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Update from Surrey Police Chief Constable Lynne Owens



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Amongst the budget cuts, inspection reports and other daily pressures it could be possible to lose sight of the most crucial part of public service and one that motivates me to come to work and work hard every day. This is the difference we in Surrey Police are able to make to the lives of the Surrey public now, and what legacy we can leave behind. The challenge has never been greater to perform by pursuing criminals, preventing crime and protecting the vulnerable from harm, but with a reducing budget. Where there is a collective responsibility to undertake this activity (such as within the protection of children from sexual exploitation which can only be achieved by the police, parents, social care, schools and others working together with the child) it is important that the impact of resourcing decisions are understood by all within the partnership. At a time of shrinkage, public services need to shrink together so that the most vulnerable in our society can be protected.

Although the full extent of child sexual exploitation (CSE) is unknown, reports are increasing and investment is required in the police and wider public service response to it.

The first National Child Sexual Exploitation awareness day took place on 18 March and we ran two events for parents and business leaders from across the county. They featured the powerful drama 'Chelsea's Choice' and a presentation from two parents of CSE victims. It was fantastic that more than 500 people were able to attend. Alongside others, I pledged our commitment to tackling CSE as part of the national #HelpingHands social media awareness campaign because we all need to do more. No areas of the U.K. are immune to this child abuse and I urge you all to learn about the warning signs and share them within your organisations or communities.

More information is available on our [website](#).

Lynne Owens

Protecting vulnerable people within our custody

Earlier this month, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) published their national report into the welfare of vulnerable people in police custody (including those suffering from mental health issues, children and those from a black or minority ethnic background). Surrey was one of six forces subject to unannounced inspections by the HMIC and our activities informed their findings.

I am pleased to report that it found that the vast majority of vulnerable people are detained appropriately and treated with care and respect. We are, of course, committed to improving standards further and one of the major ways this can happen is by ensuring that those subject to powers of detention due to their mental health are not kept in a police cell. As I have championed many times before, it is not the right environment for anyone suffering a mental health crisis.

In Surrey we have made a lot of progress in this area and HMIC praised how we monitor and manage the demands of Surrey hospitals who request police assistance. They were also positive about us having mental health professionals in our contact centre and control room, to ensure members of the public get the right response and that our officers and staff can take action, or not as the case may be, upon the best advice. The number of people detained by Surrey Police under the Mental Health Act and taken directly to a health facility for assessment and treatment instead of a police custody suite is increasing rapidly.

Surrey's Appropriate Adult Volunteer Scheme, a partnership project headed by the Diocese of Guildford Department for Social Responsibility and funded by Surrey County Council, Adult Services and the Surrey Youth Justice Service was also identified as a highly valued service in the report. SAAVS offers impartial support to vulnerable adults and young people who find themselves in police custody. As an additional level of independent oversight and transparency, Independent Custody Visitors also regularly make random visits to our three custody suites and speak to detainees to ensure they are being treated in the best way possible.

Whereas a lot of the HMIC recommendations include increasing bureaucracy through data production, I am pleased we are making a tangible difference through our own actions and the support of partners within health and social care. Momentum is still required before all the public services can truly say that all our vulnerable members of society are being treated by the most appropriate professionals within the best environments.

This was the third visiting HMIC inspection in Surrey already this year (they have the benefit of budget growth). Two more have been undertaken based upon statistics and other information that we have supplied and we are anticipating a further two visits over the next month. I will be sure to keep you updated on their judgment of how we perform.

Maintaining our vigilance

The recent horrific incidents of terrorism in Sydney, Paris, Denmark and of course last year's attack in Woolwich bring home how individuals and communities can be vulnerable to the extreme actions of lone or small groups of terrorists. This extends to people who may be bent on violence or taking life without such ideology or motivation. In previous bulletins I have commented upon the national and local police response and our activity and planning for the future continues in earnest. It is so important that, over the passage of time (of whatever length) organisations, residents and visitors remain vigilant to suspicious activities, tensions and extremism within our communities. It is all too easy to forget when the atrocities are not happening on our own doorsteps. It is important that you alert us to any concerns as soon as possible and this can be done directly to Surrey Police or via the Anti-terrorism hotline 0800 789321.

We have specially trained Counter Terrorism Security Advisers (CTSAs) who can provide advice to businesses that could be at risk from terrorist activity, particularly those in crowded places. If you feel that your company could benefit from Counter Terrorism Security Advice, which is provided free of charge, your local CTSA can be contacted by emailing ctsa@surrey.pnn.police.uk or calling **01483 639871**. More information on security advice can be found on our [website](#).

There is no doubt that often simple, proactive measures and good planning within the workplace and the home will help to prevent crime of any sort, not just terrorism. It can also offer reassurance and maintain safety in the event of other catastrophic events such as fire or flooding.

Tackling corruption

Accompanied by some unhelpful headlines, there has been some recent media focus about serving police officers who have criminal convictions. Prior to joining Surrey Police, all potential officers and staff undergo a series of thorough checks carried out by the Force Vetting Unit. Since 2008, the force's policy has been that anyone with a criminal conviction applying to be a police officer will be rejected unless exceptional circumstances apply.

Previously Surrey Police followed the Home Office guidance, in that all convictions and cautions were considered on their individual merits. Factors such as the severity of the offence and the time since it happened influenced whether an application would be successful. Therefore a small number of officers who joined the force a number of years ago have previous convictions or cautions.

In order to maintain public confidence and transparency, in 2013 we amended our force policy to publicly name any serving officer or member of staff who is charged with a criminal offence, unless there are exceptional circumstances which prevent this.

Police officers must uphold and respect the law and high standards of personal behaviour are required from them.

Operational Successes

We are continuing to see operational successes in many of our force priorities. Just a few of these are illustrated below:

- A man convicted in 2013 for his part in a "boiler room" scam (bogus stockbrokers' cold calling people and pressuring them to buy worthless or non-existent shares) has been issued a confiscation order to the value of £130,000. Simon Neil Tucker, 34, appeared at the Central Criminal Court on 24 February. If he defaults on the payment he will get an extra sentence of three years. The Judge instructed that the confiscated money should be paid to victims as compensation. Tucker was also given a ten-year Financial Reporting Order that requires him to provide details of income, assets and expenditure on a regular basis. This is the fourth and final confiscation order from this operation (Operation Quill) which has secured orders totalling £248,756.26.
 - A 33-year-old man has been charged with stealing one million Swiss francs from a Spelthorne based company. Officers were alerted to the theft of a 'brick' of mint condition francs, which is equivalent to £680,000, by a currency exchange service. Following enquiries, police located the missing money at a lock and store facility in the Hounslow area of Middlesex. Kassahun Biru was charged with theft and appeared at South West Surrey Magistrates Court in Guildford where he was remanded in custody.
 - A mother and her partner have been charged with several offences following a Surrey Police investigation into the death of a young child in Egham last year. Officers were alerted by staff at St Peter's Hospital in Chertsey after the young girl, who was approaching her second birthday, was admitted with serious injuries on Wednesday, 28 May 2014. She was later transferred to St George's Hospital in Tooting but sadly died on Thursday, 29 May. Detectives from the Surrey and Sussex Major Crime Team subsequently launched a murder investigation and a man and woman were arrested in connection with the death. Following an extensive investigation Kirsty Lee, 25, of Grove Close in Windsor and Alistair Wayne Bowen, 35, of Drayton Road in Luton have both been charged with causing or allowing the death of a child and causing or allowing serious physical harm to a child contrary to the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims
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Act 2004.

- A 16-year-old boy was sentenced to a total of 15 years after pleading guilty to one charge of rape, one charge of attempted rape, one charge of sexual assault by touching and two charges of assault by penetration. The boy, who pleaded guilty to all five charges at an earlier hearing in October 2014, was ordered to serve six years in prison and nine years on licence and will also be placed on the Sex Offender Register. The victim of the attack, a 48-year-old woman, was walking along a footpath in the vicinity of Esher Road and Pennyhill Park Hotel in Bagshot around 2.50pm on Friday, 27 June when the boy approached her and physically attacked her before sexually assaulting and raping her. He fled after she screamed for help.
- Six people have been charged following the discovery of around 33kg of suspected class A drugs worth an estimated £1.6million at a property in Caterham. They have been remanded in custody to appear at Guildford Crown Court later this month.
- A motorist who drove through Camberley with a man clinging to the bonnet of his car has been jailed for 14 months. Grzegorz Musial was sentenced after pleading guilty to causing grievous bodily harm, dangerous driving, driving without insurance and failing to stop at the scene of an accident. You can see the video here: <http://youtu.be/EeGIFy6aoGo>
- A man who wielded a screwdriver at customers in a restaurant is behind bars for ten months after off-duty Surrey Police officers disarmed him. Roads Policing officer PC Ian Nash and his wife Detective Constable Gemma Nash from Staines CID were enjoying a meal at Raj Cuisine in The Broadway, Woodham, on 28 February when the incident happened. They heard screams from the bar area of the restaurant at 10.15pm where Nicholas James Wilkins had assaulted a customer with a screwdriver. The duo leapt to action believing he had a knife and together unarmed the 46-year-old.

Key diary dates

For details of Neighbourhood Panel meetings, Police Surgeries and 'Meet the Beat' sessions in your neighbourhood, visit our [website](#)

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