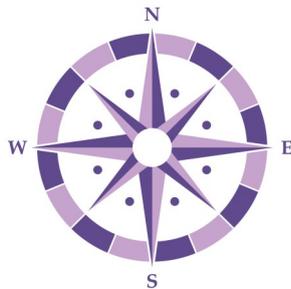


MAY/JUNE 2015 NEWSLETTER

Official opening for Compass House, Kent's hub of victims' services



Compass House

Victim and witness care and advice service

On Friday 12 June the Commissioner welcomed people to the official launch of [Compass House](#), a ground-breaking initiative which ensures victims and witnesses receive the best possible care and support.

The centre in Ashford has been providing services to people across Kent since it opened its doors in April. It was borne out of the joint vision of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Constable of Kent Police which puts victims and witnesses at the heart of all they do.

Mrs Barnes said: 'I am delighted Compass House is up and running, having been delivered by my office on time and on budget. It has come about thanks to the Ministry of Justice devolving responsibility for victims' services to Police and Crime Commissioners. Kent received an £829,000 contract and I grabbed the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to make a difference with both hands.'

'At Compass House, trained staff and volunteers from the independent charity [Victim Support](#) now work under the same roof as the Kent Police Witness Care Unit. More victims of crime are being offered help, from rape victims to people who have suffered low-level criminal damage or bicycle theft. They are all victims of crime and all deserve the best possible support which is why the help they receive is tailored to each individual's needs rather than a one size fits all approach.'

'For too long victims have been the 'Cinderellas' of the criminal justice system – the last people agencies thought about – when they should be the most important people. Without them there is no justice.'

'Compass House is a step towards putting victims where they belong, at the heart of the criminal justice system.'

To ensure Compass House met the genuine needs of people in Kent, a Victims' Panel was brought together to share its ideas and real-life experiences. It even came up with the name Compass House – which reflects the fact the centre points people to whatever services individual people need.

Kent Police Chief Constable Alan Pughsley said: 'I'm hugely impressed with what I've seen here at Compass House.'

'Our Witness Care Unit does a great job helping witnesses through the process of preparing to give evidence at court. Witnesses are then able to give their evidence to court via live video links in the fantastic surroundings here at Compass House, which is so much better than them having to attend court.'

The [Victims' Commissioner](#) Baroness Newlove was among 40 people who attended the launch event, at the centre in Tuffon Street.

She said: 'I know only too well that while no two victims are the same, they often share some similar experiences of the criminal justice system. Victims don't want to be pushed from pillar to post, they want to be helped by people who are patient, knowledgeable and consistent.'

'I support what the Compass House is trying to achieve. By actively listening to what victims are saying, the service will be able to deliver a genuinely joined up approach to victim care and respond to victims as individuals to be supported, rather than as cases to be processed.'

Mark Castle, the Chief Executive Officer of the charity Victim Support, which was awarded the contract to provide services to victims, said: 'We speak to thousands of victims of crime every year in Kent, so we know it can be difficult to talk about what's happened or to ask for help.'

'Crime can have a devastating impact and the fallout can be stressful and overwhelming. The support we give to victims of crime is essential to the criminal justice system. Without their evidence or testimony, offenders cannot be brought to justice.'

'I am glad Ann has invested in our service, to strengthen the response that victims can expect if they experience an awful crime.'



Police dog handlers and their canine partners receive Long Service Awards



Eight police dog handlers and their canine partners from Kent Police's Dog Unit have received awards to recognise their partnership and commitment to policing in Kent.

Each duo who received an award from the Police and Crime Commissioner has worked together for at least five years in roles including forensic evidence capture and drug, cash and firearms searches. Together, they have contributed to the recovery of millions of pounds worth of illegal substances, cash and stolen property around the county and the apprehension of many dangerous offenders.

Speaking about the event, Mrs Barnes said: 'It is very important to me that the dedicated, specialist service the Dog Unit gives to local communities is formally recognised.'

'This unique recognition is well deserved, especially as several of these animals are rescue dogs who were destined for very different lives indeed. The dogs play such a wonderful supporting role to our officers; from helping to find missing people to recovering weapons and drugs, leading to successful convictions in court.'

One partnership to receive an award was that of PC Nigel Marshall and his six-year-old spaniel, Gus. During Gus's career he has located over £50,000 in cash, three genuine firearms and a range of Class A drugs with a street value of over £100,000.

PC Marshall added: 'It is an absolute privilege to work alongside and care for our canine partners whose safety is always our first priority.'

'On many occasions our dogs have to be placed into dangerous situations to bring offenders to justice and keep the people of Kent safe. For our dogs to be recognised in such a way is so rewarding especially as they are often the unsung heroes in the individual handler's success.'

Annual Report highlights work of OPCC

The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner has published its second [Annual Report](#), which details good work undertaken over the past 12 months, in "record quick time".

Commissioner Ann Barnes said: 'The purpose of the report is to show progress against my policing priorities for 2014/15. Despite the financial challenges faced by Kent Police, which are set to continue, officers and staff have worked tirelessly to maintain and where possible improve the first class service provided to the people of Kent.'

Among the achievements for the year 2014/15 listed in the report are:

- Opening [Compass House](#), on time and on budget, to provide an enhanced service to victims and witnesses crime in Kent;
- The work of the [Youth Commissioner](#), who engaged with hundreds of young people and created a report to shape future youth engagement;
- Creating a new policing model which provides greater flexibility in deploying local resources, with an emphasis on visible community policing;
- Improvements to the deployment of [Mobile Police Stations](#), with a dedicated team of PCSOs assuming responsibility for the scheme;
- Hosting a Rural Crime Conference and the launch of a Rural Task Force;
- And piloting the use of officers' Body-Worn Video equipment to deliver swifter justice for victims and reduce complaints against officers.

Delivering value for money during financial austerity

Kent's Police and Crime Commissioner has pledged to continue to protect visible policing and put victims first despite the financial challenge Kent Police faces.

Mrs Barnes said: 'My office is responsible for managing the force's budget and ensuring the public gets [value for money](#).

'Forces across the country are having to cut costs but in Kent the Chief Constable and I share a vision which means the two overarching principles of my [Police and Crime Plan](#) – visible community policing and ensuring victims are at the heart of the criminal justice system – will not be compromised.'

On 2 June, Mrs Barnes presented a [paper](#) to the [Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel](#) which demonstrated how careful the force was being with its cash.

She outlined how savings had been made by managing the demands on the force, by making better use of technology and innovation such as piloting the use of officers' Body Worn Video, by sharing back office costs with Essex Police and by sharing the cost of a new intelligence-sharing system with six other forces. But where her office identifies potential waste, she will challenge the Chief Constable in public at their Governance Board meetings.

Mrs Barnes told the Kent and Medway Police and Crime Panel: 'We can't get away from the fact that cuts will have inevitable consequences. There will be difficult choices in the years to come but, whatever happens, putting victims and witnesses first and protecting visible community policing must be protected.'

Commissioner's Fund helps addicts escape life of drink and drugs



A local charity which provides support for those in recovery from a drug or alcohol addiction has received a £2000 grant from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner.

Aspire2be – based in Maidstone – sees between 50 and 75 people each week and is using the money for activities to help with addiction recovery, including a bowling club, a music group and other social events.

Following a visit to the charity – which took place during Volunteers' Week – Mrs Barnes said: 'My [Commissioner's Fund](#) is all about supporting local organisations that seek to prevent and reduce offending as well as cutting crime and anti-social behaviour.

'These activities support a wider programme of recovery to help people change their behaviours and become active participants in society.'

I was very impressed by what I saw and am delighted to have helped in this small way.'

Martyn Nicholls, Co-Chair of Aspire2be, commented: 'The grant from the Commissioner has allowed us to run groups and activities that would simply not have been possible otherwise.'

'These events mean that those seeking recovery can start to do things they enjoy and begin to build a normal life for themselves.'

Dr Marcus Colman, from the Aspire2be board of trustees, added: 'One of the hardest parts of escaping from a life of addiction to drugs and alcohol is finding new friends and a safe environment to have fun in whilst remaining sober.'

'The funding that we have received from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner has allowed us to put on activities that show that you do not need drink or drugs to have fun.'

Commissioner helps war against pickpocketing in Dover



An initiative to tackle pickpocketing in Dover which was partially funded by a grant from the Commissioner has been a success.

After establishing that theft was on the rise in Dover town centre, the [Dover Partnership Against Crime](#) (DPAC) commissioned a [short film](#) to highlight how pickpockets operate, putting it in locations across the district – such as local banks, Age Concerns and nightclubs – to raise awareness.

The 'Put Pockets' film – supported by the Dover Community Policing Team – shows a magician putting smartphone-sized Crimestoppers cards into the open bags and pockets of shoppers. The message is clear: it's just as easy to take something out of a pocket or bag as it is to put something in.

Karen Griffiths, DPAC scheme co-ordinator, said: 'We are extremely grateful to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Kent Police for allowing us to push this project forward. We have had a marked reduction in reported 'purse dippings' locally and we are sure that this is as a direct result of the Put Pockets campaign.'

After visiting Dover Partnership Against Crime, Mrs Barnes said: 'I think the Put Pockets initiative is fantastic. It ticks all the boxes of what my [Commissioner's Fund](#) is all about – giving grants to projects which empower local communities to work together, make a difference and prevent and reduce crime.'

'Dover Partnership Against crime identified a local problem and a need to make people aware of how to protect themselves against becoming a victim of crime and I am delighted that as a result they are receiving fewer reports of incidents of this nature in the town.'