

Crime and Safety Round-Up: April and May 2026

5 June 2026



April and May proved to be unusually busy months for Surrey Police and community safety partners in Epsom and Ewell, with a mixture of high-profile investigations, anti-social behaviour enforcement, retail crime initiatives and public engagement events.

The most significant policing story of the period centred on a reported serious sexual assault in Epsom during the early hours of 11 April. Surrey Police launched a major investigation following a report that a woman in her twenties had been assaulted after leaving a town centre nightclub. Extensive enquiries were carried out, including CCTV examination, witness interviews, forensic work and house-to-house enquiries. By mid-April, Assistant Chief Constable Sarah Grahame stated that investigators had not found evidence to support the offence as originally reported, although enquiries remained ongoing. The case attracted national media attention and prompted public demonstrations in Epsom town centre. Surrey Police repeatedly appealed for witnesses and urged the public not to speculate while investigations continued. (The Guardian)

The incident also led to a substantial police presence in the town as officers dealt with protests and concerns regarding public disorder. Local community leaders and elected representatives called for calm and urged residents to allow the investigation to proceed without interference. (The Guardian)

Away from the headlines, Surrey Police continued its borough-wide campaign against anti-social behaviour and organised criminality under the “Safer Epsom and Ewell” initiative launched earlier this year. The partnership between Surrey Police and Epsom & Ewell Borough Council has focused on tackling anti-social behaviour, serious organised crime and repeat offending in known hotspot locations. (Epsom and Ewell Borough Council)

Police teams also continued operations targeting nuisance and criminal use of motorcycles. According to local policing priorities published during the spring, officers have been using specialist teams, covert tactics, anti-social behaviour powers and multi-agency interventions to tackle riders involved in criminality and public nuisance. The strategy includes cooperation with housing providers and the use of borough-wide Public Space Protection Order powers. (Surrey Police)

Retail crime remained a major priority throughout April and May. Surrey Police’s Epsom Safer Neighbourhood Team reported that its zero-tolerance approach to shoplifting and offences against retailers was continuing to produce results. The initiative includes rapid investigation of known offenders, direct cooperation with retailers and remote CCTV operators, and proactive arrests aimed at reducing repeat offending in the town centre. (Surrey Police)

The wider “Safer Epsom and Ewell” operation reported notable results during the spring period. Police indicated that the partnership had led to more than 150 arrests, over 90 charges and the closure of ten county-lines drug networks, highlighting the continuing focus on organised criminal activity affecting local communities. (Facebook)

Community engagement remained a significant feature of local policing. Officers held a series of “Meet the Beat” events during April and May, including sessions in Epsom town centre, Ruxley Lane and at Epsom Hospital, giving residents opportunities to discuss local concerns directly with neighbourhood officers. Police also conducted public engagement work connected with violence against women and girls in the Ashley Centre area. (Surrey Police)

Latest published neighbourhood crime statistics continue to show violence and sexual offences, shoplifting and anti-social behaviour among the most frequently reported categories in parts of the borough. In Epsom & Ewell East, violence and sexual offences and shoplifting remained the most commonly recorded offences during March, the latest month for which detailed neighbourhood figures are available. (Police.uk)

Residents wishing to report crime can contact Surrey Police via 101 for non-emergencies or 999 in an emergency. Information can also be passed anonymously through Crimestoppers on 0800 555 111.

The Epsom and Ewell Times will continue to monitor local crime trends, policing initiatives and community safety developments throughout the summer.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Arrests from Epsom's April disorder

5 June 2026



Surrey Police have confirmed that **10 people have now been arrested** as part of an ongoing investigation into violent disorder in Epsom town centre earlier this month.

The arrests relate to incidents on **Wednesday 15 April and Monday 20 April**, when protests escalated into disorder in the town centre.

In a detailed update published on 5 May by Surrey Police, officers set out the ages and home areas of those arrested, showing a mix of local individuals and others from outside the immediate area.

The arrests were carried out over several days:

On 17 April, an 18-year-old man from Banstead was arrested on suspicion of public order offences.

On 20 April, a 23-year-old man from Richmond-upon-Thames was arrested on suspicion of public order offences and was further arrested on suspicion of criminal damage.

On 21 April:

- a 21-year-old man from Epsom was arrested on suspicion of public order offences
- a 20-year-old man of no fixed address was arrested on suspicion of public order offences
- a 15-year-old boy from Purley was arrested on suspicion of public order offences and further arrested on suspicion of criminal damage

On 23 April:

- a 12-year-old boy from Epsom was arrested on suspicion of public order offences
- a 12-year-old girl from Epsom was arrested on suspicion of public order offences
- an 11-year-old boy from Epsom was arrested on suspicion of public order offences

On 24 April, a 16-year-old boy from Leatherhead was arrested on suspicion of public order offences.

On 27 April, a 20-year-old man from Epsom was arrested on suspicion of public order offences.

Police confirmed that **all 10 individuals have been released on bail with conditions**, and that enquiries are continuing.

The latest update follows an earlier statement on 23 April in which five arrests were initially confirmed. At that stage, those detained were identified as a 15-year-old boy from Purley, an 18-year-old man from Banstead, a 20-year-old man of no fixed address, a 21-year-old man from Epsom, and a 23-year-old man from Richmond-upon-Thames.

Detective Chief Superintendent Jon Groenen said: "Whilst we support the right to lawful protest, we will investigate those suspected of committing criminal offences and causing damage, disruption, and disorder.

"We continue to review footage to identify those responsible and will take appropriate action against them."

The investigation remains ongoing, with officers continuing to examine CCTV, social media and body-worn video footage.

Sam Jones - Reporter



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Police confirm a female's report of Epsom gang-

rape was false

5 June 2026



In a statement issued by Surrey Police the report by a female of being the victim of rape by several men in Epsom on Saturday 11th April near the Methodist Church, was without foundation. This is the Surrey Police statement in full:

“This is an update in relation to a report of a rape in Epsom which we received in the early hours on Saturday, 11 April.

A thorough investigation, including an extensive examination of CCTV footage of the woman’s movements, house to house enquiries, interviewing witnesses and forensic tests, has been carried out. Through this examination of all evidence, we can conclude that no sexual offence occurred on this occasion, and we are closing the investigation.

What has become clear is that a woman in her 20s during a night out in Epsom, sustained an accidental head injury prior to making a confused report.

The woman involved has given us permission to share this information with you and she continues to be supported by relevant services.

To be clear, we take every report of sexual offending seriously, and any such report is treated with sensitivity. To do this, it is imperative that the appropriate time is allowed to complete a thorough investigation and support is given to the complainant to progress enquiries at their own pace. This limits what information we are able to release publicly.

At the early stages of this investigation, we issued an appeal for any witnesses or information that could help us progress our enquiries and identify any potential suspects. There was a lack of information in our initial appeal particularly regarding potential persons of interest. This was because the descriptions given were vague and limited. We recognise this caused concern amongst the community. We are now confident that there was no offence, and there were no suspects.

Our local officers will maintain a visible presence in Epsom over the coming days so please speak to them if you have any concerns or questions.”

Sam Jones - Reporter

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- Epsom and the Perils of Instant Judgement
- Surrey Police update on alleged sexual assault in Epsom
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- Epsom shock as police probe serious assault

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Surrey Police update on alleged sexual assault in Epsom

5 June 2026



Surrey Police have issued a further update following last weekend's reported incident in Epsom, stating that officers have not found evidence to support the offence as initially described, while confirming that enquiries remain ongoing.

In a statement published on the Surrey Police website, Assistant Chief Constable for Local Policing Sarah Grahame said:

“Over the past week, there has been widespread speculation and commentary regarding this report. We are aware of the strength of feeling this has created, and of the frustration caused by our limited public comment on the matter.

During this time, we have been investigating in depth to establish the sequence of events and to clarify the circumstances surrounding the reported incident. We have reviewed an extensive amount of CCTV footage from the area. We have also been interviewing potential witnesses, carrying out forensics investigations and conducting house-to-house enquiries.

To date, we have not found any evidence of the offence as reported but the investigation is ongoing.

There has been much speculation about the non-release of a description of any suspects, especially regarding the ethnicity. No descriptions have been released as the information about the incident and potential suspects is so limited. To address the specific commentary, there is no evidence that asylum seekers or immigrants were involved.

If you have any information or any CCTV, dashcam, or helmet camera footage, please contact us online, or via 101 quoting PR/45260041426.

We appreciate that you want information. We will continue to tell you as much as we can, to engage with you, to reassure you and to address concerns. We ask for space and time to work through the investigation.

There will be an increased police presence in Epsom over the weekend.” (Surrey Police)

The update follows a week of heightened concern in the town and significant public reaction. National media have also reported the same position from Surrey Police, including the finding that there is currently no evidence of the offence as reported, alongside confirmation that the investigation continues. (The Times)

Police are continuing to appeal for information from anyone who may have been in the area or who holds relevant footage.

Sam Jones - Reporter

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You Are Not Alone, Epsom Stands Against Rape

5 June 2026



It's a sunny Wednesday afternoon in Epsom, and it feels as though spring has finally arrived. People have gathered on the streets, perhaps 1,200 or more, women and men, brothers and sisters, mothers and fathers, friends, young and old, from all walks of life.

They are here because of what happened last Saturday. By now, everyone knows: a woman in her 20s was followed after leaving Labyrinth nightclub and attacked outside Epsom Methodist Church in the early hours of the morning. The story has reached national headlines, BBC, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*: **Woman in Her 20s Gang-Raped in Front of a Church with CCTV Cameras.**

I ask one of the people in the crowd what's going on: “We are here today because a young girl was raped on Saturday night, and the police are not telling us who was responsible. There is a perception that it could be immigrants, but the police need to tell us who has done it. Without that, speculation grows, and it could be one of our own. I don't want to protest against people who haven't done anything wrong, but we have to come together as a community because nobody

is telling us what is going on. That's why we are here."

I speak to a mother and her daughter, I want to know what they feel about the assault: "Our feeling is that the police need to be transparent about who is responsible, so that women and girls can feel safer, so that we know who we are dealing with. We haven't been told. We need descriptions. The police say that information available is limited. No arrests have been made. It is reported that four men attacked a young woman for two hours. If cameras are everywhere, why have there been no arrests? Why is there said to be no information, when people believe suspects may still be walking freely in Epsom?"

Some believe the police have accused the gathering of disorder in a public space. Many here ask: "What about the victim? Isn't rape a disorder?"

More police officers arrive. Eggs are thrown. Emotions are high. People care. Voices rise: "Who raped her?" The crowd chants in support of the victim, while the young police woman responds to my questions with a single phrase: "no comment."

Meanwhile a voice of authority repeats familiar words: "*My heart goes out to the young woman at the centre of this deeply distressing incident.*" It is a statement many here feel they have heard too many times to truly believe.

The Methodist Church will hold a service today, April 16th at 12.30pm. All are welcome. *Epsom and Ewell Times* will be there.

Epsom and Ewell Times is also launching a weekly series, **Epsom Safety Brief**. If you would like to be involved and share your concerns, please get in touch at: romana.epsomandewelltimes@gmail.com.

To the young woman at the centre of this: the whole town stands with you. You are not alone. Stay strong.

Coming soon:

Epsom Safety Brief is a community-driven series committed to clear, balanced reporting on crime, safety, and accountability. It seeks to highlight what is happening, ask necessary questions, and assess whether meaningful action is being taken to protect residents.

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Epsom March crime and safety round-up

5 June 2026



Policing activity across Epsom and Ewell in March 2026 saw a mix of enforcement successes, court outcomes and continued concern around acquisitive crime, drugs and community safety.

30th March an unexploded ordnance was handed in to the police counter in the Town Hall, The Parade, Epsom. The area was cordoned off until experts gave the all-clear.

Drug crime crackdown sees cash seizures in Epsom

A significant policing outcome during March was the seizure of more than £12,000 linked to criminal activity following a proactive stop by officers in Epsom. The funds, recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act, are set to be reinvested into policing.

Local police social media updates suggest this forms part of wider activity targeting drug-related offending and organised

crime in the borough, with officers using stop-and-search powers and intelligence-led patrols to disrupt offenders.

Targeted operations lead to arrests across offence types

Neighbourhood policing teams reported intensive enforcement weeks during which more than 20 arrests were made across a range of offences including burglary, theft, drugs and weapons possession. (Facebook)
These operations reflect a continued emphasis on “visible policing” and proactive interventions in hotspot areas.

Burglary and vehicle crime remain priorities

Across Surrey, two burglars were jailed in March after targeting homes to steal car keys and vehicles in early-morning break-ins.
While not limited to Epsom and Ewell, such offences remain a key policing priority locally, with residents repeatedly advised to secure vehicles and keys.

Domestic abuse and sexual offences prosecutions

March also saw several significant court outcomes across the county, including custodial sentences for domestic abuse, coercive behaviour and serious sexual offences.
Police continue to highlight safeguarding and victim support as central to their work, alongside encouraging reporting and use of protective measures such as Clare’s Law disclosures.

Community engagement and policing visibility

Residents are being invited to participate in upcoming “Policing Your Community” roadshows, aimed at gathering local concerns and shaping neighbourhood priorities.
This follows ongoing efforts in Epsom and Ewell to strengthen engagement between officers and the public.

Ongoing concerns around public safety incidents

Although outside the March reporting window, earlier incidents such as the January report of a teenage girl being approached by two men in Court Recreation Ground continue to frame community concerns about safety in public spaces. (The Sun)
Police have maintained increased visibility patrols in such areas in response.

Overall picture

Data and operational updates suggest that policing in Epsom and Ewell during March has been characterised by: targeted enforcement against drugs and organised crime; continued focus on burglary and vehicle theft; strong emphasis on safeguarding in domestic abuse and sexual offence cases; ongoing community engagement initiatives.
While Surrey remains a relatively low-crime area overall, the persistence of acquisitive crime and anti-social behaviour continues to shape local policing priorities.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Box Hill’s Zig Zag Road Leads to Straight Ban on Antisocial Riding

5 June 2026



Motorcyclists near Box Hill are being targeted despite the “vast majority” who visit the Surrey beauty spot being “considerate people who behave respectfully”. A Public Spaces Protection Order is being introduced around the National Trust site following efforts from residents in Mickleham and Westhumble over what they said was excessive noise and acts

of anti-social behaviour. Mole Valley District Council then carried out consultation on whether to make certain behaviour an offence within the defined area.

This includes, revving engines, keeping engines idling, speeding, stunts, driving in a convoy, exhaust popping or backfiring, racing, for sudden or rapid acceleration. The area covered includes the world famous Zig Zag road and the roundabout near Denbies wine estate.

The decision was taken by the council's March executive committee after 603 people, 62 per cent of those who took part in the consultation, backed the measures - compared with 29 per cent who were against and nine per cent who were undecided. It will remain in place for three years unless renewed with the council estimating it will come into effect this summer once necessary signage is installed.

Councillor Caroline Joseph (Liberal Democrat: Fetcham) said: "The consultation revealed a polarised view about whether a PSPO should be introduced ranging from citing behaviour that it disrupts residents' lives and threatening safety to viewing it as unenforceable and being harmful to local businesses and long-standing biker traditions. "Motorcycle riding at Boxhill and the surrounding area dates back to at least the 1920s from early racing and trials, and the Surrey Hills area remains a popular destination. "It is important to recognise that the vast majority of motorcyclists in this area are considerate people who behave respectfully."

Bike groups are concerned it will impact their long-standing enjoyment of the area and groups. She added: "It's not aimed at spoiling those traditions but it's meant to encourage less antisocial behaviour by those who don't respect the traditional activity of bikers in the area. "The purpose of the order is only to prohibit the behaviours that cause a public nuisance." "The introduction of the PSPO will benefit visitors to the local area and those residents and businesses whose quality of life has been affected by vehicle noise all while not affecting responsible and considerate drivers and riders who use Mole Valley's roads." The council said it was open to extending the order's coverage but would require further consultation - which would need to be done outside the upcoming election period.

Chris Caulfield LDRS

Zig Zag Road (image Google)

Epsom and Ewell February crime and safety round-up

5 June 2026



Epsom and Ewell Times does not normally report individual crime incidents. However, as part of a trial we are publishing a monthly round-up of crime and community safety developments affecting the borough, drawing on information released by Surrey Police and local authorities.

Police operation in West Ewell results in three arrests

A police operation targeting antisocial behaviour and suspected drug activity in **West Ewell** led to **three arrests** during February.

Officers from the **Epsom & Ewell Safer Neighbourhood Team**, supported by the East Surrey Neighbourhood Enforcement Team and Special Constabulary, carried out patrols around the **Watersedge estate**. During the evening operation officers conducted **11 stop-searches and two vehicle stops**, while gathering intelligence relating to drug use, drug dealing and antisocial behaviour in the area.

Police said the activity formed part of ongoing efforts to disrupt criminal activity in neighbourhood "hotspot" locations.

(Source: Surrey Police neighbourhood updates)

Missing Epsom man located safe and well

Surrey Police issued an appeal during February to help locate **Lee, a 63-year-old man reported missing from Epsom**.

Police later confirmed that he had been **found safe**, allowing the appeal to be cancelled.

(Source: Surrey Police)

Prolific thief targeting local businesses identified

Surrey Police also reported action against a **prolific offender who targeted businesses across Epsom and neighbouring areas**, including Sutton, Wallington, Cheam and Burgh Heath.

Police said the offender entered several premises and stole items including mobile phones during incidents affecting local traders.

(Source: Surrey Police neighbourhood update)

Safer Epsom & Ewell programme continues

The **Safer Epsom & Ewell** programme — a joint initiative between Surrey Police, Epsom & Ewell Borough Council and partner agencies — continued to develop during February.

The scheme focuses on areas including **Epsom town centre, Watersedge and Longmead**, using the Home Office “**Clear, Hold, Build**” approach to tackle organised crime, drug supply, acquisitive crime and antisocial behaviour. (democracy.epsom-ewell.gov.uk)

The programme combines targeted police enforcement with longer-term work involving the council and community partners to address underlying causes of crime.

(Source: Epsom & Ewell Borough Council / Surrey Police)

Crime trends in the borough

Police data for the area indicates that the **most commonly reported offences locally include violence and sexual offences, shoplifting, criminal damage and vehicle crime**. (surrey.police.uk)

Retail crime and antisocial vehicle use remain key policing priorities, with neighbourhood teams carrying out targeted patrols and working with businesses and community groups to address concerns.

(Source: Surrey Police neighbourhood statistics)

Community engagement and policing events

Neighbourhood officers continued their “**Meet the Beat**” programme during February, providing opportunities for residents to speak directly with police about local issues.

Sessions were held at locations including **Epsom Library at the Ebbisham Centre**, where residents were invited to raise concerns about crime, antisocial behaviour and community safety.

(Source: Surrey Police)

How to contact Surrey Police

- **Emergency (crime in progress or immediate danger): call 999**
- **Non-emergency police matters: call 101**
- **Online reporting and advice:** <https://www.surrey.police.uk/contact/>
- **Crimestoppers (anonymous information): 0800 555 111**

Residents are encouraged to report suspicious activity or information that may assist police investigations.

Sam Jones - Reporter



Related reports:

January crime and safety round-up

Surrey armed officers in fatal shooting to remain anonymous?

5 June 2026



A coroner will soon decide whether armed police officers involved in a fatal shooting in Surrey will have their names kept out of the public eye.

At a pre-inquest review today (February 23), Surrey's senior coroner Richard Travers said he would take "a couple of weeks" to rule on a Surrey Police application for anonymity for the firearms officers who shot 29-year-old Joel Stenning.

Mr Stenning died after being shot in the early hours of August 11, 2024, in Nursery Road, Knaphill, near Woking.

He had reportedly pointed an air rifle at officers who were called to his home following reports of a man with a gun. Mr Stenning died shortly after 7.30am on August 15 in a London hospital from "complications of a gunshot wound to the abdomen".

Mr Stenning was born in Chertsey, lived in Woking and worked as a roofer. He was remembered by the coroner, who opened proceedings by offering condolences to his parents, who were present in court.

Surrey Police, backed by the Chief Constable, applied for nine firearms officers to remain unnamed. Chief Superintendent (CSI) Justin Berkenshaw told the court that firearms officers are highly trained, voluntary specialists who deal with the "most dangerous and lethal criminals".

Naming them, he argued, could put them and their families at risk from organised crime groups and damage future careers.

"If someone gets named it cannot be undone," he said, adding that officers have faced threats and harassment in other cases nationally. He said anonymity would help officers give their "best evidence" without fear of becoming headlines.

BBC Surrey said that giving evidence is stressful for everyone in court and, given the circumstances, would expect police officers to give the best evidence possible.

CSI Berkenshaw said, due to the specialist and technical nature of highly-trained armed police officers, they are not easily replaced. He raised concerns that if the officers' names were put into the public domain, not only could it undermine their role as armed officers, it could discourage new recruits from going into armed operations and persuade current officers to give up their weapons.

CSI Berkenshaw said: "My team works extremely hard with my firearms officers to prevent knowledge of their role...this is because of the risk to the officers and their families..and to maintain an effective firearms unit."

He said he was worried naming the officers could risk Surrey Police's capability for an armed officer unit.

But lawyers for the Stenning family and BBC Surrey (on behalf of the media) opposed the move. The family's representative said there was no evidence of any threat linked to Mr Stenning's relatives or associates and warned against a "blanket" approach simply because officers were armed.

They argued open justice should not be side-lined by general policy concerns.

The family's legal representative said: "It sets an entirely new precedent setting approach in which the mere fact of the status of a firearms officer should give rise to anonymity across the board without assessment of conditions of the case."

Mr Travers noted the force's arguments were not specific to this case but could apply to any firearms incident. He will now weigh privacy and safety concerns against the principle of open justice before deciding whether the officers will be named when the full inquest begins.

The inquest, expected to be heard over four weeks in early 2027, will examine the circumstances surrounding Mr Stenning's death.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Image - purely illustration and not related in any way to this incident.

Is it a fair cop for Surrey Police to evict its tenants for no fault?

5 June 2026



A pregnant mum facing eviction from her police-owned home has said Surrey Police's latest concessions 'do not go far enough' and are "insulting", despite the force extending the moving deadline and halving rents.

Around 21 families living in properties owned by Surrey Police were served 'no fault' eviction notices, known as Section 21 notices, at the end of January. The notices gave families just 12 weeks to leave homes many believed they could stay in for the duration of their service.

In a press statement, Ms Townsend said she must ensure the force's limited housing stock is used "in the fairest way possible" across more than 4,000 officers and staff. She said her ambition is to ensure new recruits can access affordable housing so they are not deterred from joining Surrey Police.

Following criticism from tenants and politicians, Surrey Police confirmed last week that affected families will now be allowed to remain in their homes until 18 July. The force also announced a 50 per cent rent reduction until tenants move out, described as a "gesture of goodwill" from Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Lisa Townsend.

However, the pregnant mum, who asked to remain anonymous, said the changes fail to address the core issue of affordability. She said describing the rent cut as a goodwill gesture was "insulting", adding that even with reduced rent her family still needs to find around £5,500 upfront for a deposit and first month's rent, followed by monthly payments of an extra £1,500.

"We feel as if the rug has been pulled out from under our feet," she said, explaining that the family had always felt fortunate to live in police accommodation and had believed their housing situation was secure.

She said families had previously been told there were no plans to change their housing arrangements, including during refurbishment works in December 2024, when tenants were even asked to help design renovations. She added that had families been given more warning, they could have saved towards a move. "We're not sitting on pots of money," she said.

While she accepted that her household does not meet the new eligibility criteria for subsidised accommodation, which includes a joint income threshold of £80,000, she argued the policy fails to consider the retention of experienced officers. She said police officers are underpaid for being the "ones who run towards danger when everyone else runs away".

The mum said extending the deadline was better than nothing but warned the fundamental problem remains money. She said the decision risks forcing long-serving officers out of the force because they simply cannot afford to leave Surrey. She also raised concerns about the possibility of emergency temporary accommodation, warning it could split her family up and may not be safe.

She added that prioritising subsidised housing for new recruits "does not make housing in Surrey more affordable" and said the force could face the same retention problems in the future. The mum said she did not know any new officers who were homeless, while her own family now faces the prospect of sofa surfing after her baby is born.

Liberal Democrat MPs in Surrey have urged the PCC to reconsider the approach. Guildford MP Zoe Franklin said there was no "legal cliff edge" requiring evictions ahead of the introduction of the Renters' Rights law and argued police forces would still be able to recover service-linked accommodation where genuinely needed. Ms Townsend has said she has taken legal advice on the issue.

Families affected by the decision say they are now urgently searching for alternative homes and fear they will be priced out of the communities where they live and work.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Related report

Paradox of Protection policy for tenants: triggers Surrey police evictions

Surrey Police precept rising

5 June 2026



Surrey PCC

The average household in Surrey could pay more than £350 a year towards policing after a £15 council tax hike was given the go-ahead. The police precept - the portion of council tax that funds Surrey Police - will rise from £338 to £352 a year for the average Band D home from April 2026, a 4.4 per cent increase from last year.

The rise was backed by the Surrey Police and Crime Panel on February 4, despite a sharp debate over whether residents can afford it. Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Lisa Townsend said the increase was needed to prevent services from deteriorating, warning that without the full rise people could face slower answers to 999 calls, longer waits for officers to attend incidents, and delays in forensic investigations.

“For every £1 on the precept, about £0.5 million goes into the Force,” she told the panel. “That equates to around 15 police staff or officers.” Ms Townsend said Surrey Police has become “one of the most improved forces in the country” in recent years, with more visible neighbourhood policing and better performance on crimes such as burglary and vehicle theft, but rising demand and increasing costs mean those improvements are at risk.

She said: “Improvements we are seeing today have only been possible because of previous decisions to increase the policing precept. Those decisions have allowed SP to invest in officers, staff, systems and technology that are now delivering results on the ground.” According to the PCC, on an average day the force handles almost 1,700 contacts from the public and sends vehicles to almost 250 incidents. Each day 216 crimes are recorded, 33 relate to violence against women and girls, 56 are assault, and armed response officers are called out 16 times a week.

She added: “The improvements achieved so far simply cannot be sustained” without further funding.

Some councillors challenged the move. Cllr Richard Wilson said many residents in his area are struggling to afford food, heating and rent, questioned whether it was the right time to increase bills, and asked whether Surrey, as a relatively low-crime county, could manage with a smaller force.

Kelvin Menon, chief finance officer for the PCC’s office, said Surrey receives one of the lowest levels of government grant in England, making it more reliant on council tax, and warned that cutting funding would mean difficult choices about which services to scale back. He argued that although Surrey may be a ‘low-crime’ area, it is the police keeping it that way, asking: “What level of crime are people willing to accept?” He added: “The level of poverty in the country is possibly not the fault of the police precept.”

The PCC repeatedly assured the panel that Surrey Police has already delivered about £90m in savings over the past decade. Even with the tax rise, the force still needs to find £5.5m in further savings this year and more in the years ahead, with an overspend of around £1m this year driven largely by overtime costs.

A public consultation found 57 per cent of respondents supported a £14 increase, the maximum allowed at the time. More than 2,400 people took part, although this was highlighted as a small proportion of Surrey’s 1.3m residents.

Emily Dalton LDRS

Surrey Police and Crime Officer, Lisa Townsend, at the Surrey Police and Crime panel. (Credit: Surrey County Council webcam)

When is attempted suicide anti-social? A Surrey police dilemma

5 June 2026



A woman has criticised Surrey Police for giving her an anti-social behaviour warning after officers intervened while she considered taking her own life. She has claimed the move left her feeling “ashamed” and too scared to call for help if she

experiences the same struggles again.

The 40-year-old, who asked to remain anonymous, said she was issued with a Community Protection Warning (CPW) in October 2025 after officers intervened when she was at risk of suicide in Guildford town centre late at night. The supermarket worker said she later received a second warning in December, despite claiming she had not breached the first.

CPWs are normally used to tackle anti-social behaviour that harms or causes disturbance to the community. This could include harassment, vandalism or persistent nuisance. However, the Guildford resident said these anti-social behaviour powers are being wrongly used against vulnerable people rather than preventing crime.

A Surrey Police spokesperson said the warnings are to set “behavioural boundaries” and are “not about criminalising behaviour”. The Force uses a national framework ‘Right Care, Right Person’ to ensure health-related incidents are handled by specialists (NHS, social care) rather than the police.

The woman said the notice, which warns of potential consequences such as arrest or £100 fines if the behaviour continues, has had a chilling effect on her and has left her “too ashamed” to tell her close friends and family what happened. “It’s made me less safe,” she said. “If anyone had concerns about me they couldn’t call the emergency services because if I survived [there would be] consequences. And that puts my friends and me in a horrible position.”

The Guildford resident explained she did everything to avoid disrupting the public and was not being attention-seeking, as she fears some people may label her. “They are completely mis-using something designed to protect communities from things like youths carrying knives,” she said. “We are giving them money and power to tackle anti-social behaviour and that is not what they are doing.”

The woman described how officers initially spoke calmly with her, telling her she was not in any trouble and persuaded her to come to safety. However, she said the atmosphere “completely changed” as soon as she was safe. “When I say that I try to get help and say there isn’t any, the [police] sort of imply that I’m not trying hard enough.” The woman said she feels “failed” by mental health services and wants the police to recognise the pressure on this sector.

The 40-year-old said she was sent the first warning to her home address and the second warning was given in her workplace, in front of colleagues, which she said was humiliating. Although she made a complaint to Surrey Police, the woman said she was told no action would be taken. A police spokesperson has said they cannot comment on individual cases when a complaint is subject to review and an ongoing investigation.

The woman raised concerns about something called SIM (serenity integrated mentoring): a controversial model that once linked police with mental health services. In some areas around 2022, this was used against those who frequently sought emergency services help in a crisis. But Surrey Police said it is committed to delivering ‘Right Care, Right Person’ in making sure health-related incidents are dealt by specialists.

A Surrey Police spokesman said: “An initiative is underway in Surrey, based on similar models elsewhere in the UK, which is aimed at supporting the policing response to individuals who frequently present to police with suicidal behaviour which could put them at risk of danger. The response focuses on the core policing duties outlined under Right Care, Right Person to set boundaries and provide a consistent response from front line officers.

“The project involves working with partner agencies, such as health and social care colleagues, to signpost risk and vulnerability to the most suitable agency. Where necessary police interventions, such as community protection warnings, will be considered as part of the approach to reduce disproportionate demand and set behavioural boundaries. These would not be issued without the support of the relevant partner agencies.

“Setting these behavioural boundaries is not about criminalising suicidal behaviour - they are put in place to ensure that these individuals are accessing the right service to provide them with the support they need.”

Anyone can contact Samaritans FREE any time from any phone on 116 123, even a mobile without credit. This number won’t show up on your phone bill. Or you can jo@samaritans.org or visit www.samaritans.org.

Whatever you are going through, you don’t have to face it alone. Call Samaritans for free on 116 123, email jo@samaritans.org or visit www.samaritans.org for more information.

Emily Dalton LDPS

Image - purely an illustration and not real.