



Update from Surrey Police Chief Constable Lynne Owens



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This month's bulletin starts on a positive note, as I am pleased to tell you about some areas where our service to the public has improved. Our determined focus on burglary means that the chance of becoming a victim in this county continues to fall (following the trend of the last few years). Burglaries have reduced by 21% in the financial year to date compared to the same period last year. In recent weeks, a focus on investigating serious sexual offences has led to a significant rise in the number of these terrible crimes where the offender is charged or cautioned. We are still striving to improve further in this area, but this is good news as by getting more offenders convicted we are bringing justice to their victims as well as preventing others from becoming victims in the future.

Similarly, we have responded to your feedback about our call answering performance for 101 non-emergency calls, as you will be aware that we have had significant challenges over the last year. This has also improved, albeit we think there is more to do. One of the challenges we have is that a certain volume of calls we get are not about policing issues. For example, we are still picking up a lot of calls to 101 - especially out of normal office hours - about responsibilities that are the primary responsibility of partners. This is something which collectively we need to help the public understand so they get the service they need from the right people.

Lynne Owens

In the news

There rarely seems a time when policing is not under the media microscope and many of you will have no doubt seen national headlines over the past few weeks concerning the approach other forces are taking in dealing with local policing, burglary and drugs.

As an organisation we have made significant savings and the Government is currently consulting on a further reduction (of between 25-35%) for the September spending review. The reality is that an organisation which is more than 50% smaller will have to do things differently and, in some instances, less in the future.

So it is with interest that I have been reading the national coverage of different Forces' stances on growing cannabis, the trial of taking forensics for attempted break-ins only at even-numbered houses and the prospect that police officers may no longer attend burglaries.

You may have read that Surrey is one of a number of forces reported to be 'going soft' on cannabis. The truth is our policy has not changed in this area.

We have always encouraged officers to use discretion when dealing with cannabis. You would expect us to prioritise a known criminal caught with cannabis, or an organised crime group linked to people trafficking and modern slavery setting up large scale factories in our communities, above a teenager caught smoking the class C drug. The former would require determined prosecution and the latter probably education and advice.

Only last month officers executed a warrant at a rented property in Camberley following information received from members of the public and discovered a large scale cannabis factory which had been dismantled.

In the same way nothing has changed with regards to our aim of reducing and detecting burglary offences. From a Surrey perspective, domestic burglary has long been a priority area and the Force has made significant strides in reducing the number of offences (as I have highlighted above). The improved number of convictions last year has led to reduced levels of burglary being reported so far in 2015, and this work will continue to further protect our residents.

Policing is currently focused on being more efficient with the tightening resources we have and we are taking a long hard look at what we have traditionally dealt with and what we need to do differently to meet the challenge of changing crime patterns.

We need to ask ourselves how we can make our processes and systems less complicated and therefore cheaper. We need to find tangible examples of where operational practice could change and these may not always be popular.

Policing is important and we know remains much valued by the public. The challenge for police leaders is how to secure informed, honest and serious public debate without the hysteria.

Over the next month or two we hope to use this bulletin (among other routes) to have those conversations with you – our key stakeholders - and the wider public.

Partnership scheme wins national award

I'm pleased to report that a youth intervention scheme, run jointly by the Force and Surrey County Council, has been recognised in the prestigious Restorative Justice category at the recent Howard League for Penal Reform's National Community Awards.

Under the scheme, dedicated officers working closely with youth support service specialists are engaging with young people and victims to prevent re-offending. The key to the initiative's success is the close partnership working that focuses on putting the needs and wishes of victims at the heart of the criminal justice system. We know the scheme is working well as the feedback from victims is overwhelmingly positive and levels of re-offending across the county have dropped dramatically since it was introduced.

Funding for cameras

Some more good news: the Force has been awarded £20,000 Community Infrastructure Levy funding by Elmbridge Borough Council to be used for installing extra Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras in the borough. The cameras will be invaluable in helping officers tackle criminals travelling in to the borough as they scan vehicle number plates against information we have on cars connected to criminality.

The neighbourhood team worked closely with the Surrey and Sussex Finance Team to apply for the funding and this is the first successful application using Community Infrastructure Levy in Surrey and Sussex. Officers are working with a number of local authorities to consider further bids.

Operational successes

When crime does happen we are there catching those responsible and making sure they are brought to justice. While the bulletin can never give you the true scale of where we have been making an impact, I hope it gives you a snapshot of what we are up to and the hard work of my offices and staff:

- A chain of London drug dealers has been dismantled thanks to the close working relationship between the Force's Serious and Organised Crime Unit and the National Crime Agency. Six men have been sentenced to a total of over 40 years following the discovery of around 33kg of cocaine with a potential street value of £6.3 million. Officers from both Surrey Police and the NCA stopped three vehicles, each containing drugs, after they were seen leaving a property on Croydon Road in Caterham. The following day six men were charged with possession of a class A drug with intent to supply.
- A complex joint investigation between the Force and the Federation Against Copyright Theft has seen two fraudsters jailed for three and a half years for illegally selling on access to Premier League football coverage. The duo had obtained hundreds of domestic use only BSkyB cards which they then sold on to commercial premises, including pubs and betting shops. The fraud represented a loss of earnings to BSkyB of over half a million pounds. Further action against the pair will be taken under the Proceeds of Crime Act to confiscate anything they acquired as a result of the fraud.
- A 50-year-old man has been jailed for 12 years after admitting a string of non-recent sexual offences against two teenage boys in Surrey, south west London and Hertfordshire. He pleaded guilty to a total of 28 charges. He will also be on the Sex Offenders Register for life.
- A teenager, who pleaded guilty to causing grievous bodily harm with intent, has been jailed for nine years for a drugs-related knife attack in Guildford. Detectives trawled through hours of CCTV footage to piece together the offender's movements, enabling them to successfully search for the knife, which had his DNA on it and had been used in the attack.
- Anti-social behaviour has been robustly tackled in conjunction with partners, resulting in a Closure Order and two Criminal Behaviour Orders (CBO) being handed out this month. The Closure was obtained on a property in Slyfield, Guildford after numerous reports of serious nuisance, including criminal and disorderly behaviour. A CBO was handed to a 22-year-old man, banning him from an area of Walton-on-Thames for two years, while a second Walton man was given a five year CBO after he made nuisance and abusive phone calls to our 999 operators and call handlers. He was also given a six week prison sentence, suspended for 12 months.

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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