

Update from Surrey Police Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave

January 2017



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Last month I shared with you some reflections from my first year as Chief Constable, outlining some of our achievements and some of the challenges we have faced.

This month, as we begin the New Year, I want to update you on an area that I would like to be a positive long term legacy for Surrey. I want to ensure our Force is representative of the communities we serve in Surrey, and that we are championing equality and diversity both in the organisation and in our engagement with the public.

Chief Constable Nick Ephgrave

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Representation

When you look at policing nationally it is clear that there is more work to be done to ensure we have a diverse, representative workforce, and this is a challenge that we share here in Surrey. By taking action and working closely with the breadth of our communities, we hope to encourage those who may not have traditionally thought of policing as a career to join us, whilst simultaneously working hard to retain our black and minority ethnicity officers and staff.

We have a well-established Surrey Police Association of Culture and Ethnicity (SPACE) whose members, alongside senior officers, will be spending time throughout the year visiting educational establishments and attending local community events to meet with the public. This will be an opportunity to tell them about the work we do and highlight the opportunities available for joining or working with us either as a police officer, police staff or even a member of our Independent Advisory Group (IAG) who are a critical friend to the Force, providing advice and a different perspective on diversity and community issues.

Having a representative workforce benefits both the Force and the Surrey public, it allows us to gain access into those within our communities who we haven't always had strong links with, helping us to understand the issues they are facing and how we can help, as well as building trust. Ultimately, this will mean that we can be there when they need us most.

In Surrey we want to be better at demonstrating the significance that we place on the inclusivity of our workforce. In August last year we were recognised in the Inclusive Top 50 UK Employers list and were ranked 28. We were the fourth highest police force to be included out of almost 100 submissions and I am incredibly proud of this achievement.

Stonewall rating

I am also delighted to announce that Surrey Police has been ranked in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index for 2017. The index formally recognises organisations, both private and public sector, who are demonstrating and championing Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT+) equality in the workplace. It is the first time we have been part of the index so I am incredibly proud that we have been ranked 176 out of over 400 organisations that took part.

This is an important step for us and recognises the dedicated work that goes into ensuring equality in all areas of our Force. Our inclusion in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index 2017 is just one of the ways we are working towards creating a culture where people can feel comfortable to be their true selves at work, and we will be taking their recommendations on board to help ensure we can become even better when it comes to LGBT+ equality.

Operational successes

Just some of our recent successes have included:

- 100 drivers were arrested over the Christmas period as part of the anti-drink and drug driving campaign. Half of those arrested have already been charged with drink related offences and are due at, or have already been to court. Of the remaining drivers, 42 remain on bail pending further enquiries, six face no further action and two will be summonsed to court.
- A corrupt NHS official who accepted bribes of £80,000 in exchange for awarding lucrative IT contracts has been jailed for three and a half years at Guildford Crown Court. The man who paid him the bribe received a 14 month sentence. Surrey Police is now seeking a Confiscation Order to recover the costs of the contracts.
- Three girls have pleaded guilty to assaulting a teenage girl with a crowbar at a Guildford park last year. A 14-year-old girl was left with a head injury, a slight fracture to the nose, bruised ribs and two black eyes following the incident. The girls await sentencing on 17 February.
- A 34-year-old man has been sentenced to 18 months in prison for a burglary in Godalming. The man, who posed as a police officer, stole £200 worth of Euro notes and a pearl necklace.
- A 49-year-old landowner has been fined £500 and ordered to pay costs of £700 when two horses strayed from her land on the A3. The horses were in a collision with four vehicles which caused life changing injuries to four people and led to the death of the horses.

Officer sentencing

I need to share with you the news that a Surrey Police officer has been convicted of sex offences and sentenced to seven and a half years in prison. PC David Harriott appeared for trial at Winchester Crown Court on 16 January and was sentenced for the following charges, two counts of sexual assault of a child under age 13, one count of assault of a child under 13 by penetration, one count of causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity, and seven counts of making indecent photographs of a child. These are shocking crimes and are completely in conflict with the moral standards we expect of our officers. As you can imagine we have taken this extremely seriously and PC Harriott remains suspended pending the outcome of misconduct proceedings, which will now be fast tracked.



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