

## **VALUE FOR MONEY**

### **PROCEEDS OF CRIME ACT (POCA)**

#### **Background**

The Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) have afforded police forces a powerful tool to confiscate the assets of convicted criminals, particularly in relation to serious and organised crime. The POCA target within Sussex for 2009/10 was a stretch target and required a large shift in Force performance to achieve the £2.5m confiscation target.

In the performance year 2008/9, Sussex Police achieved confiscations amounting to £1.56m, although performance paled off towards the end of the performance plan year. The Authority and the Chief Constable were concerned that an impact of a slow down in performance could hinder the momentum generated to promote the importance of stripping criminals of their ill-gotten gains.

#### **The Authority adding value**

The Authority's Lead Member for Serious and Organised Crime, Mrs Carole Shaves MBE JP, has played an active role in understanding what are the drivers and blockages to achieving the ambitious targets for 2009/10. It was identified that one of the barriers to achieving the targets were the delays within the Criminal Justice system and an apparent lack of understanding in the magistrate courts of the powers afforded to them within POCA and the positive impact of confiscations for the public.

Mrs Carole Shaves, a Deputy Chairman of the Eastern Sussex Bench, personally raised judicial and magistrate awareness of asset confiscations which has now resulted in a far more robust and proactive involvement by Benches from a position of understanding. Magistrate training days now include a focus on asset confiscation and it is planned that this is now to be extended to the Crown Court in Sussex.

#### **Outcome**

As a direct result of engagement with the Lead Member for Serious and Organised Crime, the understanding of the Judiciary within Sussex of the importance of confiscating assets from convicted criminals, has led to an improved relationship with the courts and is likely to have considerable benefits in the short to medium term.

Tracking a criminal's money now forms an integral part of any investigation into organised crime groups. The Authority have supported investment in Sussex Police in dedicated staff who have received nationally recognised accreditation, enabling them to work with other agencies and financial institutions. Their sole purpose has been to ensure that criminals do not benefit financially from their crime. The Lead Member for Serious and Organised Crime continues to give personal oversight on behalf of the Authority on the intricate and often unseen work undertaken by Sussex Police to dismantle and disrupt organised criminals.

**Contacts:**

Mrs Carole Shaves, Lead Member for Serious and Organised Crime,  
Sussex Police Authority  
E-mail: [carole.shaves@sussexpa.gov.uk](mailto:carole.shaves@sussexpa.gov.uk)

Detective Supt Andy Buchan, Sussex Police  
E-mail: [Andrew.buchan@sussex.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Andrew.buchan@sussex.pnn.police.uk)