



**VERA BAIRD<sup>QC</sup>**  
POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONER

# **Northumbria Police & Crime Panel Report**

**August 2017**

## **Front desk reduction in hours**

Northumbria Police, like many public sector organisations, continues to face significant reductions to funding, (since 2010 Northumbria's Budget has been reduced by more than £136 million, this year alone saw a reduction of a further £3 million) and has to work differently to continue providing the high standards of service our communities expect and deserve. As part of this, the force is working in collaboration with partners, including sharing business locations which often makes it easier for members of the public who are able to access various services under one roof.

Since January 2015 the Force has undertaken an Estates Rationalisation Programme which has seen the disposal of a number of old and outdated buildings to allow the relocation of bases. In many areas these have been to more modern and more accessible neighbourhood police offices. This has enabled significant revenue savings to be achieved and every penny saved has been reinvested back in to policing.

As part of the Estates Rationalisation Programme, footfall data has been collected on a consistent basis to determine the extent of public usage of the existing Front Office provision. The figures were very revealing, for example, in Hebburn the average daily customers using the service was three people, Etal Lane which used to be open 24 hours a day, seven days a week, on average saw 34 people daily – it is clear that this operational model was not sustainable and was preventing the Force from investing money in the areas that the public wanted to see enhanced. Indeed the current front office operating model reflected historic ways of working and had not been reviewed since 2006 as part of the Citizen Focus Agenda.

In addition since then the Force has undergone a significant number of changes and the way in which the public wish to interact with the Force has changed. The Force has reviewed its wider Communications Strategy for engagement with the public, with particular emphasis on improved access via telephone, internet and social media including the recent introduction of 'Your Northumbria' which there is information about in this report.

The information collated in respect of the footfall and usage and subsequent changes to opening hours is detailed below.

Putting these changes into a national context the current position is that there were 27 stations open to the public, 11 of which had 24/7 front offices. This was the highest number of front offices anywhere in the country outside of the Metropolitan Police. Only 6 other forces across England and Wales have 24/7 front offices and each of these only has one such facility in their force area. Even with our revised opening hours, Northumbria will still have 24 front offices open to the public, still significantly higher than most other forces. All the stations listed in the report remain operational as indicated and should an emergency be presented officers will respond accordingly. It is also worth noting that the £1.4m savings resulting from these changes to opening hours is the financial equivalent of 30 police officers.

As a life-long union member, I have always ensured that Northumbria Police consult and consider the views of the relevant trade unions, in fact, the Force has a proud record of working closely with trade unions over many years. I was therefore disappointed that Unison sent out an email to members, informing them that the union had not been consulted. Since January, at least six consultation meetings had been held with Unison. My office recently sent you a copy of the factsheet addressing each of the points raised by Unison, I hope you found the information useful. Northumbria still has one of the highest numbers of accessible front desks in England and Wales and the Chief Constable and I are determined to provide a policing service that is fit for purpose and delivers the priorities of local residents. Difficult decisions have to be taken, it is right that they are taken to protect the long term future of Northumbria police to be able to deliver what local residents want from their police force.

### **Central Area Command**

**Etal Lane** was previously open 24/7 under the new structure it will open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The evidence to support this change is provided below:

- Example of monthly footfall
  - January 2015 - 1004 (Daily footfall - 32)
  - January 2016 - 783 (Daily footfall - 25)
  - January 2017 - 778 (Daily footfall - 25)
- After 5pm, demand for the front desk reduces dramatically - on average only two visitors per hour, demand on evenings at weekends fell even further. Weekend usage of Etal Lane was very poor, this is in part due to the location and the fact that most people contact the police by telephone in an emergency.

Under the previous opening hours, Etal Lane had the equivalent of 6 FTE under the new model this will reduce to 1 FTE. It is important to note that all the policing operations will continue at Etal Lane Station, it will remain fully operational with police officers and staff still working from the station.

**West Road** was previously open 8am till 12am Monday to Sunday, under the new structure it will be open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday.

The evidence to support this change is provided below:

- Example of monthly footfall
  - January 2015 - 625 (Daily footfall - 20)
  - January 2016 - 529 (Daily footfall - 17)
  - January 2017 - 489 (Daily footfall - 16)

Under the previous opening hours, West Road had the equivalent of 4 FTE, under the new model this will reduce to 1 FTE. Demand during the week has shown a fall, with one month the average daily footfall being as low as 11 (June 2016).

On the 17th July 2017, the West Road police station co-located to the College. The revised opening hours tie in better with the opening hours of the college and meet the demands of when the community use the front desk services.

### **Northern Area Command**

**Bedlington** was previously open 24/7, under the new structure that has changed to 8am to 8pm.

- Example of monthly footfall
  - January 2015 - 1775 (Daily footfall - 57)
  - January 2016 – 1728 (Daily footfall – 56)
  - January 2017 – 1932 (Daily footfall - 62)

Though the daily visits have remained static, the usage of the front desk is busiest between 9am and 5pm and a similar pattern is reflected over a weekend, The front desk usage falls after 5pm. After 8pm it was a common occurrence that there were only one or two visitors per hour until midnight - after this no one visited the station front desk.

Under the previous opening hours, Bedlington had the equivalent of 6 FTE, under the new model this will reduce to 3.5 FTE

**Killingworth** was previously open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, under the new structure no front desk office provision will be provided. Monthly visits per day have always been low since the service opened in 2014

- Example of monthly footfall
  - January 2015 - 48 (Daily footfall – 1.5)
  - January 2016 – 40 (Daily footfall – 1.3)
  - January 2017 – 58 (Daily footfall – 1.8)

It is clear that the residents of Killingworth contact the police through alternative means, rather than visiting the White Swan Centre. Officers will still utilise the facilities as the neighbourhood policing team will still be based at the centre, so local residents will still see police activity in the community. Under the previous opening hours, Killingworth had the equivalent of 1 FTE, under the new model this will reduce to no service.

### **Southern Area Command**

**Milbank** was previously open 24/7, under the new structure the front desk is open 8am to 8pm Monday to Sunday.

Millbank in the main police station for South Tyneside, however, the busy times of the front desk reflect the shopping area opening hours of 9am to 5pm.

- Example of monthly footfall
  - January 2015 - 1254 (Daily footfall - 40)
  - January 2016 – 1537 (Daily footfall – 50)
  - January 2017 – 1566 (Daily footfall - 50)

After 7pm both during the week and at weekends the number of visitors is remarkably low, as low as one visit an hour . Under the previous opening hours, Millbank had the equivalent of 6 FTE, under the new model this will reduce to 3.5 FTE

**Houghton** was previously open 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday, under the new structure the front desk is open 10am to 2pm.

- Example of monthly footfall
  - January 2015 - 211 (Daily footfall - 7)
  - January 2016 – 183 (Daily footfall – 6)
  - January 2017 – 104 (Daily footfall – 3)

Since June 2016 onwards the number of visitors to Houghton has been around three visitors a day. Under the previous opening hours, Houghton had the equivalent of 1 FTE, under the new model this will reduce to 0.5 FTE

<b>1      How is the PCC making commissioning decisions, and what are her future intentions?</b>
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### **Commissioners Community Fund 2017-18**

The Commissioner's Community Fund provides funding for local groups to develop solutions to local policing and community safety issues in their local area. Grants of up to £2,000 were made available to charities, voluntary groups, community groups and social enterprises that can clearly demonstrate how their local intervention would help to reduce ASB, build community confidence or promote crime prevention.

The work that these groups do in Northumbria communities to support the priorities in the Police and Crime Plan is invaluable. The plan followed extensive consultation with the communities and neighbourhoods in the force area therefore local communities are involved in helping to design solutions to tackle the local issues that they have raised as important to them.

As previously reported to the Police and Crime Panel it was our intention to strengthen the assessment process for the Commissioners Community Fund. To do this, both

Community Safety Partnership leads for each local authority area and Northumbria Police neighbourhood officers were involved in assessing the suitability of applications received. It was felt that by inviting these individuals to be part of the process, that their local knowledge of both groups and issues within their respective areas would allow funding to be directed to those groups and projects that would make the biggest difference to improving their local community.

Applications were received from all local authority areas with a particularly high turnout in Newcastle. We have been impressed by the creativity and appetite from local communities who want to work to deliver change for the good in their local area which means that 63% of the groups that applied for funding received some level of award. By helping these groups and projects it further supports the Police and Crime Plan providing crucial assistance to the work being carried out by Northumbria Police.

In total £91,829 was awarded, which has been made possible by the savings I have made to the cost of my office. Further information about successful applications are available on my website – [www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk](http://www.northumbria-pcc.gov.uk).

## **Section 2 - How is the PCC building effective partnerships?**

### **2.1 Alcohol – minimum unit pricing**

Working with Mary Glindon, MP for North Tyneside I continued the work I have been doing with other PCCS, colleagues from Balance, the North East Alcohol Office and the Alcohol Health alliance around increasing the duty on Strong White cider. Mrs Glindon and I and wrote to the Prime Minister urging the Government to increase the minimum price of alcohol in England to follow in the footsteps proposed by Scotland and Wales. In Northumbria, dealing with alcohol related crime and disorder is a significant drain on police resources.

While taxation is necessary to address the full range of harmful alcohol consumption, minimum unit pricing (MUP) is a focused, targeted measure which will address the cheapest, high-strength drinks associated with the most acute alcohol harm. Cheap alcohol carries a tremendous cost, damaging not only health, but also the economy and wider society. Deaths from alcohol related liver disease have increased by 400% since 1970, in stark contrast to the rest of Europe. In England, the average age of death from an alcohol-specific cause is just 54. Among 15-49 year olds alcohol is now the leading risk factor for ill-health, early death or disability.

Minimum unit pricing will ensure that no product is sold for less than a 'floor price' per unit of alcohol – recommended by the Alcohol Health Alliance to be 50 pence. The most recent available estimates from the authoritative Sheffield Alcohol Research Group suggest that the introduction of a 50 pence MUP would:

- save 525 lives per year
- reduce hospital admissions by 22,000
- cut the cost of alcohol to society by £3.7 billion over 20 years

### **2.3 Home Office VAWG Transformation Fund**

Earlier this month we were advised that an application to the Home Office VAWG Transformation Fund has been successful. Funding of £636,000 has been received to deliver a three year project which has four components. I will be working closely with local authorities, the Northumbria Community Rehabilitation Company and voluntary and community sector organisation to deliver this project. The four elements of the project are outlined below and updates will be provided to the panel.

**1. Prevention – The Northumbria Domestic Abuse Practitioner Standard (DAPS)** - Designed to reduce the level of demand placed on specialist services by expanding the skills, knowledge and overall capability of non-specialist providers, this development will focus on creating an agreed, standardised and accredited suite of training courses that can be delivered across all six of our local authority areas.

**2. Provision of Victim/Survivor Long-Term Support – The Sexual Violence (SV) Witness Advocates** - Designed as a response to Seeing is Believing, 2017 the report that highlighted the poor level of support experienced by rape complainants, as well as capacity issues affecting the level of court support currently provided by local ISVA/IDVAs, this new development will see the creation of a small team to work within the Criminal Justice System (CJS) and alongside specialist providers to operationalise the concept of assertive 'witness advocacy' recommended by the Victims Commissioner (2016) and to ensure that sexual violence victims (including those who are young, male, from local BME communities or who have mental health issues and/or learning difficulties) are offered an enhanced level of needs focused, assertive advocacy at every stage of the criminal justice process.

**3. Early Intervention (& Partnership Working) – The CJS Diversion Support Worker** - Research and experience suggest that it is sometimes the most vulnerable victims, displaying the most intractable or complex needs, who fail to access the support they need. This development aims to address one such area of unmet need by creating the role of 'Diversion Support Worker' to work in partnership with Northumbria Police and Northumbria CRC in the implementation of a new conditional cautioning scheme that trials a 'women specific condition' (WSC) for low level women offenders, many of whom are victims of current and/or historical abuse.

**4. Perpetrator Intervention – The Cyber Stalking & Harassment Pilot** - Cyber-enabled stalking and harassment have been highlighted by local specialist services as forms of offending which are creating new demands on their staff whilst remaining largely undetected by the police and therefore only limited by the determination, imagination and IT skills of the offender. Building on work already undertaken by Northumbria Police (e.g. force-wide coercive control training) and a number of current initiatives (e.g. domestic abuse scrutiny panels) this development will see the trialing of a new team of experts tasked with finding, developing and training others in the best ways of tackling some of our most persistent (and dangerous) offenders.

## **2.4 Appropriate Adults Scheme**

An appropriate adult (AA) is responsible for protecting or 'safeguarding' the rights and welfare of a child or 'mentally vulnerable' adult who is either detained by police or is interviewed under caution voluntarily. The role was created alongside the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984. AAs are distinctly different from other supporters a person might have, such as solicitor, interpreter or mental health worker, they have specific rights and responsibilities that are largely detailed in the PACE Codes of Practice.

There are no statutory duties either to secure or to provide an appropriate adult for vulnerable adults in contrast there is a statutory duty on youth offending teams to provide AAs for children and young people. Historically local authority social services



departments would often provide AAs when requested by the police however recent constraints on public sector resources has led to a shortage of AAs and local authorities in Northumbria often struggle to provide AAs although the majority have agreed to provide an AA in serious cases such as murder and rape.

Appropriate deployment of AAs in custody means that:

- Vulnerable suspects are treated fairly with respect for rights
- Vulnerable suspects are able to participate effectively
- More effective and efficient evidence gathering (reduced risk of unreliable evidence)
- Courts have increased confidence in evidence (reduced risk of evidence being ruled inadmissible)

To overcome the resourcing difficulty and to ensure vulnerable adults are appropriately supported, Northumbria Police and my office have developed a formal arrangement whereby students from Sunderland University act as volunteer AAs. This collaboration with the university to deliver AA work is thought to be the first of its kind across the country.

Key features of the Northumbria Appropriate Adult Scheme include:

- Sunderland University identify, recruit and supervise AAs and manage the on-call rotas for AA work.
- 85% of Sunderland students lie in the North East and a high proportion of the students acting as AAs are mature students and at least in their second year of study.
- The scheme is registered with National Appropriate Adult Network meaning all AAs are trained to a recognised national standard.
- Northumbria Police arrange all safety and supervision whilst on Northumbria Police premises.
- A rota with at least 4 options per custody hub at any one time to maximise access to an AA.

Students are taken from at least 3 health and social care based courses to ensure provision is available at any time of the day and night and to ensure students gain valuable experience relevant to their career aspirations.

The scheme was established in March 2017 and will run for one year initially. If the scheme is successful and cost effective the scheme will continue and perhaps be widened to include other local universities. Initial findings from the scheme already show that the time that a vulnerable adult waits in custody to be supported by an AA has reduced from 5 hours and 40 minutes to 59 minutes.

## **2.5 Association of Police & Crime Commissioners**

This time last year I informed panel members that I had been appointed Chair of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners (APCC) and it was my hope to use the

position to not only raise the profile and role of PCCs, but to ensure Northumbria's voice was heard at the very highest level of government.

My term of office recently came to an end and upon reflection I believe much has been achieved. The profile and role of Police & Crime Commissioners has been enhanced, we have influenced government debate, PCCs have been called up by government minister for our views. I also set about changing the structure within the APCC to give PCCs more influence and say over policy areas. This has worked well as we have developed PCCs knowledge and they represent the national association in their particular area.

I have used my year as Chair to promote the good work that my office have implemented such as the Safehaven, rape scrutiny panels and fire service collaboration and the outstanding work our police officers undertake day in day out. I will continue to play an active role within the APCC and my priority continues to be Northumbria.

### **Section 3 - How is the PCC scrutinising the force's performance against the police and crime objectives of the plan?**

#### **3.1 Monitoring the delivery of the Police & Crime Plan – Scrutiny Meeting**

The Police & Crime Plan features the priorities of the public throughout the publication and part of my role is to monitor the delivery of the document and to ensure it continues to be effectively delivered, whilst ensuring value for money. This will ensure an efficient and effective police force, where resources are configured and used to provide the best possible service to the public of Northumbria.

As you will be aware I regularly meet with the Chief Constable and his Executive team so that I can monitor police performance and ask the questions needed to evaluate performance against the objectives set in the Police & Crime Plan. These meetings cover a number of areas ranging from number of complaints to crime statistics. I also ensure that the relevant information is made available on my website so the public can see how the plan is being delivered by Northumbria Police.

In order to focus on the elements of the plan where further scrutiny is required I have introduced a monthly Scrutiny Meeting. This meeting will require members of the Command Team to present quarterly performance information, updates on delivery of HMIC Action Plans and also Northumbria police progress against delivery of the Strategic Policing Requirement ensuring Northumbria fulfil their national responsibilities and plan effectively to carry out their role in respect of national policing challenges as determined by the Government.

In addition in respect of local policing there will be a timetable of 'call ins', these will be specific reports that will focus on key areas of business within the Police and Crime Plan where further scrutiny may be needed. The service areas and issues covered will be those that are raised by my consideration of the monthly performance information or

as a result of engagement with local communities and partners in the Criminal Justice System. Looking forward we will also consider in some service areas such as the use of Body Worn Cameras how a service may need to develop over the coming months and years and how this impacts on resources needed and how it can potentially improve future performance and provide better outcomes for victims of crime.

Future reports to the panel will include an update on these meetings and an overview will be provided on my website.

## **Living in Fear – The Police and CPS Response to Harassment and Stalking**

Published earlier this month, this national thematic report presents the findings and recommendations of a joint inspection by Her Majesty's inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) and Her Majesty's Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate (HMCPSI) in 2016/17 into how crimes of harassment and stalking are tackled. Northumbria Police was not one of the forces visited for this report however we will consider the national findings and recommendations to ensure that we strengthen the service provided to victims of harassment and Stalking in Northumbria.

The report highlights that:

- Stalking in particular was misunderstood by the Police and the CPS. As a result, it often went unrecognised.
- Prosecutors on occasions missed opportunities to charge stalking offences, instead preferring other offences, particularly harassment. In some cases, the charges did not reflect the seriousness of the offending.
- Offences were not dealt with appropriately by using stalking-specific powers. Crimes of harassment and stalking reported by victims were sometimes not recorded at all; when crimes were recorded, they were sometimes not recorded correctly; and cases of stalking were sometimes recorded as harassment.
- Victims of harassment or stalking crimes that had not been categorised as domestic abuse were less likely to have had a risk assessment. For domestic abuse victims, although a risk assessment was often completed, the specific questions relating to harassment and stalking were sometimes overlooked.
- A structured risk management plan was often not completed for victims of harassment and stalking
- Police Information Notices (PINs) were sometimes used as informal sanctions and instead of, rather than after, thorough investigations.
- Consistent publication of data about the number of PINs issued and better training for officers, have never been implemented in some forces.

Northumbria Police records almost all instances of contact as harassment rather than stalking, whilst other forces appear to be much more likely to record contact as stalking rather than harassment. Northumbria Police data included in the report showed that the Force recorded one stalking for approximately every 450 harassment offences in the 12 months to 31 December 2016. On average, forces recorded one stalking offence for every 50 harassment offences. Northumbria Police has the second highest level of

recorded harassment offences per 1,000 population, but also the lowest rate of stalking offences per 1,000 population.

Four recommendations were made for chief constables:

1. Chief constables should stop the use of PINs and their equivalents immediately, to ensure that all victims of harassment and stalking are protected and crimes are investigated appropriately.
2. Chief constables should make sure stalking investigations are improved by ensuring that:
  - a. Officers are aware of the powers of entry and search for stalking, and use them appropriately; and
  - b. Adequate records of these searches are compiled for audit and compliance purposes.
3. Chief constables should work with criminal justice partners to identify what programmes are available to manage offenders convicted of harassment and stalking offences in their respective force areas. In the absence of such programmes, they should review whether interventions could and should be established.
4. Chief constables and CPS Area leads should monitor and ensure compliance with the national stalking protocol.

The Chief Constable will consider these recommendations and provide me with an overview of the position of Northumbria and provide me with an actions plan for improvement.

#### **Section 4 - How is the PCC improving communication/consultation with the public?**

##### **4.1 Advisory Groups**

In 2012 I established Advisory Groups to represent the communities which are protected by the Equality Act 2010. The groups cover age, gender, black and minority ethnic communities, those committed to region or belief, the disabled community and lesbian, gay bisexual and transgender people and there is also a victims group. These groups meet regularly to help shape my thinking about policing and support me in my scrutiny role. The groups have continued to evolve over the last five years and have recently been reinvigorated with a refresh of membership. The groups have all been instrumental in the development of the new Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 and are now currently developing new work programmes.

A flavour of their individual work can be found below:

- **Age Advisory Group** – the group have discussed and advised on a wide range of topics so far this year. The main two areas that they have considered are online safety of older vulnerable people and also domestic abuse, which is often hidden in long-term relationships where the victim is 55+. The group are

cascading their learning to others to ensure people feel safe and supported to report crime or ask for support where needed.

- **Youth Advisory Group** – the group are hosted by Streetwise North East who are well placed to engage with vulnerable young people and young people throughout the Northumbria area and has recently met for the first time. As suggested by a Panel Member at the last meeting the group are developing channels to ensure that the views of looked after children and child carers are included in their work, in the main wider young people's views are collected through programmes of peer research and online forums.
- **Gender Advisory Group** – the group continue to consider a wide range of topics in relation to gender specific issues. There has been a focus on how to recognise honour based violence and encouraging a police focus on domestic exploitation and slavery within marriage as part of their safeguarding and trafficking work. The group are also providing views about the new domestic abuse media campaign due later this year.
- **LGBT Advisory group** - the group have made strong links with the new Northumbria Police LGBT Liaison Officers who work to build relationships with local LGBT communities, instilling trust and confidence in Northumbria Police and providing reassurance. The group have taken a specific interest in the recruitment of LGBT officers as they have learnt that there is a high dropout rate of LGBT recruits at an early stage, the group are working with Northumbria Police to explore what more can be done to encourage greater involvement throughout the whole recruitment process.
- **BME and Faith Advisory Group** – this year the group have considered the recruitment practices of Northumbria Police and have advised on the best way to engage potential BME candidates in future campaigns. The panel have also been kept up to date with recent work in relation to hate crime as this was causing concern amongst BAMER communities following BREXIT and the recent tragic events in Manchester and London. The group are fully in support of 'Your Northumbria' messaging service for community leaders and individuals working within communities to receive information from Northumbria Police.
- **Disability Advisory Group** – the group continue to have representatives from a wide range of communities including both learning, mental and physical disabilities. The group have advised on the further development of Safe Reporting Centres and feel able to share this knowledge with others and are currently supporting my office to develop an Easy Read version of the new Police and Crime Plan 2017-21.
- **Victims Advisory Group** – Victims First Northumbria are hosting the group which comprises a wide range of victims of crime who have been greatly impacted by crime and are recovering from their experience. To date this year they have focused on understanding the dynamics and impact of restorative

justice and providing views on improving communication between the police and victims. Members of the group will meet with Baroness Newlove, the Victims Commissioner, in the autumn when she visits Northumbria to learn more about the PCCs role to strengthen victim services in this area.

To further spread our reach into diverse communities we are developing a 'calendar of engagement' where we will engage with local communities to gather their views on policing and safety. This will complement our Advisory Group work and strengthen our understanding of local priorities.

## **4.2 'YourNorthumbria'**

'YourNorthumbria' is a multi-channel, two-way communication tool, specifically designed for Northumbria Police. The system can be accessed through a variety of means, including fixed computers, smartphones, tablets and laptops. It is the first force wide community engagement system designed to keep registered users up to date with the latest information about what is happening in their local communities. It allows officers to engage with the community with crime prevention advice, appeal information, victim support, intelligence gathering using location based alerts specifiable by ward areas, postcodes and address and send information to vulnerable registrants through their preferred channel and assist in critical scenarios such as emergency evacuations and severe weather warnings.

Building community confidence and engaging with residents is incredibly important - so any new method of communication that helps our officers to reach more communities, providing information and reassurance, is welcomed by me. I'm sure 'YourNorthumbria' will be successful and I would encourage everyone (including Panel members) to sign up – the more people we have on board the more families and households will be reached with important safety and crime prevention messaging.

'YourNorthumbria' will also keep residents informed about the latest crime notifications and crime prevention advice for their communities. The messages can be tailored to individual preferences for both the type of messages received and the means of communication.

'YourNorthumbria' also allows people to register multiple locations and interests, not just a home address. This is ideal for those who may want to know more about where their children go to school or have family members who live elsewhere in the force area. To sign up go to <https://www.yournorthumbria.org/>

## **4.3 - Community Engagement**

As Police & Crime Commissioner for Northumbria, I am work to maintain links with communities, seeing first-hand what they do and listening to what they think Northumbria Police does well and of course what could be done better.

I recently visited Sulgrave in Washington, an area where police and local authority partners have worked closely to tackle issues that were affecting the estate and the

quality of life for local residents. When I first visited Sulgrave a couple of years ago, partners were working together to encourage residents to report anti-social behaviour and crime, increased confidence in reporting combined with the police and partners working to tackle crime and ASB has led to reduction of 10.3% in ASB in 2016/17 with reduction of 23% over previous years.

The project has had lots of successes including:

- Landlord accreditation programmes
- Property inspections
- The first injunction in Sunderland against a known troublemaker which included conditions to stay out of the housing complexes and local convenience stores.
- CCTV is now monitored by the Council control rooms 24 hours a day.
- Additional support for vulnerable and isolated residents

These are just a few examples of the great achievements and I was delighted to meet the people behind the project and hear first hand how partnership working has changed people's lives for the better. This project is starting to see people's lives transformed, residents are taking responsibility for their area and are actively engaging in the formation of an established residents group.

## **Section 5 - How is the PCC improving confidence in the Police across the area?**

### **5.1 Funding for Northumbria.**

Soon after the election there was a flurry of comments made by Government Ministers stating that police funding has been protected and I felt it vital that I gave clarity to this claim – with a perspective from on the ground, here in our region. I could not let such statements go unchallenged.

I can categorically state that police funding has not been protected. Since 2010 to today, Northumbria Police force has needed to make savings and cuts of £136 million to manage reductions in funding, this is a real terms reduction in excess of 23%. For 2017/18 national direct funding for all forces was cut by 1.4%, £3.0m in Northumbria's case, with local tax payers expected to cover the shortfall via an increase in precept on council tax.

I have raised this issue time and time again with the Home Office. This Government has cut the funding for police forces across England and Wales. Local Policing is a priority here in Northumbria, it's our eyes and ears of local communities, despite all the challenges put in our way by central government, top slicing of funds from our budget for government projects we have managed to protect local policing – for how long I can continue to do this I do not know.

I call upon the Home Secretary and Prime Minister to sort the funding problem. It is imperative that counter terrorism policing is properly funded, and that funding is not diverted from mainstream policing as a result. The Home Office state that counter-

terrorism funding will increase by 30% by 2022, that date needs to be brought forward to now.

I sit on the Home Office group looking at police funding. The election has slowed down this work. However, I will be lobbying for a fair and transparent deal. All I am asking for is our fair share, it's wrong that we have had to face the biggest cuts of any force in England and Wales – this is unsustainable and I will do everything within my power for a deal that allows our Chief Constable and police officers to do the job that the public expects them to do.

As Panel Member I would like to ask that you join me as co-signatories in writing to the Policing Minister to ask him to redress this matter and ensure that in future funding agreements Northumbria receives an appropriate funding settlement and that local people are not left to bear the brunt of funding cuts on order that they have an efficient and effective police service.

## **5.2 Acid attacks**

In June, I was approached by Newcastle City Councillor, Dipu Ahad, who was leading a petition to highlight the fact that hydrochloric acid can be bought by anyone and the devastating effect it can have in the wrong hands. The petition calls on the Government to take immediate action to prevent this substance from being so readily available. As Police & Crime Commissioner, I backed the national petition calling on the Government to regulate acids which could be used to attack and disfigure. It has been reported that a high percentage of attacks are male-on-male, with gang members increasingly using acid as an easily-obtained weapon. Worldwide, approximately 80 per cent of acid attacks are by men on women, often in revenge for spurned sexual advances or marriage proposals.

Locally, here in Northumbria, acid attacks are extremely rare and racially aggravated attacks which have occurred according to reports from London and Manchester have not happened in Northumbria and we will all make sure everything possible is done to keep it that way.

I called upon the Home Office to take a proactive stance to bring this crime under control, with regulations in place to make these substances harder to buy. I'm pleased that the Home Secretary is taking the matter seriously and is looking in to it. Acid attacks are cowardly and have a devastating effect – now is the time for Parliament to take action.

## **6.2 Fire Safety Tests – Northumbria Police Estate**

The Force carries out fire risk assessments to police properties to assist the Chief Constable in complying with The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. The assessments are an evaluation of each of the premises occupied by the Force and which identify hazards and determining the likelihood that such hazards will cause



harm. Recommendations made during the assessment are subsequently implemented managed.

In the light of the Grenfell Tower disaster fire safety tests of all the Northumbria Police estate will be commissioned with particular attention being paid to the suitability of materials used within buildings, the suitability and sufficient of detection and fire-fighting equipment. The Panel will be updated on the outcome of this work.

### 6.3 Northumbria Bravery

Three Northumbria Police officers graced the national policing stage as they won the National Police Bravery Award at the 22nd Police Bravery Awards ceremony held in London's Dorchester Hotel in July.

PCs Sarah Currie and Michael Otterson and Sergeant Elliott Richardson were honoured in front of police colleagues from around the country. The three officers were on duty in Gateshead when they answered a call from a community nurse concerned for a patient who had a history of violence, schizophrenia and paranoia. Following their enquiries they established the patient was at an address in Gateshead and the officers followed the man to a public house.

As PCs Currie and Otterson opened the pub door, they were confronted by a man in the foyer holding a firearm and there was a violent and lengthy struggle as they tried to stop him from aiming the gun at them. They were quickly joined by Sgt Richardson and the struggle continued; the firearm discharged by the man as the officers tried to gain control of the weapon. After a sustained struggle and with help from a member of the public in the premises, the man was eventually over-powered and disarmed.

When his bag was searched they found two handguns, a crossbow, a pack of throwing knives, home-made petrol bombs, smoke grenades and a baseball bat inside.

Everyone in Northumbria Police is very proud of each of the officers for the outstanding bravery they have shown. A dangerous man intent upon causing serious harm was successfully detained by unarmed officers determined to protect communities and their colleagues. These officers may well view what they did as little other than their duty, it was much more than that - it speaks volumes about their individual character.

Once again Northumbria Police officers have shown why they are the very best. These officers entered a dangerous situation and used their skills and bravery to ensure the safety of local residents. Northumbria is rightly proud of Sarah, Michael and Elliott, they deserve this recognition and are an inspiration to colleagues across the country. The media can often focus on the negative aspect of policing, but it is this kind of bravery that happens day in day out and I want to say thank you to all our officers, we appreciate everything that they do.

#### Section 6 - Lobbying and shaping the national agenda - Update

Intimidatory Offences and Domestic Abuse Guidelines Consultation	The Sentencing Council recognised that currently the Magistrates' Court Sentencing Guidelines (MCSG) contains limited guidance for the sentencing of harassment and racially or religiously aggravated harassment, and threats to kill offences. There are no sentencing guidelines for stalking,
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	disclosing private sexual images and controlling or coercive behaviour offences. As there are certain similarities between these offences, the Council decided to group them together under the title 'Intimidatory' offences and consult on the guidelines.
Alcohol Structures consultation	The PCC responded to a government consultation on Alcohol Structures, exploring options around the introduction of a new duty band for still cider, particularly targeting the cheapest, high strength 'white ciders'. The PCC believes it is particularly important for the government to raise duty on the cheapest, strongest alcohol products, notably white cider, which is associated disproportionately with street drinking, dependency and consumption amongst children and young people. The response focused on providing evidence that cheap, strong alcohol can have on individuals, families and communities and why it is important that the Government targets harmful products through appropriate duty increases.