](#) highlighted three injuries to a victim of domestic abuse. The forensic health practitioner was able to secure medical evidence of 25 separate injuries to the victim's body. This evidence was considered vital to a successful charge for serious assault, which resulted in a guilty plea from the suspect. In this case, the victim documented in their personal statement how the examination had helped them realise the extent of the harm caused.

Although the programme hasn't yet been formally evaluated, early findings show that it improves victim confidence and outcomes.

## Area for improvement

### **The force should make sure that it consistently assigns the correct crime outcome type**

The force has addressed some of the crime classification issues that we identified in [our 2023–25 PEEL inspection](#). But in our [quality service review](#) during this inspection, we found that only 48 of the 72 cases we reviewed had the correct [outcomes](#) applied.

Of those with incorrect outcome codes, 9 of the 24 cases we reviewed were finalised with outstanding enquiries. Other outcome errors included cases that were closed because [victims](#) had withdrawn their support although no evidence of this was recorded and cases where suspects were marked as unknown when they had been identified.

We found that the force routinely audited and scrutinised the use of some outcome types. Dedicated decision makers routinely review all [positive](#) and [resolved outcomes](#) (outcomes 1–10 and 20–22). Other outcomes are checked through [dip sampling](#) as part of the ongoing audit process, but not all are reviewed. The results of our quality service review highlighted that further measures are needed.

Assigning the correct outcome type is important. It makes sure that the force can effectively evaluate and improve its investigations, achieve positive outcomes and build victim confidence.

## Main findings

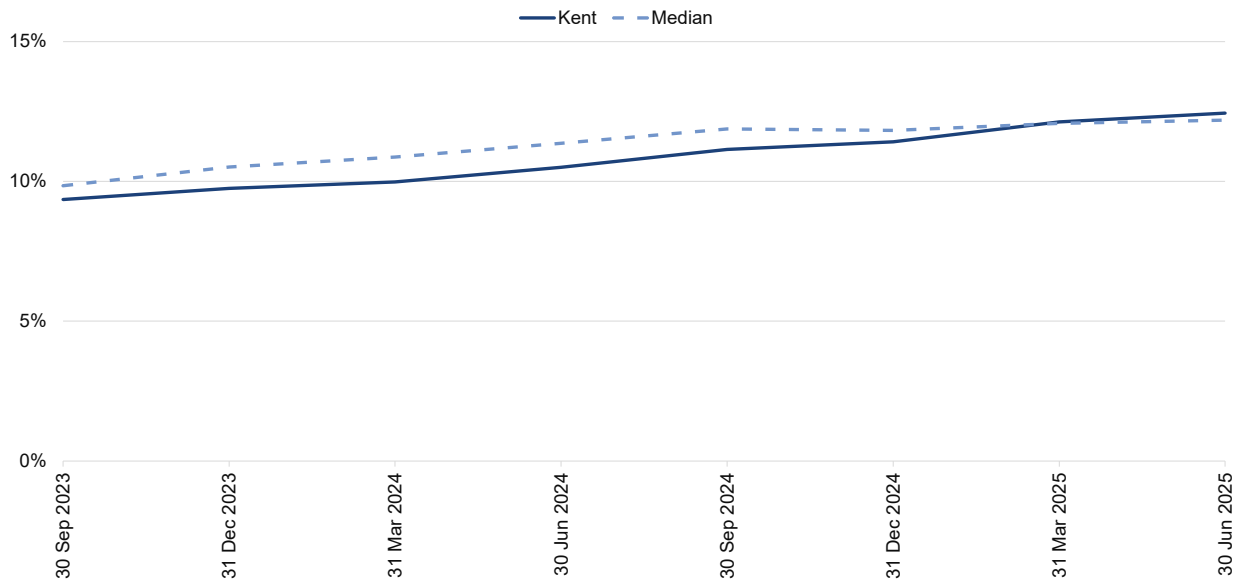
In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at investigating crime.

### **The force consistently achieves appropriate outcomes for victims**

The force has shown a meaningful and sustained improvement in its positive outcome rates for victims of crime in the last two years.

In the year ending 30 June 2025, 12.4 percent of all outcomes that the force assigned to [victim-based crimes](#) were positive outcomes.

**Figure 5: Percentage of positive outcomes that Kent Police and all forces in England and Wales assigned to victim-based crimes between the year ending 30 September 2023 and the year ending 30 June 2025**



**Source:** [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Chart description: Line chart showing the percentage of [positive outcomes](#) that Kent Police assigned and the median for forces in England and Wales for each year from the year ending 30 September 2023 to the year ending 30 June 2025. The chart shows that 12.4 percent of outcomes that Kent Police assigned to [victim-based crimes](#) were positive in the year ending 30 June 2025, compared to the median of 12.2 percent for forces in England and Wales. It also shows that the percentage of positive outcomes that Kent Police assigned has been generally increasing since the year ending 30 September 2023. And the median percentage of positive outcomes for forces in England and Wales has been slowly increasing in the same period.

Note: The percentage of positive outcomes that forces assign is calculated from all outcomes they assign in a given period. Victim-based crimes include all police-recorded crimes where there is a direct [victim](#), such as an individual, an organisation or a corporate body. For a detailed description of crime and outcome types, please see the [Home Office statistics](#).

**Figure 6: Percentage of unresolved, resolved and positive outcomes that Kent Police and all forces in England and Wales assigned to victim-based crimes in the year ending 30 June 2025**

<b>Outcome types</b>	<b>Kent percentage [%]</b>	<b>Median percentage [%] for forces in England and Wales</b>
<u>Unresolved crime outcomes</u> (Outcomes 11–18)	84.4	82.9
<u>Resolved crime outcomes</u> (Outcomes 5, 9, 10, 20–22)	3.2	2.7
<u>Positive crime outcomes</u> (Outcomes 1–4, 8), of which:	12.4	12.2
1: Charged/summonsed	8.2	9.1
2 and 3: <u>Caution</u> – youths and adults	0.8	0.8
4: Taken into consideration	0.0	0.1
8: <u>Community resolution</u>	3.4	2.2

**Source:** [Police recorded crime and outcomes open data tables](#) from the Home Office

Note: The percentage of unresolved, resolved and positive outcomes that forces assign is calculated from all outcomes they assign in a given period. [Victim-based crimes](#) include all police-recorded crimes where there is a direct [victim](#), such as an individual, an organisation or a corporate body. For a detailed description of crime and outcome types, please see the [Home Office statistics](#).

We found that senior leaders had set and maintained high investigative standards. Force structures allow detailed scrutiny to improve standards.

The force has introduced a programme, called ‘investigative habits’, to improve investigative standards in frontline teams. It aligns investigative practices across the force and encourages investigators to apply focus, precision and momentum to progressing investigations. It helps the force adopt a suspect-focused, victim-centred and context-led approach. It promotes independent thinking and proportionate investigation planning.

The force monitors file quality against national file standards to identify common issues. It uses this information to find good practice and areas of learning and to provide feedback to investigators and the Crown Prosecution Service.

The force has a dedicated team and robust processes to effectively manage the use of pre-charge [bail](#) and [released under investigation](#) and to prevent lapsed bail whenever possible.

## **The force provides a quality service to victims of crime**

The force prioritises victim care. It reviews any outstanding victim updates, missing victim contracts or needs assessments during daily management meetings. Leaders are held accountable.

The force has improved the use of victim needs assessments through regular messages to the workforce that emphasise the importance of completing these assessments and listening to feedback received.

We found that completion rates and the quality of victim needs assessments had improved following the introduction of an app that allows officers to complete a simple online form. The system then automatically populates and links the relevant sections within the force's crime recording systems. There are mandatory sections to make sure the form is fully completed and in-built checks to improve the quality of the entries made. Officers and [staff](#) told us that the app had made the completion of victim needs assessments more efficient.

In 48 of the 50 relevant cases we reviewed, we found that the force had recorded victim needs assessments. This means that investigators had assessed whether those victims needed support and, if so, what type of support they needed and whether they were [vulnerable](#) or intimidated.

The force identified and recorded a victim's entitlement to an enhanced service in 30 of the 31 relevant cases we reviewed. We also found that the force completed a victim contract in 53 of the 54 relevant cases we reviewed. The victim contract was adhered to in 52 of the 53 cases, and where appropriate, a victim personal statement was considered in 8 of 8 relevant cases.

Victims being assessed for needs and victims being updated are two of the rights in the [Code of Practice for Victims of Crime \('the Victims' Code'\)](#). It is essential for the force to comply with the Victims' Code to give victims a high-quality service.

## **The force should make sure there is effective supervisory oversight throughout an investigation, including at crime finalisation**

In 64 of the 77 relevant cases we reviewed in our quality service review, we found that there was effective supervision of investigations. All investigative opportunities had been taken in 69 of 84 cases and investigations were effective in 65 of 83 cases.

During our inspection, some supervisors told us that they couldn't always review cases on time due to the volume of investigations, competing operational demands and the need to support inexperienced investigators.

Investigations with effective supervisory oversight are more likely to lead to better outcomes for victims. In our quality service review, we found that there was effective supervision in finalising crimes in 49 of 73 cases. Effective supervision is essential to make sure that investigations progress promptly, follow proportionate lines of enquiry and aren't closed prematurely.

**The force should make sure it has enough resources to meet demand and manage investigation times in teams that investigate rape and domestic abuse**

The force has created specialist teams for [high-risk domestic abuse](#), [stalking](#) and rape cases. It created these teams after recognising the links between these offences and the need to have singular investigative focus and responsibility.

However, at the time of our inspection, these teams weren't fully staffed. Team members told us that they faced high demand, heavy workloads and restrictions on moving to other roles. The force told us that from 1 October 2024 to 30 September 2025, active rape investigations rose by 6.3 percent and domestic abuse investigations by 12.2 percent.

The force should make sure that these teams have enough investigators to manage demand, reduce investigation delays and achieve positive outcomes for victims.

# Safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm

## Adequate

Kent Police is adequate at [safeguarding children](#) and [adults at risk of harm](#).

### Areas for improvement

**The force needs to make sure that officers take appropriate action and work with multi-agency partners to reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable people**

The force needs to make sure attending [officers](#) complete comprehensive [risk assessments](#) and that officers action all required partner referrals.

During our inspection, we found that while supervisors were consulted about risk assessments and [safeguarding](#), this often wasn't formally recorded or auditable. This makes it difficult to assess if officers have considered all safeguarding measures.

Inconsistency in supervisory oversight or secondary review processes for [domestic abuse](#) incidents means that the force may be missing opportunities for statutory or support service referrals for [victims](#). It may also be missing opportunities for proactive disclosures through the [Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme](#) or the [Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme](#) and, therefore, failing to inform potential victims of identified risk.

The force has a defined process, called [Operation Encompass](#), in place to make sure it promptly notifies the schools of pupils living with domestic abuse. However, in our [quality service review](#), we found that officers had notified schools about [children](#) exposed to domestic abuse in only 10 of 15 relevant cases. This means that children may not have received the required support in school. The force needs more robust checks to make sure that these cases aren't missed.

We found that the force had shared information with appropriate agencies in only 18 of the 28 relevant cases we reviewed. This shows that it needs a more co-ordinated response to safeguarding.

Multi-agency working is an important part of the force's safeguarding strategy. The force has a [multi-agency safeguarding hub](#) and a central referral unit. These include a wide range of partners, which cover both child and adult safeguarding. Once multi-agency referrals have been identified, the force processes them promptly, with no backlogs reported.

### **The force needs to have a consistent approach to its identification and response to locating and safeguarding missing people**

We found that there was inconsistency in how the force managed [missing person](#) investigations across its three policing divisions. This was due to resourcing issues. In two of the three policing divisions, missing person teams don't work weekends or late shifts and only deal with a small proportion of missing person cases. This has resulted in some response teams receiving less support with the supervision and progression of investigations. It has also increased the demand on response teams in the two divisions and led to varying levels of service to the public across the force when investigating missing persons.

We found that some missing person reports weren't recorded properly, which could lead to missed [safeguarding](#) checks and missed opportunities to identify repeat or [vulnerable](#) cases. We also noted differences in the training provision across the force. Since our inspection, the force has introduced new training, processes and a monthly governance board meeting to standardise investigations and manage performance. It needs to monitor these changes to make sure they provide the long-term improvements expected.

When missing person reports are correctly recorded and allocated, the force's missing person policy makes sure that it gives a structured and proactive response. During the missing person triage process, the force assesses risk and gathers important information. In our [quality service review](#), we found that in 18 of 20 relevant cases, the risk grade was appropriate based on the information known at the time. But we found that in three of six relevant cases, the risk to the missing person wasn't appropriately reviewed throughout the investigation. And only three of eight relevant cases had an effective and proportionate supervisor's investigative action plan.

The force needs to make sure it has a consistent approach to the management, review and progression of investigations to make sure it is locating and safeguarding missing persons effectively.

## Main findings

In this section we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at safeguarding children and adults at risk of harm.

### **The force safeguards children and adults at risk of harm**

As part of our quality service review, we reviewed 40 cases to determine how well the force safeguards victims.

We found that in 40 of 40 cases, safeguarding advice was appropriately given to victims. This suggests that officers are aware of their duty to identify and reduce the risk of harm to vulnerable victims. In 15 of 18 cases we reviewed, officers recorded the [voice of the child](#) in referrals, making sure that the child's experiences and needs were considered in safeguarding decisions.

When attending incidents, officers consistently show [professional curiosity](#) and look beyond the obvious to identify signs of hidden harm, exploitation or vulnerability. In 34 of 39 cases we reviewed, officers completed appropriate risk assessments, which shows they had a clear understanding of the risks that victims face. Officers made relevant referrals to specialist partners in 30 of 34 cases, which shows that they were aware of available support services and the importance of connecting victims with the help they need.

### **The force is working collaboratively to tackle criminal offences and protect vulnerable people subject to exploitation associated with small boat arrivals**

Operation Lockstream is the force's response to small boat arrivals. The force is working collaboratively with the [National Police Chiefs' Council](#), the Home Office, Border Force, the National Crime Agency, HM Revenue & Customs, Immigration Enforcement and the Joint Maritime Security Centre to investigate criminal offences associated with small boat arrivals at the Kent border.

The initiative makes sure that people arriving are subject to enhanced checks, which are processed quickly and efficiently. People who are identified as offenders are arrested, evidence is obtained and there is improved [intelligence](#) gathering. The operation aims to disrupt organised immigration crime and protect vulnerable people from [trafficking and exploitation](#).

## **The force uses appropriate measures to safeguard vulnerable people and reduce any risk from offenders**

The force uses preventative orders and schemes to manage risk and protect vulnerable people. In 15 of the 15 relevant cases we reviewed, the force considered preventative orders to reduce the risk of further harm to victims. These included [Domestic Violence Protection Notices](#), [Domestic Violence Protection Orders](#), [Domestic Abuse Protection Orders](#) and [Stalking Protection Orders](#). This shows that the force is using all available tools to safeguard victims. Processes for monitoring and enforcing these orders are now well established.

The force operates disclosure schemes such as the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme and the Child Sex Offender Disclosure Scheme in compliance with national statutory guidance, with timely disclosure to applicants. This empowers individuals to make informed decisions about their relationships and personal safety.

The force has recognised the need to improve its approach to ‘right to know’ under the Domestic Violence Disclosure Scheme. In the year ending 31 March 2025, the force received 1 request for information per 10,000 population, which means its application rate is lower than expected. At the time of our inspection, responsibility for the scheme was spread across multiple teams, but the force has since improved its approach. Responsibility for the scheme is now centralised, which has improved governance and capacity. The force should monitor performance to make sure that more victims are protected through disclosure.

## **The force doesn’t always record crimes committed against vulnerable victims effectively**

The force should improve its recording of crimes committed against vulnerable people. In our quality service review, we examined 50 records involving referrals made to the force about vulnerable adults and child protection cases, 49 incidents involving victims of domestic abuse, 50 reported incidents of rape and 18 decisions to cancel crimes of rape. We found the following:

- Vulnerable adult and child protection cases: 29 crimes should have been recorded, and 25 were recorded correctly.
- Domestic abuse incidents: 35 crimes should have been recorded, and all 35 crimes were recorded correctly.
- Reported incidents of rape: 1 crime of rape wasn’t recorded correctly but was classified as an [N100](#) record.
- Cancelled crimes of rape: 16 out of 18 crimes were cancelled correctly.

It is especially important that the force accurately records crimes involving vulnerable victims. It is equally important to cancel crimes only when it is convinced that no crime was committed. Recording and cancelling crimes correctly helps to make sure victims receive the service and support they expect and deserve from the police. If the force doesn't record or cancel crimes correctly, offenders may go on to commit further crimes against their victims or against other vulnerable victims.

**When working with partners, the force doesn't always consider additional ways to safeguard and protect vulnerable people and challenge offenders**

When working with partners, including social services, health providers and the Probation Service, the force doesn't consider all appropriate ways to safeguard vulnerable people and challenge offenders. In four of six cases we reviewed, the force didn't refer the case to the [multi-agency risk assessment conference](#) or make [multi-agency tasking and co-ordination](#) arrangements. This means that the force and partners couldn't create a multi-agency plan to reduce the harm to [high-risk domestic abuse](#) victims or their children and manage the risk from offenders.

The force told us that some cases not heard under these formal arrangements were still subject to professional discussion at a monthly vulnerability board. This is held in each division with key partners. The community safety partnership chairs the meeting. It involves representatives from various services including housing, health, mental health, drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse and social care. Any agency can refer cases for consideration. The process is robust and considers both victims and perpetrators. Plans for individuals are agreed, and actions and responsibilities are set. These are then kept under review until they are completed.

# Managing fraud

## Adequate

Kent Police is adequate at managing fraud.

### Innovative practice

#### **The force uses multi-agency fraud panels to help tackle fraud in its communities**

The force holds a bi-monthly, multi-agency fraud panel, which is well attended by partner agencies such as the local authority, trading standards and the National Crime Agency. This meeting is effective in sharing information between partner agencies and is used to discuss emerging trends and promote collaborative problem-solving.

During our inspection, we found that this was particularly effective at sharing protect messaging, which is part of the [4P approach](#), across multiple agencies and with local communities through various communication methods.

### Areas for improvement

#### **To fully understand how fraud affects its communities and the response needed, the force needs effective governance for all fraud offences**

We found that the force had no single governance structure in place for fraud. Specialist fraud teams, the force's fraud protect response and the response to volume fraud are all viewed in isolation.

This means that the force can't fully understand how fraud is affecting its communities or the response needed. The force is implementing a new Microsoft Power BI dashboard to help in bringing this information together in the future. It should make sure this provides the additional data expected and that it implements effective governance for all fraud offences.

## **The force should make sure it has the capacity to effectively review and support fraud investigation**

We found that the force relied on its fraud triage team to review and allocate all fraud investigations. Due to volume and capacity issues, fraud crimes are being allocated with either little guidance or without consideration of the [fraud investigation model](#). And in some cases, the team allocates crimes that should have been closed.

When reports are made, the force provides specialist support to call takers and frontline [officers](#). Specialist officers also provide support to ongoing investigations. But this isn't proactive, and investigators have to ask for help. In our workforce survey, we found that less than half of respondents involved in the investigation of fraud (159 of 339) felt adequately supported in their work.

The force uses an allocation model that doesn't consider the complexity of the crime but is instead based on how the allegation was sent. This may lead to investigations being allocated to officers without sufficient capability or specialist resources not being used effectively.

## **Main findings**

In this section, we set out our main findings that relate to how good the force is at managing fraud.

### **The force has enough capacity and capability to manage fraud in its communities and provide support to victims**

During our inspection, we found that force had enough capacity and capability to manage fraud. It has a dedicated 4P plan for fraud and additional 4P plans for high-threat fraud, for example [courier fraud](#). There is a dedicated fraud investigation team that effectively manages complex cases using the fraud investigation model. The force has an effective response to serious and organised fraud perpetrators and uses proactive tactics to target them. The fraud investigation team also provides some support for non-complex fraud cases.

We found that there wasn't enough training in place for officers and [staff](#) in the [control room](#) and those that carry out investigations. And in our workforce survey, 70.5 percent of respondents involved in managing fraud (239 of 339) told us that they hadn't received training on managing, responding to and investigating fraud cases. At the time of our inspection, the force had a training plan for the coming year. But it should make sure that it trains officers and staff to respond effectively to fraud incidents.

**The force works with multi-agency partners to safeguard and reduce the risk of harm to victims of fraud that the National Fraud Intelligence Bureau and other sources identify**

The force provides training and supporting documents to help call takers and frontline officers in responding to [vulnerable](#) fraud [victims](#). But we found that victims didn't always receive a consistent response and frontline officers didn't always use the supporting documents.

The force has a well-established prevent and protect team that makes sure all victims receive fraud-related advice. Fraud co-ordinators give bespoke advice based on the victim's needs and any vulnerabilities.

The force uses preventative orders to reduce the risk of reoffending. These orders are considered as part of the force's 4P approach to fraud.

The force works actively with its communities to provide preventative fraud messaging. However, this work isn't based on the risk in local communities or the demographics of the people most at risk of fraud. The force should make more effective use of its resources and activity by making sure it has a targeted and [intelligence](#)-led approach.

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